

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Original Date Issued: February 12, 2021  
Deadline for Questions: February 19, 2021  
Closing Date: March 5, 2021, 11:59 PM ET  
Reference: **ICMAHO/ICMA Code of Ethics Bias Assessment**

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) seeks proposals from qualified consultants interested in supporting ICMA's effort to assess the ICMA Code of Ethics (Code) to identify language and approaches that may reflect bias. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure the Code reflects the local government management profession's commitment to social justice and racial equity.

ICMA anticipates awarding one (1) single Firm Fixed Price award as a result of this solicitation. ICMA reserves the right to award more or fewer awards than anticipated.

All questions concerning this solicitation should be directed to [workwithus@icma.org](mailto:workwithus@icma.org) with "Questions on ICMAHO/ICMA Code of Ethics Bias Assessment" in the subject line. All responses to questions will be provided via an Amendment to the RFP and will be posted at <https://icma.org/requests-for-proposals> not later than February 15, 2021.

It is the Offeror's responsibility to ensure that it has downloaded and received the RFP in its entirety, including all subsequent Amendments, in any. ICMA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from download, transmission, or conversion processes.

No communication intended to influence this procurement is permitted except as outlined above. Contacting anyone (either directly by the Offeror or indirectly through a lobbyist or other person acting on the Offeror's behalf) in an attempt to influence this procurement: (1) may result in a Offeror being deemed a non-responsive Offeror, and (2) may result in the Offeror not being awarded a contract.

This solicitation in no way obligates ICMA to award a contract nor does it commit ICMA to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal.

ICMA appreciates your responsiveness and looks forward to a mutually beneficial business relationship.

## **PURPOSE**

ICMA seeks support from a consultant to assist ICMA's effort to assess the ICMA Code of Ethics (Code) to identify language and approaches that reflect bias to ensure the Code reflects the local government management profession's commitment to social justice and racial equity.

## **ABOUT ICMA**

ICMA's mission is to advance professional local government worldwide through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics. ICMA provides member support, data and information, peer and results-oriented technical assistance, and training and professional development to more than 12,000 ICMA members, city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect millions of individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas.

ICMA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1914 that offers a wide range of services to its members and the local government community. It is the only international membership organization of appointed local government managers and executives. The organization is a thought leader in local government issues, a recognized publisher of information resources ranging from textbooks and survey data to topical newsletters and e-publications, and a provider of leadership and professional development for local government professionals. ICMA provides technical assistance to local governments worldwide helping them to develop professional practices and ethical, transparent governments.

For more information regarding ICMA's programs and services, please go to <https://icma.org>. ICMA's Dun and Bradstreet number is 072631831.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

Creating better communities around the world begins with a commitment to social justice and equity. ICMA strives to ensure that our members and the overall local government management profession reflect the diversity of the people we serve. ICMA is committed to mitigating the effects of bias in all areas of local government by developing and promoting programs and initiatives in the areas of service delivery, hiring practices, leadership development, community engagement, and workplace culture. ICMA works to drive engagement and support of members, local governments, and partnering organizations on issues related to equity, systemic racism, and social justice.

In June 2020, the ICMA Executive Board issued a statement on systemic racism that noted, "The local government management profession and ICMA were founded on a Code of Ethics and a Declaration of Ideals, which demand that we serve the best interests of all, achieve equity and social justice, and act with integrity so that we may earn the trust of all those we serve. Addressing systemic racism is our ethical obligation."

The Board's statement specifically called for ICMA to "Revisit our Code of Ethics to better integrate our ethical commitment to racial justice and equity into the very fiber of the 12 tenets." As background, an individual agrees to adhere the Code as a condition when

joining ICMA.

The successful consultant will be a partner in assisting ICMA in this comprehensive assessment of the ICMA Code of Ethics to identify language and approaches that reflect bias. ICMA's Code of Ethics is available at: <https://icma.org/icma-code-ethics>.

The consultant's proposal should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Design a process to gather member feedback through focus groups and a survey or assessment tool with both quantitative and qualitative elements on ways to strengthen the Code's commitment to addressing systemic racism.
- Offer actionable recommendations for revisions and/or modifications to the Code based on the results of this member feedback. The recommendations should include definitive implementation strategies and a sample timeline for the effort.
- Provide ICMA with an environmental scan of the approaches used by comparable non-profit organizations with a local government focus (i.e., the Government Finance Officers Association and the American Planning Association) to strengthen their commitment to addressing systemic racism in their Code of Ethics.
- Develop and deliver a communications strategy to present the recommendations to ICMA's Executive Board and/or membership for approval.

#### **CONTRACT TERM AND DELIVERY DATES**

ICMA expects this scope of work to be completed within 6 months. Final delivery dates will be negotiated upon award.

#### **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

In order to be considered for this opportunity, Offerors are required to submit the following information.

<b>Cover Letter</b>	Signed by the Offeror's authorized signatory.
<b>Approach</b>	Describe a proposed approach for accomplishing the scope of work.
<b>Prior Performance</b>	Describe any similar projects that the Offeror has conducted (2 pages maximum).
<b>Expertise</b>	Provide biographical statements any relevant expertise of the key staff proposed for work on this project. (2 pages maximum).
<b>Reference</b>	A description of the types and sizes of client organizations served, as well as a sample client list indicating the type of services rendered. Respondents should provide references as follows: at least three (3) examples of relevant work; the contact information should include the contact name, phone number, e-mail address, and website address. References will be contacted as part of the evaluation process.

**Pricing** Provide pricing as required in the Pricing Proposal form (ATTACHMENT A).

**Required Forms** Completed W-9 and New Vendor Application available at <https://icma.org/requests-for-proposals>

All proposals must be submitted by the date and time indicated on the cover of this RFP to [workwithus@icma.org](mailto:workwithus@icma.org) and include “ICMA Code of Ethics Bias Assessment” in the subject line. No phone calls please.

Late proposals and proposals lacking the appropriate completed forms may not be evaluated. Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Proposals will not be accepted at any other ICMA location other than the email address above. The vendor offer will be rejected if the vendor modifies or alters the electronic solicitation documents. If changes are made to this solicitation, notifications will be sent to the primary contact provided to ICMA from each Respondent. ICMA takes no responsibility for effective delivery of the electronic document.

#### **EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**

ICMA will evaluate qualifying proposals based on the following criteria:

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>MAXIMUM POINTS</b>
Approach	25
Prior Performance	25
Pricing	25
Oral Presentations	25
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>

**ATTACHMENT A  
PRICING PROPOSAL**

<b>SCOPE OF WORK TASKS</b>	<b>PRICING</b>
Design a process to gather member feedback through focus groups and a survey or assessment tool with both quantitative and qualitative elements on ways to strengthen the Code's commitment to addressing systemic racism.	
Offer actionable recommendations for revisions and/or modifications to the Code based on the results of this member feedback. The recommendations should include definitive implementation strategies and a sample timeline for the effort.	
Provide ICMA with an environmental scan of the approaches used by comparable non-profit organizations with a local government focus (i.e., the Government Finance Officers Association and the American Planning Association) to strengthen their commitment to addressing systemic racism in their Code of Ethics.	
Develop and deliver a communications strategy to present the recommendations to ICMA's Executive Board and/or membership for approval.	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

## ATTACHMENT B

### History of the ICMA Code of Ethics

The membership first adopted the Code, consisting of 13 Articles, at the ICMA Annual Conference in Montreal in 1924.

The Code's importance to the profession can be described in two ways:

- First, it defined the values of the profession, acknowledging that a true profession is more than a body of knowledge experienced practitioners implement. A true profession is anchored in, and guided by, a set of commonly held core principles. Those principles not only guide the individual's conduct but create a set of expectations and a bond with other professionals and with the society in which they serve. Professionals act with integrity in the conduct of their personal and professional lives in order to merit the trust of those they serve.
- Second, the principles outlined in 1924 are timeless. Our commitment today to integrity; public service; seeking no favor; exemplary conduct in both personal and professional matters; respecting the role and contributions of elected officials; exercising the independence to do what is right; political neutrality; serving the public equitably and governing body members equally; keeping the community informed about local government matters; and supporting and leading our employees all come from that first Code.

Since 1924, the membership has voted by ballot to amend the Code to reflect changes in society and emerging challenges for the profession. Here are the highlights of those changes:

**1938.** In the first amendment, a preamble was added to better explain the council-manager structure and ICMA's mission. A statement of the profession's commitment to merit-based hiring, noting that "political, religious, and racial considerations" carry no weight in personnel decisions was also added. Interestingly, the reference to the manager's duty to stay out of politics disappeared from the Code.

Article 3, while updated over the years, remains virtually intact today: "The city manager is governed by the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all his public and personal relationships in order that he may merit the respect and inspire the confidence of the administrative organization which he directs and of the public which he serves."

**1952.** The ongoing debate over the precise role of the manager in the policy arena was reflected in tweaks made to the policy-related Articles. Sagely, the Code advised managers they should avoid public conflict with council on controversial issues.

The first reference to the responsibility for continuous professional development also appeared in 1952.

**1969.** As membership expanded as the result of changes to the ICMA Constitution, the Code ceased using the term “city manager” in exchange for the more inclusive reference to “member.”

**1972.** The profession’s commitment to political neutrality, dropped in the 1938 revision, reappeared in more direct language in a new Tenet 7: “Refrain from participation in the election of the members of his employing legislative body, and from all partisan political activities which would impair his performance as a professional administrator.”

For the first time, the ICMA Executive Board added Guidelines to give members practical advice on investments, gifts, job commitment expectations, and election activities. In addition, the ICMA Executive Board adopted formal the Rules of Procedure for Enforcing the Code of Ethics.

**1976.** As ultimately unsuccessful efforts were underway to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Code was made gender neutral in recognition of the fact that women were truly part of the profession.

**1995.** The term “municipal” was replaced with “local government.”

**1998.** An increase in member’s political activity led to an amendment designed to clarify the profession’s commitment to political neutrality in Tenet 7 by emphasizing the broader principle. The new version stated: “Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation in the election of the members of the employing legislative body.”

**2014.** The structured review of the Code with membership began first with Tenet 12. In conversations with the membership, the overwhelming feedback was Tenet 12, as written, used archaic language and seemed to present two disconnected principles. The old language “Seek no favor; believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or by misuse of public time is dishonest” was replaced with “Public office is a public trust. A member shall not leverage his or her position for personal gain or benefit.”

**2017.** Tenet 3, last revised in 1976, is one of the two tenets that applies to all members. In reviewing the tenet, the CPC focused on redrafting the language to ensure it is relevant to a membership that is substantially broader than it was in 1976. In revising the language of Tenet 3, the CPC retained the commitment to integrity but focused on making the commitment more action oriented. A new guideline on personal relationships in the workplace was added. The existing guideline under Tenet 12, which addresses personal relationships that create conflicts of interest, was expanded to further explain what constitutes a conflict of interest.

**2018.** Tenet 4 was first added to the Code in 1952 as: "The city manager keeps the community informed on municipal affairs. He emphasizes friendly and courteous service to the public. He recognizes that the chief function of the local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all the people on a non-partisan basis." It was revised in 1972

to read “Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all of the people.”

Member feedback during the CPC’s review indicated consensus on simplifying the tenet language to “Serve the best interests of the people.” The membership voted in favor of this amendment in June 2018 and shortly thereafter the Board adopted changes to the guidelines on inclusivity and diversity, as well as moved the length of service guideline to Tenet 3 as it related more to the professional commitment to integrity.

**2019.** Tenets 1 and 2 had not been substantively revised since their addition to the Code in 1969 and stated:

**Tenet 1.** Be dedicated to the concepts of effective and democratic local government by responsible elected officials and believe that professional general management is essential to the achievement of this objective.

**Tenet 2.** Affirm the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and maintain a constructive, creative, and practical attitude toward local government affairs and a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant.

Members approved maintaining the original intent through streamlined tenet language in October 2019:

**Tenet 1.** We believe professional management is essential to efficient and democratic local government by elected officials.

**Tenet 2.** Affirm the dignity and worth of local government services and maintain a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant.

Following membership approval of the revisions to Tenets 1 and 2, the CPC reviewed member feedback on the Tenet 2 guideline on advice to officials of other local governments gathered throughout 2018 and 2019. In June 2020, the Board approved the addition of the phrase “in order to uphold local government professionalism” to the existing guideline language to explicitly state the reason for providing this notification to a colleague.

**2020.** Tenets 5 and 6 were last revised in 1972 and stated:

**Tenet 5.** Submit policy proposals to elected officials; provide them with facts and advice on matters of policy as a basis for making decisions and setting community goals; and uphold and implement local government policies adopted by elected officials.

**Tenet 6.** Recognize that elected representatives of the people are entitled to the credit for the establishment of local government policies; responsibility for policy execution rests with the members.

The CPC selected Tenets 5 and 6 to review at the same time because they both addressed aspects of the policy recommendation and decision-making process and focused on a member’s role in implementing a governing body’s decisions.



The changes membership approved to Tenet 5 included the addition of providing technical and professional advice about policy options to elected officials and updated the language to highlight the member's role in collaborating with elected officials to set goals for the community and organization. Tenet 5 now states, "Submit policy proposals to elected officials; provide them with facts, and technical and professional advice about policy options; and collaborate with them in setting goals for the community and organization."

The Tenet 5 guideline referencing a potential conflict by serving as both the city manager and city attorney had not been updated since 1972. The CPC recommended to the Board reframing the issue beyond the narrow example given to address situations where there could be a conflict by virtue of holding two positions within the same organization or externally and that members have an obligation to disclose and disengage to the greatest extent possible. The Board approved this change as well as the CPC's recommendation to move the conflicting roles guideline to Tenet 3, where it is now aligned with the existing guidelines on conflicts of interest.

The revision to Tenet 6 better reflected the decisions elected officials make are not limited only to policy adoption, elected officials are accountable to the people for those decisions, and members remain responsible for implementing those decisions. Tenet 6 has been amended to state, "Recognize that elected representatives are accountable to their community for the decisions they make; members are responsible for implementing those decisions."