

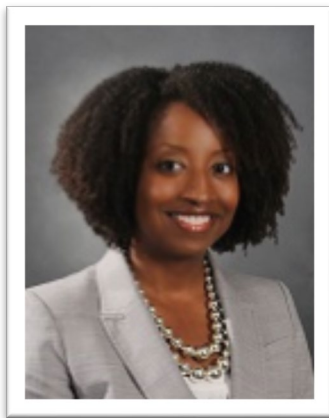
LGMF Local Government Management Fellows Thrive in Their Careers



The **Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF)** has launched hundreds of local government careers by placing recent public administration master’s degree graduates in full-time management-track positions with ICMA members in cities, towns, and counties.

In its 14-year history, the LGMF has created more than 300 alumni who have been hired for senior positions in local government, including more than 20 who have become town, city, or county managers. We asked alumni to provide brief outlines of their careers, describe how the Fellowship prepared them, and pass along words of advice to future Fellows.

With an introduction from Tanisha Briley, an alum from the third LGMF cohort, the remainder of the are in chronological order, with the earliest Fellows stories first:



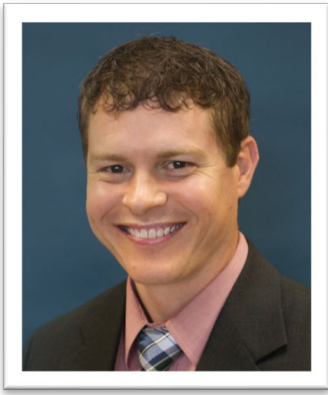
Tanisha Briley

City Manager, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
LGMF 2006-2007; Davenport, Iowa

One of the coolest ICMA programs you have likely never heard of helped define my career. The Local Government Management Fellowship (icma.org/lgmf) began in 2004, and I was part of the 2006 cohort. I was attracted to the Fellowship because of its explicit focus on mentoring and career development support from a city or county manager. Because of the mentoring and support I received from the city manager when I was a Fellow, budget manager, and then assistant manager in Davenport, Iowa, I have the tools and experience to successfully support my community today.

After nearly 14 years the program has benefited many recent graduates with ground-breaking career entry experiences, generating 270 program alumni, more than 20 of whom have risen to CAO roles. And now several alumni are hosting their own new Fellows, continuing the cycle of mentorship.

This document features some of the program’s alumni in “where are they now” profiles. More than anything else, I urge ICMA members to consider hosting a Local Government Management Fellow in your community. Not only will you gain more than you give, but your impact will extend beyond your community to places your Fellow will serve as a local government leader in the future.



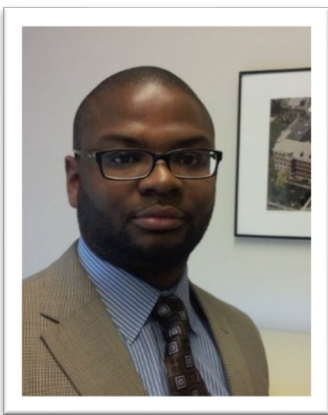
David Dillner

City Manager, El Dorado, Kansas
LGMF 2005-2006, Winchester, Virginia

Following graduation from the University of Kansas with an M.P.A. degree, I served as an assistant to the city manager in Winchester, Virginia, as a participant in ICMA's Local Government Management Fellowship program. After that, I served as city administrator in Edgerton, Kansas, and city manager in Abilene, Kansas, before moving to my current position as city manager of El Dorado, Kansas.

The Local Government Management Fellowship prepared me for my career as a city manager by providing well-rounded, practical experience that exposed me to the many facets of local government management. Much like an apprenticeship, the Fellowship gives Fellows an opportunity to learn directly from city managers in a way that allows for meaningful contributions and mentoring. I learned more about myself and the opportunities available in local government.

Fellows should try to be ambitious and seek out opportunities within the organization that will allow you to gain the experience you desire. Seek out mentors who will assist you and provide feedback and coaching. Find ways to challenge yourself and get involved in the community that you serve. Also, show a desire to learn about local government and demonstrate what you can bring to the organization. You may not realize it, but you have skills/strengths that can help an organization. Think of what these skills/strengths may be and showcase them to potential organizations.



Joe McRae

Director, Parks and Recreation, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
LGMF 2005-2006; Catawba County, North Carolina

After receiving a B.A. degree in political science and public communications from Ashland University in 2002 and an M.P.A. from the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University in 2005, I served as the Local Government Management Fellow/management analyst in Catawba County, North Carolina.

From there, I became the assistant to the village manager in Wilmette, Illinois, and as assistant to the city manager, deputy city manager, and director of parks, recreation and community services in Evanston, Illinois.

The Fellowship in Catawba County was instrumental in my development as a local government manager. I had truly amazing mentors who gave me challenging projects and exposed me to multiple professional development opportunities on a regular basis. They were vested in my success in a genuine way that I still appreciate and try to pass on to those I have mentored since.

My advice for current and future Fellows is to be intentional about learning through practical experience and about gaining wisdom from your mentors and co-workers. Watch how your mentors handle different situations – personnel matters, budget matters, constituent matters. Learn the different operations of local government. And never be afraid

to step out and try something new. This program created opportunities and access that would likely not have been available to me otherwise. I am truly grateful for the experience and the impact it has afforded me to have on each community I have been privileged to serve.



Dustin Anderson

Town Manager, Munster, Indiana
LGMF 2006; Loveland, Ohio

I was Loveland’s first Local Government Management Fellow back in 2006.

I am currently the town manager of Munster, Indiana, a suburban community 25 miles southeast of Downtown Chicago with a population of 25,000. Before that, I was a project manager for Greenwich Connecticut, and a consulting analyst with Management Partners.

The skills I developed as a Local Government Management Fellow have served me very well throughout my career. Being exposed to all facets of local government and being a part of a community right out of the gate was a fantastic opportunity. Having had almost unlimited access to the city manager as a mentor at the time, and to learn by both watching and doing helped mold me into the steward of the public’s trust that I strive to be today.

My advice to current Fellows or applicants is to work in smaller towns. On balance—if you consistently demonstrate competence—you will be given far more responsibility than your contemporaries in larger cities or counties. I am now hosting my third Fellow. I lean on them to do real staff work that has real consequences. If you want the best possible professional experience, you should consider forgoing the luxury of reserving geographic preference.



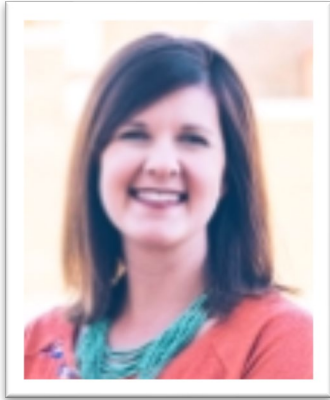
Nathan R. Thiel, ICMA-CM

Village Administrator, Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin
LGMF 2007; Riverside, Illinois

After receiving my M.P.A. degree from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, I landed in the village of Riverside, Illinois, as my Local Government Management Fellowship host community. There, I served two years as the assistant to the public works director and as the interim public works director. Since then I have served as a budget analyst in Sugar Land, Texas; city administrator in Mauston, Wisconsin; and currently, village administrator in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin.

The LGMF program was a catalyst and gave me confidence to aim to become a municipal manager. I have had the benefit of working in small and large communities and in rural and metro municipal governments. I have learned that a community’s size plays a significant role in the direct impact your efforts have in a community.

Fellows entering the program should take advantage of the opportunities afforded them and shouldn't be afraid to experience a market they might otherwise overlook. Chances are the position that looks less than ideal will afford more opportunities to make a direct and real impact than your "dream job." As Fellows advance in their careers, I can assure them that new and exciting opportunities will come.



Cori Burbach

Assistant City Manager, Dubuque, Iowa
LGMF 2007-2008; Lancaster and Dubuque, Iowa

Following my Fellowship in Dubuque, Iowa, I was lucky to be given advancement opportunities in the city. In September 2017 I had the opportunity to replace one of my mentors as assistant city manager when she became a city manager in another state.

The Local Government Management Fellowship prepared me by giving me the opportunity to utilize my formal education and fresh perspective to work on complex projects where I had no tangible experience. Those opportunities led me to become the first sustainability coordinator in Iowa and gave me the support, confidence, and connections to create new programs and policies over the years. Each of the projects I worked on helped me learn a little more about our organization and our community, and those experiences are still informing the initiatives I work on today.

I have two pieces of advice for Fellows:

Say yes to everything! When I accepted my current position, a respected department head told me: "The day I saw you take over your table at the Emergency Operation Center drill [a process I knew nothing about until that day], I knew you were going to be assistant city manager someday." I asked to be involved in projects for which I had no expertise and volunteered for projects that intimidated me.

Go out of your way to get to know residents and partners. Their stories will help you understand your organization's relationship with the public, and their perspectives will give you the best answers to some of the most challenging problems you'll encounter.



Scott Pingel

City Manager, Fircrest, Washington
LGMF 2007-2008, Federal Way, Washington

After I received my M.P. A. degree from West Virginia University, I became an ICMA Fellow for the Federal Way, Washington, where I worked for a little more than two years.

I was the city manager in Stanfield, Oregon, for a little more than three years, and then city manager in Dayton, Oregon for almost five years before taking by current position in Fircrest, a suburb of Tacoma.

Local Government Management Fellowship was a great program in which to learn the ropes of the local government. Having a group of other Fellows to learn from was helpful. In Federal Way, I had the opportunity to be mentored not only by the city manager but by both assistant city managers as well—something that was important for my development. I learned local government finance and how to work through details from the assistant who served as chief financial officer and I was able to learn more of the operations side of local government as well as how to confront and deal with conflict from the assistant who served as chief operating officer All of these mentors allowed me to take on whatever I thought I could in order to grow and provide value to the organization.

I would encourage current Fellows to constantly be in learning mode and look for ways to add value to the organizations you work for. Don't be afraid to fail, because failure makes you better, and don't be afraid to do hard things. Take on as much responsibility as the organization is willing to give you.



Steven Buter

Budget and Management Analyst, Greensboro, North Carolina
LGMF 2008; University Place, Washington

After finishing my M.P.A. degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2008, I packed up and moved all the way across the country to start my Local Government Management Fellowship with the city of University Place, Washington. After five years in University Place doing everything from dressing up as McGruff the Crime Dog to managing an economic development strategic plan update, my wife, young son, and I moved back across the country.

We settled in the Triad area of North Carolina, where I took an analyst position in the budget and evaluation department of the city of Greensboro and my wife continued her career with the Department of Veterans Affairs in nearby Winston-Salem. Beginning my career in University Place, a small/medium-sized city with a small staff, exposed me to every aspect of local government. I worked with community leaders, local businesses, intergovernmental teams, and elected and appointed officials. Working with a small team, some of whom are still trusted mentors, taught me what a high-performing team can do when working together. The LGMF program opened the door to local government management for me, and I would encourage others to take risks and embrace new opportunities early in their careers while their personal situations are likely to be flexible.



Jacqueline Guzman

Deputy City Manager, Cupertino, California
LGMF 2009; San Jose, California

I started my Local Government Management Fellowship with the city of San Jose, California, in 2009 and stayed on in the budget office for a few years before receiving a promotion. I joined Cupertino as a senior management analyst in 2012 and worked my way up—and sideways—to my current role as deputy city manager. As the DCM, I oversee public affairs and sustainability and manage the city manager's office, including city-wide policy and legislative affairs. I'm also on hand to help the council or departments with any priority project.

The LGMF helped me understand the responsibility that comes with the profession and gave me a city-wide perspective. It was also great to have a cohort of friends with whom to compare notes. I advise Fellows to take advantage of the special access you get to leaders in your organization by being a part of the LGMF. Take risks and raise your hand for special assignments that expand your skills and your portfolio. Lastly, find yourself a champion in the organization who can open doors and give you opportunities.



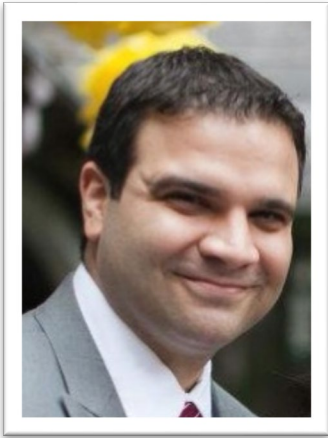
Sean M. Kimball

Town Manager, Cheshire, Connecticut
LGMF 2009; San Jose, California

After receiving my M.P.A. from the University of Connecticut in 2009, I accepted a Local Government Management Fellowship with San Jose, California. As a Management Fellow I was challenged to develop solutions to specific issues and projects over the course of about four months in a single department. During my time in San Jose I rotated through the Office of Economic Development, the Housing Department, and the Finance Department. During my Fellowship, I was able to develop and utilize my project management skills while also learning from city

leaders and department managers who gave me advice and guidance that I still draw from today. After San Jose, I moved back to Connecticut, where I served as both the deputy director of administrative services and later the director of finance in the town of Simsbury for seven years. In May 2018 I was appointed to my current position.

My advice for current or potential Fellows is to take advantage of any opportunity to learn from those around you. Ask managers and directors to lunch and listen to stories of their successes, their failures, and their goals for the future. I was surrounded by many dynamic and innovative people in San Jose, and the greatest and most lasting aspect of my experience was taking lessons and advice from so many of them as I formed the foundation for my own leadership style and management philosophy.



Gabe Engeland

City Manager, Sierra Madre, California
LGMF 2010-2012; Tacoma, Washington

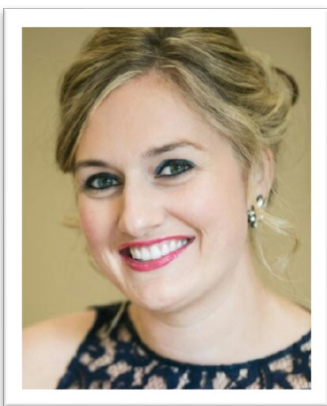
I was selected for the Local Government Management Fellowship program when I was in my second year of the M.P.A. program at the University of Kansas. I completed my Fellowship in Tacoma, Washington (named after Mount Rainier, which was originally called Takhoma, and called the “City of Destiny” because it was to be a western railroad terminus in the Nineteenth Century).

Sierra Madre, California, where I currently work as city manager, is a city of 12,000 people located in Los Angeles County and bordering the city of Pasadena. Before that, I was the city manager in Trinidad, Colorado, north of the New Mexico border. I have also worked for Gilbert, Arizona, a town of 250,000 people outside of Phoenix.

The LGMF program helped to build and supplement the foundation of public administration that I was developing at the University of Kansas. The Fellowship helped to instill public service values into my everyday work and exposed me to a number of projects, programs, and assignments that most graduate students don’t get to experience, let alone lead. In addition, LGMF created a strong network of peers and friends who were in the same positions in their careers as I was, which made learning and growing easy.

The world of government is changing rapidly and becoming specialized and segmented at an astonishing rate. At the same time, new areas of competency are emerging (e.g., digital government) as familiar areas are reimaged (e.g., civic engagement) and most governments don’t have the ability to manage all of this at once.

This is where you come in. My advice is to make yourself available, make yourself accountable, learn all that you can, accept criticism, and ask every question that comes into your mind. It’ll prepare you for a rewarding career where you can lead change and serve a community.



Jamie Ludovic

Central Services Director, Washington County, Wisconsin
LGMF 2010; Howard, Wisconsin

After attending the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Northern Illinois University for my M.P.A. and interning with La Crosse County, Wisconsin, and the Downers Grove, Illinois, I began my career in local government serving as a Local Government Management Fellow in Howard, Wisconsin.

I currently serve as the central services director for Washington County, Wisconsin. This role manages seven divisions, fifty employees, and roughly ten million dollars in annual expenditures. As a key member of the leadership team, this position gives me access to the administration and inner workings of the organization and its 26-member board of supervisors and offers significant responsibility for the county’s communications, land resources, planning division, parks division, facilities division, and the Washington County Golf Course. I am currently working on implementing the county’s first comprehensive

communications plan and implementing the county's parks fiscal sustainability plan to operate county parks with zero tax dollar support including development of a new mobile website allowing visitors up to seven days to pay an entry fee.

Previously, I worked for Montgomery, Illinois, and Garner, North Carolina.

The LGMF is a highly competitive career-development program. Organizations that wish to host Fellows must submit a letter of intent and subscribe to the goals of the program. More importantly, they are often skilled at garnering support for these types of mentorship opportunities and at selecting the types of individuals who personify successful city and county leaders. I had the privilege of working for two high-energy individuals during this Fellowship, and the people I have worked for throughout my career are no accident; they are game changers.

My advice for current Fellows or applicants is summed up in this quotation from author Edmund Lee: "Surround yourself with the dreamers and the doers, the believers and thinkers, but most of all, surround yourself with those who see the greatness within you, even when you don't see it yourself."



Michelle Smolen

Assistant City Manager, Paducah, Kentucky
LGMF 2011-2012, Lexington, Massachusetts

I participated in the Local Government Management Fellowship program with the town of Lexington, Massachusetts, while I was completing my M.P.A. from the University of Kansas. It was an incredible opportunity that helped launch my career in local government. The hands-on experience with a town manager taught me about the complexities of city operations and strategies for effectively working with elected officials. I am also incredibly thankful for the Fellowship because it resulted in lifelong mentors and friends.

After the Fellowship, I was a budget analyst for Olathe, Kansas, and am currently serving as the assistant city manager in Paducah, Kentucky.

My best advice for current Fellows is to keep an open mind about any project that comes your way. Some of my most rewarding experiences and biggest moments of growth came from projects that I would not have picked for myself.



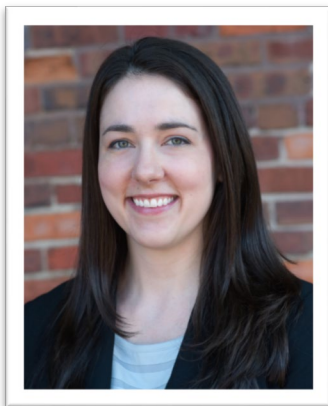
Josh Jones

Senior HR Consultant, Executive Recruiter, CPS HR Consulting, Las Vegas, Nevada
LGMF 2012-2013, Oak Lawn, Illinois

Following an undergraduate internship with a city manager who introduced me to ICMA, I received my M.P.A. degree from the University of Kansas. Part of that great program included a full-time assistantship with Fort Collins, Colorado, for one year. As that ended and I graduated, the Local Government Management Fellowship helped me bridge the gap to true permanent employment with a city.

I had a fantastic experience as a Fellow with the village of Oak Lawn. The village manager there gave me incredible responsibilities that allowed me to stretch and grow like I never had before. From there, I rapidly climbed the ranks, culminating in becoming a city manager at age 29 for a small town in Southern Utah. Now I sit on the other side of the table as an executive recruiter with CPS HR Consulting, which is a joint powers authority in California that does work exclusively for local governments. It's great to be able to help many cities and counties, and to stay closely involved in the industry.

My advice for current Fellows and applicants would be to take on every growth opportunity that you can, within reason. As you graduate from the Fellowship and obtain a permanent entry-level position, you may not have as much access and freedom to explore and build your resume as you do as a Fellow. Your Fellowship is like that proverbial time for financial industry graduates on Wall Street when you work hard to see the dividends pay off later.



Haley Kadish

Performance and Innovation Officer, Albuquerque, New Mexico
LGMF 2012-2013; Catawba County, North Carolina

After completing my M.P.A. degree at the John Glenn School of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University, I was the Local Government Management Fellow in Catawba County, North Carolina. I went on from my Fellowship to help improve nearly 50 local government organizations with The Novak Consulting Group.

In June 2018, I started a new role as the performance and innovation officer for Albuquerque. The LGMF was an invaluable experience for me, primarily because it was instrumental in shaping my way of thinking. It taught me to think at the level of a local government leader—a mighty feat for someone straight out of grad school.

If I could give one piece of advice to folks who are just starting out in local government, it would be that a positive attitude goes a long way. In my experience, energy and enthusiasm for the work is contagious, so bring it with you and share it every single day.



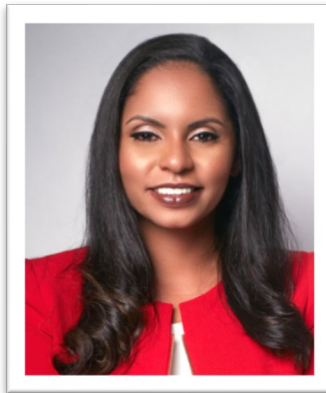
Brent Troxell

Assistant to the Village Manager, Glenview, Illinois
LGMF 2012-2013; Dakota County, Minnesota

I have an M.P.A. degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and I completed my Local Government Management Fellowship in Dakota County, Minnesota. After that, I worked for Glenview, Illinois, as a management analyst and deputy director of public works before assuming my current position as assistant to the village manager.

The LGMF provided an opportunity to be party to high-level policy decisions and strategic conversations I otherwise would not have. I was able to interact with management staff in a way not typical of an entry-level employee. The projects I worked on were of particular importance to the manager, providing an opportunity for feedback and direction from the highest point in the organization. My role as a Fellow provided significant organizational context within projects and exposure to staff, which provided an excellent framework and gave me confidence as I moved into other roles.

My advice to Fellows is to be humble, work hard, be easy to get along with, make yourself valuable, and double check your work.



Teresa Taylor

Assistant City Manager, La Grange, Georgia
LGMF 2012-2013, Decatur, Georgia

Three months after completing my M.P.A. at Georgia State University, I began a Local Government Management Fellowship with the city of Decatur, Georgia. The Fellowship shaped my career path and fostered my passion for local government. Direct mentorship from a city manager, exposure to an array of municipal projects, and rotational assignments in multiple departments are what made the Fellowship experience different from a traditional entry-level position in local government.

Five years after my Fellowship, I was hired as the assistant city manager in LaGrange, Georgia. I believe the Fellowship fast-tracked me for a leadership position in local government, because I had cross-departmental experience and a strong mentor, and I had learned not to be afraid to try new things.

I tell every Fellow I encounter: take advantage of the opportunity, volunteer for everything, and have fun!



Melissa Appleby

Deputy Town Manager, Simsbury, Connecticut
LGMF 2013-2014, Lexington, Massachusetts

After graduating from the University of Connecticut's M.P.A. program, I began my Local Government Management Fellowship in Lexington, Massachusetts. I began my Fellowship in July 2013 and completed that journey in January 2015, after which I served as senior management analyst in Greenwich, Connecticut, for two years. I began working for the town of Simsbury, Connecticut, in February 2017, and I currently serve as deputy town manager.

The LGMF granted me the opportunity to work in an environment that was challenging yet supportive. As a Fellow, I gained valuable experience in the fundamentals of local government management, including budgeting, labor relations, and economic development. I also developed skills related to goal-setting, meeting facilitation, and other critical facets of organizational management. Perhaps most important, the LGMF provided me with a network of support that continues today. Participating in this program granted me access to resources that I would not otherwise have, including peers throughout the country that I can rely on for advice and sharing best practices.

My advice for current and aspiring Fellows is to get involved with as many projects as possible. A diversity of work experience will position you well as you move forward in your career. Pay attention to what type of work you most enjoy, be aware of the skills that you need to develop, and follow a path that will best meet those needs.



Nathan Steele

Senior Management Analyst, Yountville, California
LGMF 2013; River Falls, Wisconsin

After earning my M.P.A. at Brigham Young University, I accepted a position as a Local Government Management Fellow in River Falls, Wisconsin. It was an awesome experience that gave me the tools I needed to excel in my career.

Now, as a senior management analyst/planning manager in Yountville, California, I find myself regularly using the tools I gained in River Falls. Of all the things I learned during my Fellowship, the most valuable lesson was the importance of being flexible.

New challenges pop up every day, and if you can't handle unexpected issues, then those challenges can become major trials.

My advice to any new Fellows would be to learn to be flexible, because you never know when you'll need to drop your current plan and immediately take over a new one.



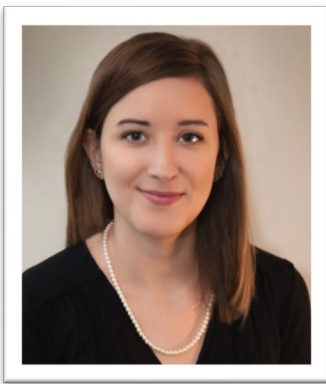
Matt Lawless

Town Administrator, Scottsville, Virginia
LGMF 2013-2014; Albemarle County, Virginia

ICMA service doesn't always crisscross the country. After earning a B.A. at William & Mary and an M.P.A. at American University, I worked in human resources jobs in my hometown of Winchester, Virginia, and in nearby Charlottesville.

Neighboring Albemarle County hosted me as a Local Government Management Fellow in 2013-2015, imparting skills in budgeting, team leadership, and community organizing. After the Fellowship, I served as town manager of Boones Mill, Virginia, until 2018. I'm now back in the Charlottesville area as town administrator of Scottsville, the only town in Albemarle County.

My advice to Fellows and applicants is to try to touch a variety of subject areas and find discrete projects that can be completed and added to your portfolio.



Sarah Alig

Assistant to the City Administrator, Woodbury, Minnesota
LGMF 2014; Olathe, Kansas

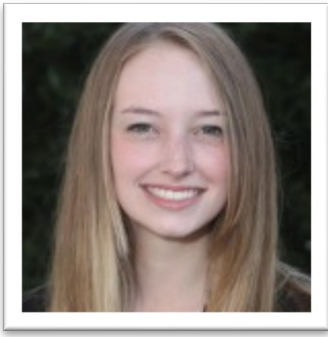
Since June 2015, I have served the city of Woodbury, Minnesota, as assistant to the city administrator. Before moving to Minnesota for this position, I served in Olathe, Kansas, as its Local Government Management Fellow in the city manager's office and the budget office. I was staff liaison to the Olathe Teen Council, organized a "Fresh Air" employee development forum, developed a crisis communications plan and a "Communities That Care" grant application, and presented the city manager's office year-end report to the city council. These experiences exposed me to a wide variety of operations in a large, innovative, and well-run suburb and reinforced my dedication to public service.

Based on my experience, I would recommend that anyone serving as Fellow maximize that special opportunity to:

Ask questions! Nobody expects you to know more than you do, and this is a great chance to demonstrate humility and curiosity. Pay attention to the context – sometimes it's helpful to ask questions right away in a meeting, but sometimes it's better to pull someone aside afterward and say, "Hey, can you explain what happened in there?"

Build relationships! Shadow people, ask questions, invite them to get coffee with you, ask if you can tag along and sit in on meetings. If you're bored, bop around to different people, ask them what they're working on, and see how you can help.

Make yourself useful! Volunteer for all the research, investigation, or busy-work things that come up in the meetings you're sitting in on. Earn a reputation for being helpful, prompt, curious, and resourceful.



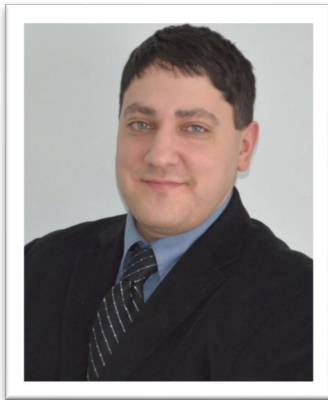
Megan Dale

Management Analyst, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
LGMF 2014, Catawba County, North Carolina

I completed my Local Government Management Fellowship in Catawba County, North Carolina, in 2014-2015, after graduating with my M.P.A. from UNC-Chapel Hill. After my Fellowship, I began working as a management analyst with the Chapel Hill Public Works Department, and I've been there almost three years now.

My Fellowship was a valuable experience for me, not only because it gave me the work experience I needed to get started in my local government career, but also because Catawba County helped me learn what kind of organization I wanted to work for. The staff members were welcoming, fun, and genuinely cared about each other's success. The experience helped me learn what to look for in a team, and I was lucky find another great work family at Chapel Hill Public Works.

Projects and work experience are important, but my advice to current Fellows is to look for opportunities to be in the room when teams are working together, and decisions are being made. Being present is the best part!



Jason Escareno

Senior Advisor, Pierce County Council, Pierce County, Washington
LGMF 2014-2015; San Mateo County, California

My experience may have been a little different from that of the other Fellows in that I left a senior position with the state of Michigan—one that I had just started and was very happy with—to become a Local Government Management Fellow. I just felt it was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it was. For instance, with only graduate school on my resume I was able to interview with municipalities in five states, received offers from two, and decided to accept a Fellowship with the San Mateo County, California. Looking back and realizing how hard it can be to transition to another state, I think that is one of the many assets to pursuing the LGMF.

In my current position as a senior adviser for Pierce County Council in the greater Seattle area, I provide legal and policy recommendations for a partisan elected council. I cover human services, housing and homelessness, mental health and substance abuse, and healthcare, which is currently undergoing a huge transformation across the state. Previously I was a budget analyst in Santa Clara County, California, where I handled budget and policy relative to criminal justice, which was a phenomenal opportunity because the county is ahead of the rest of the country with jail reform

I cannot stress enough how much the LGMF has helped me grow professionally. I was able to get a lot of hard and soft skills on my resume from San Mateo County that would have taken a decade or more if I had followed a traditional career path. For example, I was appointed a management negotiator and represented the county manager during labor negotiations with nine bargaining units representing 5,000 employees. The LGMF is the only way I could

have had this opportunity with so little local government experience. The other thing is the network. As a Fellow, you get introduced to everyone, and that has been transformational for my career.

My advice to current Fellows and applicants is to be upfront during the interview process about your career goals and what you want out of the Fellowship. Don't just seek feedback, give it. You have to assert your presence strategically. Face to face is always better than call or email. And look for ways to contribute.



Genesis D. Gavino

Assistant to the City Manager and Chief of Staff, Dallas, Texas
LGMF 2014-2015; Tacoma, Washington

In February 2014 I started my Fellowship with the city manager's office in the Tacoma, Washington, prior to graduating from the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Washington. The Local Government Management Fellowship was invaluable to my experience in Tacoma because it provided me with a support system of peers whom I could reach out to and learn from.

My one piece of advice for Fellows is that there's no such thing as a bad project or assignment. Don't limit yourself because it doesn't fit your "path," but view everything as an opportunity to learn and grow, especially at such an early stage of your career. My mentors instilled this mindset in me from the beginning, and today I'm proud to serve as the assistant to the city manager in Dallas, Texas, the ninth largest city and third largest council-manager city in the country.

I'm excited about what lies ahead and look forward to the future leaders developed through the LGMF and ICMA.



Kevin Catlin

City Manager, Springfield, Michigan
LGMF 2015; Tulsa, Oklahoma

I graduated from the University of Illinois at Springfield and started my local government career in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as a Local Government Management Fellow. I transitioned to Brookings, South Dakota, where I served as assistant city manager for nearly two and a half years. I was appointed city manager of Springfield, Michigan, in May 2018.

The LGMF program prepared me for my current position in many ways. My mentor had the most significant impact on me as it pertains to ethics and professional development. I truly valued his advice, perception, and opinions. Current Fellows should diversify their experiences (outside of their comfort zone) even if they are assigned a specific department or project. City management professionals must have a well-rounded view of government. Prospective applicants should highlight their broad experience in working with people and executing projects that have made a significant impact on their community.



Will Doerfer

Town Manager, Liberty, North Carolina
LGMF 2015; Hyde County, North Carolina

My journey as a Local Government Management Fellow began while I was in my final semester in the M.P.A. program at Appalachian State University. I was fortunate to be placed in a rural county through the ICMA partnership with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC). I started in Hyde County, where I had the good fortune to share an office with the county manager.

Currently, I am the town manager in a small rural community, Liberty, North Carolinas. While there has been a learning curve adapting to a new community as well as my first chief administrative officer position, I know I was more prepared for this position largely due to my experience as a Fellow.

The LGMF program prepared me for my career in several important ways. First, I was able to observe and participate in many executive meetings and witness the decision-making process of the management team.

In addition, Hyde County is one of the least populous counties in the state. I learned the importance of regional cooperation and collaboration. Finally, last but certainly not least, I developed lifelong friendship and mentorship relationships with the county manager and department heads. I have used their advice and expertise on several occasions since taking on my current role.

I would always advise current Fellows to do your very best to take advantage of networking opportunities presented by ICMA. Many career employees of local government are not invited to attend manager conferences, gatherings, and advisory groups. As a Fellow, you are often exposed to those events. Take full advantage! There are so many other managers who believe in the Fellows program that they will give you their ear, their advice, and opportunities to shine. If asked to address a regional group of managers, DO IT! Take advantage of the free registration for the ICMA conference and regional conferences.

Finally, keep your ears open at all times and contribute when appropriate, but remember you are in a unique position to see the executive levels of local government fresh out of graduate school! Enjoy!



India Adams

Assistant City Manager, Delray Beach, Florida
LGMF 2015-2016; Albemarle County, Virginia, and Tacoma, Washington

I've been in my position as assistant to the city manager in Delray Beach, Florida, since January 2018. I'm a Virginia native with a bachelor's degree in public administration from George Mason University and an M.P.A. from Virginia Tech.

I began my local government career as a part of the 2014 Local Government Management Fellowship cohort serving in a one-year fellowship with the Albemarle, Virginia, and then a two-year fellowship with Tacoma, Washington. The LGMF program prepared me for my current career by providing me with an unprecedented opportunity to work with and learn from brilliant managers on both coasts. They trusted me with high-profile special projects and gave me the opportunity to engage with elected officials and the community early in my career.

My advice for applicants and current Fellows would be this: don't be afraid to move somewhere completely different from what you envisioned. I have made two cross-country moves serving in both conservative and progressive localities and would do it again. There is great personal and professional value in immersing yourself in a new city and being embraced by a new community.



Alex Vazquez

Management Analyst, Office of Performance Improvement, Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, District of Columbia
LGMF 2015-2016; Raleigh, North Carolina

While I pursued my M.P.A. degree at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the LGMF program was a constant topic of discussion. My professors brought it up during class, former classmates serving as Fellows spoke highly about the many opportunities the Local Government Management Fellowship program provided, and visiting practitioners, many tied to ICMA, highlighted how the LGMF provides graduates a great pathway into the local government profession. As I evaluated my employment opportunities after graduation, it was a no-brainer for me to apply to the LGMF program. Much to my delight, I was offered the opportunity to become the first ICMA Fellow in Raleigh, North Carolina. Thanks to the varied tasks and projects I worked on in Raleigh, I was able to determine the type of work that interested me the most—performance management, strategic planning, and process improvement—and the type of department I wanted to learn more about—one that provided direct social service to residents.

Thanks to the networking opportunities facilitated by the LGMF program and the skills and knowledge I gained as a Fellow, I have been able to quickly step into my current role as a management analyst in the office of performance improvement in the District of Columbia's Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, a city department that is responsible for the supervision, custody, and care of young adults involved with the juvenile justice system.

My advice to current Fellows and future LGMF applicants is three-fold:

1. Make your interests known. Even if it does not happen immediately, a good supervisor will ensure that you are exposed to work and projects that not only interest you, but that will also prepare you to excel in future positions
2. Get to know everyone, not just those in senior positions. While building relationships with senior staff is crucial, don't overlook connecting with front-line employees, as they can provide meaningful insights into service delivery, operations, and dynamics that are difficult to assess when you're not in the field
3. Be patient. Understand that you will have to show your worth to an organization, even those that have hosted Fellows in the past, before you are assigned a major project. Volunteer to take on any and all tasks and do great work, you'll eventually build enough capital to lead larger projects.

Are you an alumni LGMF that would like your story added to this article? Email it to us at lgmfprogram@icma.org, and we'll update it!

The LGMF, founded in 2004, is managed by ICMA with partners the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration, the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, the Local Government Hispanic Network, Women Leading Government, and the National Association of County Administrators.

ICMA would like to thank all the mentors and hosts throughout the program's history that have worked with ICMA to create these Fellowship positions, mentoring the Fellows, and helping to build the future of the local government management profession.

Visit [icma.org/lgmf](https://www.icma.org/lgmf) for more information.

LGMF Hosts have included:

NORTHEAST

1. *Milford and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware*
2. *Lexington, Massachusetts*
3. *Nether Providence Township, Pennsylvania*
4. *Milton, Vermont*

SOUTHEAST

1. *Clearwater, Florida*
2. *Fort Lauderdale, Florida*
3. *Miami Beach, Florida*
4. *Sarasota County, Florida*
5. *Wellington, Florida*
6. *Cartersville, Georgia*
7. *Decatur, Georgia*
8. *Douglasville, Georgia*
9. *East Point, Georgia*
10. *Savannah, Georgia*
11. *Smyrna, Georgia*
12. *Catawba County, North Carolina*
13. *Charlotte, North Carolina*
14. *City & County of Durham, North Carolina*
15. *Hickory, North Carolina*
16. *Hillsborough, North Carolina*
17. *Lee County, North Carolina*
18. *Mecklenburg County, North Carolina*
19. *North Carolina County Fellowship (coordinated by NCACC)*
20. *Wake County, North Carolina*
21. *Albemarle County, Virginia*
22. *Arlington County, Virginia*
23. *Henrico County, Virginia*
24. *Winchester, Virginia*

MIDWEST

1. *Evanston, Illinois*
2. *Oak Lawn, Illinois*
3. *Munster, Indiana*
4. *Davenport, Iowa*
5. *Dubuque, Iowa*
6. *Dakota County, Minnesota*
7. *Edina, Minnesota*

8. *Minneapolis, Minnesota*
9. *Columbia, Missouri*
10. *Hamilton, Ohio*
11. *Loveland, Ohio*
12. *Altoona, Wisconsin*
13. *Bayside, Wisconsin*
14. *Dunn County, Wisconsin*
15. *Howard, Wisconsin*
16. *Lancaster, Wisconsin*
17. *Mauston, Wisconsin*
18. *River Falls, Wisconsin*

MOUNTAIN PLAINS

1. *Tucson, Arizona*
2. *Aurora, Colorado*
3. *Olathe, Kansas*
4. *Sedgwick County, Kansas*
5. *Wichita, Kansas*
6. *Tulsa, Oklahoma*
7. *Vermillion, South Dakota*
8. *Arlington, Texas*
9. *Lancaster, Texas*
10. *Plano, Texas*

WEST COAST

1. *Fremont, California*
2. *Hayward, California*
3. *Mountain View, California*
4. *Palo Alto, California*
5. *San Jose, California*
6. *San Mateo County, California*
7. *Douglas County, Nevada*
8. *Henderson, Nevada*
9. *Las Vegas, Nevada*
10. *Washoe County, Nevada*
11. *Federal Way, Washington*
12. *Issaquah & Snoqualmie, Washington*
13. *Kirkland, Washington*
14. *Tacoma, Washington*
15. *Sound Transit, Washington*
16. *University Place, Washington*