

# **Cal-ICMA Coaching Program California, United States of America**

**International Leading Practices Symposium 2008  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Cal-ICMA (the California affiliate of the International City/County Management Association) provides a multi-element Coaching Program to emerging leaders in local governments throughout the state. This effort is supplemented by talent development programs provided by regional groups and individual local governments.

This case study will focus on the statewide coaching program plus talent development initiatives at the regional level in the Silicon Valley. The attachments also include two illustrative case examples of local governments that have promoted the development of aspiring managers.

## **PROBLEM SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE**

A whole generation of baby boomers are retiring from local government service, and there are fewer numbers of Gen X and Gen Y professionals ready and willing to replace them. In addressing the talent crisis, the "Preparing the Next Generation" Committee has identified a two-fold challenge:

- 1) Accelerating the development of high-potential aspiring managers already in the local government pipeline
- 2) Attracting young people into the pipeline

## **PROBLEM ASSESSMENT**

Local governments in the United States, Australia and other Western democracies all face a daunting demographic crisis. A whole generation of baby-boomer senior managers is retiring and there are many fewer Generation X mid-career professionals to replace them. This "talent replacement gap" seriously threatens efforts to maintain and enhance the effectiveness of local governments.

*The numbers.* In the United States, 80 million baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) are retiring throughout the U.S. economy. However, there are only 50 million Generation Xers (1965-1977) available to fill behind the wave of retirees. The Australian economy faces a similar demographic challenge. This talent crisis is especially problematic for the public sector, which has a higher percentage of baby-boomer

employees than the private sector. To further exacerbate the challenge in the government sector, the larger talent replacement gaps are in managerial and administrative ranks. In fact, in my state of California, a majority of local government executives have reached retirement age.

A number of related political issues, changing value systems and other phenomena have converged to exacerbate the demographics.

*An anti-government bias.* In the 1960s and 70s, many baby boomers were brought up to consider public service as an honorable, even noble, calling. However, since that time, an anti-government bias has developed. Government work is now seen as bureaucratic, mind-numbing and generally second-rate. Our "best and brightest" have not been encouraged to select public service as a chosen field. For example, in the 1963 class of the Harvard University Law School, 30 percent of the graduates selected government service. In the Class of 2000, only one percent!

*Different values.* Younger people in the workforce exhibit different values from their older baby-boomer managers. They put more emphasis on having a balanced life and are less open to sacrificing family and other personal interests all in the interest of career advancement. Two years ago, the Coaching Program sponsored by Cal-ICMA conducted a series of focus groups of up-and-coming talent in local government. They perceived that senior managers are often singularly focused on work, overwhelmed, abused and attacked.

*The lack of rewards for difficult jobs.* Senior management jobs in local government are becoming increasingly complex, "political" and difficult, due to increasing levels of media scrutiny and community (and Council) discord. In addition, there are few significant monetary incentives to move from mid-management into top management of local government, recognizing the difficulty of executive positions. Simply put, mid-level staff in local government do not perceive the benefits, rewards and joys of moving into senior management at the point in history that we desperately need them to do so.

*The failure of local governments to grow their talent.* Unlike major corporations, most local governments do not engage in succession planning. In fact, the executive recruiters participating in a summit hosted by ICMA in 2004 noted that many local governments have eliminated assistant/deputy chief executive or assistant/deputy department head positions as they have downsized due to budget cuts. There are no fewer opportunities in local government organizations for up-and-coming talent to develop new skills and experiences in assistant and deputy positions. In tough financial times, many local governments have also cut funding for professional development, training and internships. Finally, senior managers often feel so overwhelmed with demands from all quarters that coaching and mentoring aspiring managers drop off their "to do" lists.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To accelerate the development of emerging leaders in local government, the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program provides the following eight program elements (see 2008 Coaching Program announcement in attachments):

### 1) Telephone Panels and Webinars

The 2008 Coaching Program offers eight telephone panels and two webinars on leadership and career development topics. Each session involves a panel of senior managers and emerging leaders. In 2008, topics include:

- Navigating Your Career – Challenges and Opportunities
- Building a Solid Foundation for Career Success
- Maintaining Balance and Satisfaction in Demanding Jobs
- Strategies for Civic Engagement, Community Building, and Results
- Mastering Finance in Local Government
- Developing in Your Own Organization – You Don't Have to Leave to Succeed
- Negotiating Your Employment Deal
- Why Having Fun Helps – Humor in the Workplace
- Promoting Economic Vitality – Keeping the Coffers Full
- Leading for a Sustainable Future

Participants can call in from their desks or join a group call-in from a conference room at the local government site. A group discussion related to the topic follows the one-hour telephone panel or webinar. Podcasts of each session are available on the Cal-ICMA web site.

### 2) One-to-One Coaching

Aspiring managers can secure a senior manager coach (chief executive, department director or other senior manager) by going online to the "Coaches Gallery" on the Cal-ICMA web site. The Coaches Gallery features 80 senior managers and their profiles and photos. The web site also includes guidelines, coaching tips and other resources for the coaching matches.

### 3) E-Coaching

Emerging leaders can submit questions on challenging job or career issues to a panel of senior managers and executive recruiters. Each panelist responds to the issue from their own unique perspective. The emerging leader receives a response by email and then the response (without attribution) appears in the "Dear eCoach" column on the web site.

- 4) Networking and Speed Coaching Events  
To involve all California Managers in at least one aspect of the Coaching Program, each of the 18 Area Manager Groups hosts a networking event for senior managers and emerging leaders. Generally, the event involves some kind of coaching activity, including "speed coaching." Several sample formats and guidelines for these networking events can be accessed via the Cal-ICMA web site.
- 5) Management Style Analysis Reports  
The Coaching Program offers participants the opportunity to complete an online management style analysis and then receive a confidential, personalized 24-page profile report. The report helps the emerging leader better understand one's preferred interaction and communication styles. The report suggests how one can become more effective and better understood by others given their management style.
- 6) Women Leading Government  
The Women Leading Government (WLG) initiative provides a series of educational events and networking opportunities for women aspiring managers. Those involved have formed a separate non-profit governing board to oversee programming and a new web site ([www.womenleadinggovernment.org](http://www.womenleadinggovernment.org)) which helps participants access resources.
- 7) Accelerated Leadership Development Series  
The Cal-ICMA Coaching Program has engaged one of its partners Continuing Education for Public Officials (CEPO) to provide "soft skills" training for emerging leaders. A one-week training program is conducted each August for three consecutive years. Half-tuition scholarships are available. Courses are based on experimental, adult learning principles and focus on the topics of self-awareness, collaboration, risk-taking, intuitive decision-making, negotiations and social intelligence.
- 8) Intensive Weekend Seminars  
The California City Management Foundation, another Coaching Program partner, provides two intensive weekend seminars: one for "Future City Managers" and the other for "First-Time City Managers." Both seminars are funded through the Foundation and involve senior managers as instructors and facilitators.

To attract young people into local government service, the Coaching Program has also begun a pilot branding and marketing campaign entitled "Local Government Careers -- Your World Starts Here" (see ad in attachments). The Coaching Program is now also

organizing a "City/County Manager in University Residence" project (see program description in attachments). The program aims to:

- Enhance the curriculum of university programs
- Promote local government careers
- Provide an opportunity for senior managers to renew themselves

As part of its university outreach effort, the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program has worked with the University of Southern California (USC) to develop a City/County Management Fellows Program. USC has provided over \$106,635.39 (AU) to fund scholarships and internships in local government. The first year involves seven fellows.

The Cal-ICMA Coaching Program also works with regional efforts to prepare the next generation. For example, City/County Manager Associations in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties (serving a total population base of 2,500,000) have formed a Two-County Next Generation Committee. This regional Next Gen effort has developed a series of initiatives to accelerate the development of future local government executives in the two counties. Examples include the Management Talent Exchange Program (MTEP), a three-month exchange of aspiring managers between local governments. The purpose of MTEP is to develop new skills, experiences, and relationships for future managers. Another program initiative is "speed coaching" provided by senior managers for high-potential employees. A third example is the creation of a Management Academy offered by the City of Palo Alto for other local government employees in the region. The Next Gen Committee is now developing with Foothill/DeAnza College a regional training consortium and supporting the City of San Jose in its efforts to create a Public Sector Academy at a local high school.

## **FUNDING**

Direct program costs for the basic Coaching Program total approximately \$105,000 (Australian dollars). The principle expenditures are for professional services for the program, director, bridge telephone lines, web services, and publication costs. Revenues are provided by the sponsoring organizations, such as ICMA, California City Management Foundation, Municipal Management Associations, County Administrators Association of California, and various corporate sponsors (see 2008 Coaching Program announcement in attachments). California City Management Foundation, Continuing Education for Public Officials, Women Leading Government and other partners provide specialized elements to the Coaching Program and fund those efforts through their resources.

Funding for a sample of the Two-County Next Generation programs include:

### Management Talent Exchange Program (MTEP)

Human Resources staffing from Palo Alto costs \$40,100 (Australian). Revenues include \$11,500 from corporate sponsor, \$4,600 from two sponsoring City Manager Associations, \$24,000 from participating agencies (26 participants at \$923 per participant).

### "Speed Coaching" Event

Luncheon and facility costs \$2,900 per event. Revenue for each event is \$29 per participant (90 participants = \$2,610).

### Management Academy

Direct costs total \$27,650 per class of 20 participants. Revenue is \$1,400 per participant provided by local governments that enroll participants.

## **RESULTS ACHIEVED**

In terms of the statewide Coaching Program, the telephone panels attract approximately 200 call-in participants for each of the eight sessions. Each of the two webinars attracts 400 participants. Eighty senior managers are featured on the "Coaches Gallery" on the Cal-ICMA web site and provide one-to-one coaching to emerging leaders. Networking and speed coaching events generally attract 40-100 participants. The intensive workshops involve 15-25 participants. A number of participants have been appointed City Managers and Department Heads. Documented feedback from coaching participants has been excellent. The University of Southern California City/County Management Fellows Program includes seven fellows in the first program year.

In respect to the regional effort, the Management Talent Exchange Program has been instrumental in accelerating the development of aspiring executives. Four recent participants have been promoted into City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Fire Chief and Public Works Superintendent positions. Likewise, Management Academy graduates have been promoted into executive positions. For example, in the City of Palo Alto, 50% of all the Department Directors and Division Managers who have been promoted into their positions are graduates.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The ten lessons learned from the statewide, regional and local talent development initiatives include the following:

1. Create Data or Evidence-Based Rationale for Action

To grab the attention of the profession as well as individual agencies, any talent development program must use data, stories, and other evidence. As part of this effort to create a compelling rationale to act, the "Preparing the Next Generation" (PNG) Committee created the *Preparing the Next Generation* Guidebook, published by ICMA. The PNG Committee also created a Speakers

Bureau to discuss at professional meetings and conferences the talent crisis facing local government.

2. Use State-Wide and Regional Collaborations

Recognizing the constrained resources of any one organization, statewide and regional collaborations are cost-effective ways to address the leadership development challenge.

3. Find Strong Champions

Any talent development initiative requires strong champions at the senior levels of the local government management profession. The "Preparing the Next Generation" Committee which plans and oversees the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program is led by some of the strongest and most visible local government managers in the state.

4. Identify and Promote Model Programs

The PNG Committee identified model leadership development and succession planning programs and featured them in a case book entitled *Local Governments Preparing the Next Generation – Successful Case Studies* (see announcement of publication in attachments).

5. Engage Emerging Leaders in the Programming and Marketing

Any organizing group should include emerging leaders as well as senior managers. The emerging leaders reflect the values of the next generation and ensure that appropriate communications and outreach will be used.

6. Rely on Mix of Funding and Program Partnerships

A creative mix of funding has helped finance the basic Coaching Program.

Funding partners include:

- > Professional associations
- > Foundations
- > Joint power authorities
- > Corporations
- > Participating agencies

Pro bono contributions from the senior managers have also been critical. In addition, the PNG Committee has partnered with other groups (e.g., professional associations, universities, non-profit organizations, area manager groups, school districts) to plan and deliver programs.

7. Involve Technical Expertise

Any talent development initiative requires technical expertise. The Cal-ICMA Coaching Program has utilized the expertise of a master coach who serves as the Director of the Coaching Program. Human resource professionals from a variety

of local governments are providing technical advice as well as serving as coaches.

8. Use Array of Cost-Effective Technologies

The use of technology is a cost-effective approach for engaging senior managers and emerging leaders. The Cal-ICMA Coaching Program has used a variety of tools, such as bridge telephone lines and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) for the telephone panels, webinars and podcasting of the coaching panels. In addition, the Cal-ICMA web site ([www.cal-icma.org](http://www.cal-icma.org)) hosts the "Coaches Gallery" for one-to-one coaching match-ups, e-coaching responses to tough questions, guidelines for "speed coaching," and many other resources.

9. Provide Menu of Programs

The Coaching Program has been successful in engaging large numbers of senior managers and emerging leaders because it offers a wide array of different program elements, such as one-to-one coaching, telephone panels, webinars, e-coaching, workshops -- something for everyone.

10. Different Benefits for Different Participants

The Coaching Program and related efforts have demonstrated the benefits for two groups:

- **Emerging Leaders** who want and need support to quickly move into management positions as they are vacated by retiring leaders.
- **Senior Managers** at the end of their full-time careers who have renewed and revitalized themselves by helping develop the next generation as part of their legacy.