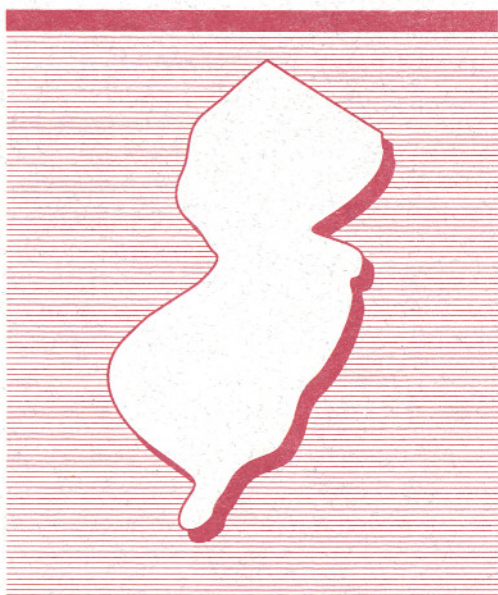


*What you can expect  
from a*

**local  
government  
professional**



*A guide for local  
elected officials  
from the  
New Jersey Municipal  
Management Association*

# Value-added management

A professional local government administrator or manager adds value to your municipality's services. Bringing a host of skills common to the public and private sectors, the municipal management professional also brings knowledge, skills and values that are unique to the administration of local government.

## Knowledge

Running a multi-service government organization is different from running a business. Labor relations are different in the public sector. Dealing with other units of government — from the town next door to the federal bureaucracy — is different for a local government official than for the private businessperson.

The government professional has studied and learned these differences, and can add the value of that knowledge to your local government's operations.

The government professional has also learned the ins and outs of grant programs, and of state and federal laws that govern so many areas of municipal operations.

- **You face legal, practical and financial pitfalls every time you make a decision. The knowledge and experience of a good local government professional can help you avoid those pitfalls.**

## Skills

Each community is unique and requires a person with the right skills as its manager or administrator. We may want "to run government like a business," but local government is not *exactly* like a private business. It has its own unique demands. Your residents demand far more from your government than they demand from a local business.

Local government professionals are skilled in a wide range of areas that are vital to your organization:

**Budgeting:** The skilled local government professional knows the ins and outs of the municipal budget process, knows how much services ought to cost, and knows how to help you stretch the budget dollar.

**Labor relations and staff development:** The skilled professional has learned how to negotiate without

alienating employee groups; how to analyze the costs of union demands; and how to help employees develop their skills to serve your local government better.

**Community relations:** A professional with good communications skills can help get your message to the community, and help the community get its message to you as an elected official.

**Facilitation and mediation:** A skillful local government professional can help your governing body organize its agenda and make more effective decisions, and can help you diffuse disputes both inside the organization and in the community.

**Management:** A qualified professional knows the details of a broad range of services that are unique to local government, and can help your community deliver those services as effectively and economically as possible.

**Planning and policy evaluation:** Without ever usurping your governing body's authority, the accomplished local government professional can help you analyze requests for new, different or modified services, and can help you plan for the future of your community.

- **You can help improve the quality of your local government's services by appointing a skilled local government manager or administrator.**

## Values

Managing a local government requires knowledge and skills, but it also requires a sense of values.

Local government professionals, who subscribe to the code of ethics and the declaration of ideals of the International City/County Management Association and the New Jersey Municipal Management Association, are dedicated to a set of values that apply especially to local government. These values include:

- Nonpartisanship, with no involvement in local partisan politics.
- Dedication to active solicitation of public opinion.
- Belief in social, physical and cultural diversity, and the need for each community to honor its past, serve its present, and improve its future.

- Equitable and non-discriminatory delivery of services.
- Dedication to constant personal and organizational improvement.
- Avoidance of even the slightest appearance of conflict of interest.
- Belief in the public service as a noble endeavor that serves the interests of its constituents.
- Belief that the chief function of local government is at all times to serve the best interests of all its people.

## Do all local government professionals possess this much knowledge and all these impressive skills? And do they share these values?

We all strive for this level of knowledge and this wide set of skills.

Of course, our age, education and experience vary, and we come to the practice of local government professional management from different backgrounds.

Only an open recruitment process, using the newsletters of ICMA and NJMMA, reaches a large group of skilled, knowledgeable local government professionals. This open process increases the number of applicants and gives the governing body a better pool from which to choose.

Your governing body must decide what it wants from its manager or administrator, and you need to ask the right questions during the selection process. Only you, as an elected official, can determine if a particular candidate has the exact mix of knowledge and skills your community needs.

- **In answer to the other part of the question: Yes, all local government professionals share these values, which are the central tenets of their professional lives.**

Sources of additional information

**NJMMA**

**New Jersey  
Municipal Management  
Association, Inc**

c/o Robert F. Casey  
Executive Director  
13 Walker Avenue  
Succasunna, NJ 07876-1313

NJMMA helps serve the professional development and training needs of New Jersey's local government managers and administrators. NJMMA will also provide individualized advice to communities that are considering hiring a local government professional.

**ICMA**

**International  
City/County  
Management  
Association**

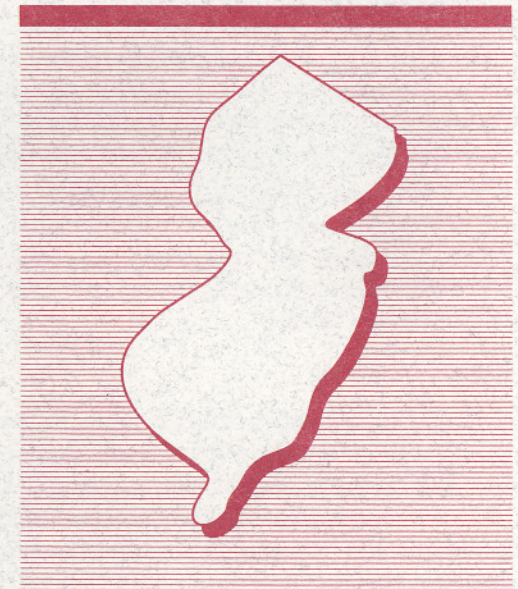
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ICMA serves the professional needs of local government managers nationally and internationally. It also provides many publications of interest to elected officials.

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