



Be Part of the Solution:  
**Choose a Career in  
Local Government**



**It's a school day.** By 9:00 a.m., you've gotten out of bed, turned on the lights, brushed your teeth, showered, gotten dressed, taken the bus or car to school, and sat down at your desk in front of a teacher. This morning was brought to you by your local government.

Someday, somewhere, a student will need you to provide running water, electricity, schools, roads, and more. The community where that student lives will need your desire to make an impact in people's lives and your passion for public service. Will you be ready?

As you begin to think about your future—where you want to go to college, what you want to study, and who you want to be—consider pursuing a career in local government management.

Local government is where decisions that most affect you are made. Local government is where 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**

Local government is 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.

“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

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. Professional local government managers are like CEOs of corporations, but they 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. They are the catalysts for making good things happen in our communities.

## You are Needed

A leadership gap within local government is looming. 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 understand the old rules no longer apply and 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 professional local government management. It's a place where you can make a difference and where you can be the difference.

## Some 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:

- **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.
- **Visit [LifeWellRun.org](https://LifeWellRun.org)** for more information information about how local government works and the role professional local government managers play in building and shaping communities. Here, 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.

**For more information about using these materials, contact your teacher. To learn more about the *Life, Well Run* campaign, go to [LifeWellRun.org](https://LifeWellRun.org)**



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# ICMA

*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*