

# EVERY EXPLORER NEEDS A NAVIGATOR

Pursue a Rewarding Career:  
**Become a Professional Local  
Government Manager**



Each day in communities across the country people depend on running water, electricity, public transportation, fire departments, roads, and more. Each day you can fulfill your desire to make an impact in people's lives, live your passion for public service, and demonstrate your leadership ability. You can become a professional local government manager.

Local government is where the ideal of democracy is most tangible and where government is most accountable and accessible to its citizens. Of the three levels of government, local government has the greatest impact on the quality of our daily lives.

## **Democracy in Action**

Responding to the needs of their residents, local governments provide the services that help our communities thrive. Though they may differ significantly from state to state, local governments may have total or partial responsibility for:

- Making our communities safe by providing police, fire, and EMS services.
- Creating jobs by attracting and retaining businesses.
- Ensuring children have access to an education by providing funding for schools and teachers.
- Improving the quality-of-life by securing land for parks and building community centers.
- Providing transportation by constructing and maintaining roads, creating train and bus systems, and building airports and bike paths.



In local government, professional managers are the people who make sure it all happens. Hired by the elected governing body, they are the key decision-makers, the senior-level city, town, and county executives whose decisions affect people in thousands of communities across the United States. Like CEOs of corporations, professional local government managers see the community in its entirety, without being tied to one department, one interest group, or one political point of view. Working in partnership with elected officials, citizens, and business leaders, professional managers translate policy into actions and visionary ideas into real results. They oversee the day-to-day operations of local government and ensure that public services are provided effectively, efficiently, ethically, and equitably. Managers are the catalysts for making good things happen in our communities.

“The ability of the manager to help maintain and manage this city in the best possible way is crucial.”

—Bill Floyd,  
Former Mayor, Decatur, GA

## You are Needed

A leadership gap is looming within local government. The current generation of professional local government managers—inspired to enter public service by President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 Inaugural Address—is nearing retirement. Local governments are looking for a new brand of leadership.

In the next few decades, local governments will lead the way in developing creative solutions to extraordinary problems. This will require leaders who look beyond traditional and political boundaries to innovate and make meaningful change.

**You could be that new leader.** As you think about your future, consider a career in local government management. It’s a place where you can make a difference, and where you can be the difference.

## Resources for You

The *Life, Well Run* campaign, an ICMA (International City/County Management Association) initiative to raise awareness of and

appreciation for professional local government managers, has developed materials that can help you learn more about local government and a career in local government management:

- **Watch “Local Government 101,”** a free, 10-minute Prezi produced by *Life, Well Run*, which explains the origins and functions of government and the role of the professional local government manager. Go to [LifeWellRun.org/join-the-campaign](https://LifeWellRun.org/join-the-campaign) to download this and other campaign resources.
- **Download the *Life, Well Run* poster** from [ICMA.org/LifeWellRun](https://ICMA.org/LifeWellRun) and display it in your college or university to encourage awareness of the profession.
- **Visit [LifeWellRun.org](https://LifeWellRun.org)** for more information about how local government works and the role professional local government managers play in building and shaping communities. You also will find career advice on how to become a professional local government manager.
- **Check out the interactive map on [LifeWellRun.org](https://LifeWellRun.org)** for success stories from professionally-managed communities. These stories will really help you get a sense of the exciting work that occurs in communities around the country, and the role of professional local government managers in building communities we’re proud to call home.
- **Consider an advanced degree in public administration or public policy.**

**Talk with your professor about using these materials. To learn more about the *Life, Well Run* campaign or about a career in professional local government management, go to [LifeWellRun.org](https://LifeWellRun.org) and click on “Professional Managers.”**



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**ICMA**

*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*