



# Winning the Race for Talent

Attracting, Retaining, and Growing  
Local Government Professionals

LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES / 2018 CITY MANAGERS' DEPARTMENT MEETING

# The Talent Development Initiative

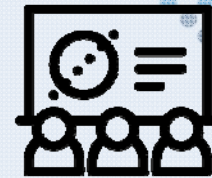
- Cal-ICMA / International City-County Management Association
- Assignment No. 1: Report on Attracting, Retaining, and Growing Local Government Talent
- Target Audiences:



Agency  
Leaders



Electeds



Professional  
Organizations

# Research

- Over 350 surveys completed by city managers, executives, and HR leaders
- A dozen focus group meetings statewide
- Interviews with thought leaders in the private sector



# The Talent Challenge

- Baby boomer retirement wave
- 1990s – Flattening Organizations
- Cut mid-management positions to save costs
- Employee development and training cut (“non-essential”)



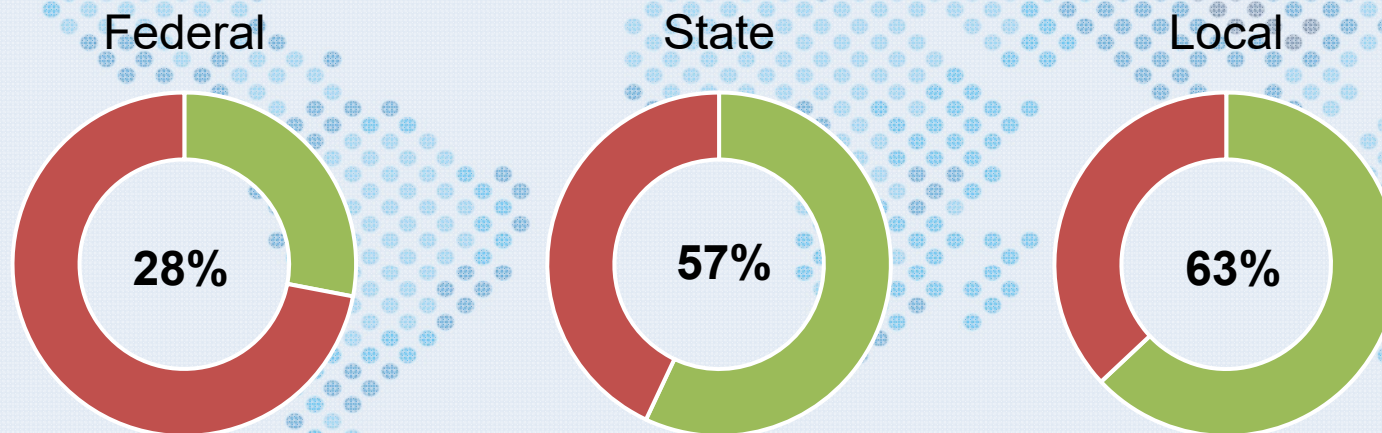
## Interactive Exercise

What is your agency's Employee Value Proposition (EVP)?

- Why would a talented professional **want to join your organization** and stay with it?
- Why would a talented professional **be reluctant to join your organization** and stay with it?

## Would you want to work for cities?

- 2017 Pew Research Report: Only 20% say they trust government to do what's right most of the time
- The public's favorability of government in 2013:



## Today's workforce is asking...

- Are there big problems to solve in local government?
- Am I interested in solving these big problems?
- Will I be empowered to help solve the big problems?

*“Meaning is the  
new money.”*

*- Daniel Pink*





# Challenges to Replenishing Talent



Retirement Wave = Fewer Seasoned Dept. Heads



Candidates may have the technical skills but not the management/leadership (soft) skills



May be difficult to compete with private sector



Increasing cost and instability of the pension system

## Challenges to Retain & Develop Talent



Today's workforce has a greater emphasis on organizational culture: values, beliefs and norms



Work-life balance desired across generations



Longer commutes, housing costs



Connected workforce demands newest technology in the workplace to do their jobs effectively



Desire for quick advancement (“up or out”)  
– 6 in 10 millennials are actively looking for new work

## What's Not Working

- Relying on “poaching” staff from other agencies
- Continuing to use the same recruitment tactics (posting a traditional job announcement)
- Expecting employees to work the same way as 10, 15, 20 years ago
- Continuing to treat training and development as discretionary
- Relying on compensation and benefits to recruit or retain employees

## What You Can Do

- No one-size-fits-all approach
- Reinforce talent development as a core responsibility of all supervisors

## What You Can Do



- Grow homegrown talent
- Provide stretch opportunities
- Support technology to meet today's needs
- Support staff development, training, and coaching
- Retool the recruitment process
- Foster employee engagement
- Hire for values, attitude, learning agility

## Start a Conversation with Your Electeds



- Support and fund training
- Be mindful of staff expectations outside of work hours
- Support opportunities for analysts and mid-level managers to deliver presentations to the council
- Be mindful of how civility on the dais impacts an agency's reputation
- Create a “culture of appreciation”  
– recognize staff for their work

## Panel Discussion – Q&A

- Dominic Lazzaretto, City Manager, Arcadia
- Erin Steffen, Assistant to the City Manager, Berkeley
- Frank Benest, ICMA Liaison for Next Generation Initiatives

## Next Steps

- Distribute the Talent Development Report
- Share complete findings with city managers and elected officials at League Events
- Share findings with City Manager Area Groups
- Follow-up with Professional Organizations





# Resources

- Talent Development Report
  - Key Findings and Recommendations
  - Action Checklist / Toolkit
  - Recommendations for Professional Organizations
- Cal-ICMA's Talent Initiative Website – Coming Soon
  - Final Report
  - Examples of Exemplary Programs
- Developing Assessment Tool
- “Best Places for Talent Development” Recognition

## 5 Things to Get Started

1. Conduct a brief workforce analysis
2. Identify key talent for succession planning
3. Offer and promote cost-effective professional development
4. Engage managers in a readiness assessment and coaching opportunities
5. Begin a conversation about organizational culture (and take action)

## One Commitment

“What is the one thing I commit to do in my organization to better attract, retain, and grow talent?”



## Questions / How to Get Involved!

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## Cal-ICMA Talent Initiative Executive Summary

### Purpose

The purpose of the Cal-ICMA Talent Initiative is to help managers in local government focus on the business imperative of attracting, retaining, and growing talent.

### Assessment Activities

To assess the talent challenges facing local governments in California, the Cal-ICMA Talent Development Team completed a review of the available literature, a survey of 372 senior managers, interviews with private and non-profit sector thought leaders, and 11 focus groups throughout California involving 272 local government executives.

### Key Findings About The Talent Challenge

While local governments did not adequately prepare for the Baby-Boomer retirement wave, we have a potential competitive advantage in attracting, developing, and retaining today's talent. This is because all employees – but especially Millennials – seek meaning and purpose in their work and local governments help people enhance the world around them.

Local governments can no longer rely on “stealing” talent from other agencies; more than ever, public agencies need to grow their own talent. Employees who are learning and growing are more likely to stay with an organization. Talent development cannot be a human resources function but must be integral to every manager's core duties.

Successfully attracting and retaining talent is more about culture than money. The traditionally stodgy governmental culture inhibits innovation, discourages experimentation, and turns away the best talent. Retooling organizational cultures to better attract and retain early-career talent will enhance our organizations for all employees and improve performance and productivity.

### Challenges in Attracting, Retaining and Growing Talent

Senior managers who participated in the 11 focus groups perceived an array of challenges that need to be addressed for local government agencies to succeed in talent development. They also perceived the need to engage elected officials in the talent conversation. A few of the key challenges or obstacles include:

### *Key Recommendations*

#### Attracting Talent

- ✓ Eliminate “minimum qualifications” for entry-level positions
- ✓ Refine job postings to focus on meaning, values, learning, skills development, and organizational culture
- ✓ Hire for potential and learning agility vs. technical skills and knowledge
- ✓ Expand the recruitment reach by using social media sites and new technologies
- ✓ Offer internships or fellowships to students, independently or through the ICMA Local Government Management Fellowship Program

#### Retaining and Developing Talent

- ✓ Assess your leadership pipeline and develop home-grown talent
- ✓ Provide staff with training and professional development opportunities annually, with specific learning outcomes
- ✓ Offer targeted mentoring and coaching for different groups of employees
- ✓ Use multi-department and cross-functional project action teams
- ✓ Use interim or acting assignments or provide job rotation opportunities to fill roles or “try out” staff
- ✓ Ensure that all supervisors are accountable for the development of their staff and follow up regularly

## Talent Attraction/Recruitment

- Agencies are experiencing a larger number of vacancies in key positions; there are simply fewer seasoned Department Heads and other senior managers to recruit from other local government agencies.
- Internal candidates are often lacking management experience and leadership (“soft”) skills.
- Local government is not competitive with other sectors in respect to our lengthy recruitment processes, including testing requirements and minimum qualifications.
- Local government organizations often exhibit a lack of flexibility in respect to scheduling when and where work is done and the rigid nature of job duties and position classifications.
- Agencies do not provide budgets or allocate much effort to market or brand our local government agencies.

## Talent Retention & Development

- Local governments have not made talent development a critical priority.
- Long commutes, high-cost housing, and lack of child care all work against talent retention.
- Traditional or even “stodgy” organization cultures are not inviting for early-career talent.
- The deep recession and restructuring of organizations have resulted in the elimination of mid-manager and other “step-up” positions.
- Political in-fighting and uncivil community discourse are driving out talent.
- Mid-career talent is reluctant to move up due to adversarial politics, added job responsibilities and risks, and less work-life balance.

## Themes from Thought Leaders

In order to enhance our understanding of how to better compete for talent, especially millennial talent, the Talent Development Team conducted four interviews with recognized “Thought Leaders” from the technology and non-profit sectors. Themes included:

1. Early-Career professionals are asking about the big problems facing government and whether they will be allowed to help solve them.
2. Given these questions, local governments have both a branding and an organizational culture challenge.
3. Talent initiatives need the active encouragement and support of senior leadership.
4. Local governments must tell their story, especially regarding the opportunity to serve and make a difference.

## *Key Recommendations*

### Retooling Organizational Culture

- ✓ Use onboarding activities with new employees to engage them with top management and discuss organizational values and “what we care about”
- ✓ Incorporate more flexibility in scheduling, holiday closures, and other ways to do our work
- ✓ Ensure opportunities for face-to-face interactions with top management
- ✓ Create a “culture of appreciation” and recognition
- ✓ Promote more autonomy for employees and provide opportunities to work on the whole project
- ✓ Focus on employee engagement initiatives, including listening to employees, truly engaging them in problem-solving, and promoting a sense of community and belonging
- ✓ Ensure ongoing performance conversations with employees (not just annual performance evaluations)

### Encouraging Employee Initiative

- ✓ Promote growth and development as a core element of each employee’s job responsibilities
- ✓ Encourage employees to identify their career development needs and suggest effective ways to fulfill them
- ✓ Invite each employee to include desired talent development plans in their regular reviews with a supervisor

## **Findings & Recommendations**

The full Talent Initiative report identifies a variety of actions, both large and small, that local governments can take to increase their chances for successfully attracting, retaining, and growing talent. The “Key Recommendations” tables on the previous pages identify some of the lowest effort and highest impact steps leaders can take to begin to address the talent needs of their organizations and the profession as a whole. The most fundamental recommendation is to **ensure that every manager understands that the professional development of their employees is a primary job duty and that all employees take responsibility to grow and develop in their work.** If both leaders and employees embrace their roles, all other recommendations will progress naturally.

## **Assistance from Professional Organizations**

Professional organizations play a role in championing local government as a noble, rewarding, engaging, and thriving job sector. Therefore, regional and professional organizations should be enlisted to assist advancing the Talent Initiative by:

- Developing sample branding materials including more enticing job announcements that all government agencies can customize and use in their efforts to attract talent talent (Cal-ICMA with ILG)
- Scheduling educational sessions dealing with Talent Initiative, including those with elected officials, to highlight the importance of attracting, retaining, engaging and developing talent (Cal-ICMA, League of California Cities, MMASC/NC, CSAC, and others)
- Promoting shared service models for delivering talent development programs on a regional basis (CPAAC)
- Expanding ICMA Student Chapters and outreach efforts to universities to engage early-career professionals (MMASC/NC)
- Focusing on leadership development (with emphasis on “soft skills”) for mid- managers and aspiring leaders (Cal-ICMA, MMASC/NC, ELGL)
- Conducting “Future County Department Heads” seminar (CACE, CSAC Institute)
- Drafting model language for employment agreements to provide flexibility for talent development efforts (CALPELRA)

### *Further Information*

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## **Follow-Up Action Steps**

In order to continue to advance the recommendations included in this report, the Cal-ICMA Talent Development Team (TDT) will take the following actions:

- Continue to solicit exemplary programs and examples of best practices that can be placed on the Cal-ICMA website for agencies to utilize.
- Conduct additional Private Sector Thought Leader interviews and disseminate through the Talent Initiative website, at conference sessions, and through online videos and podcasts.
- Engage professional organizations in discussing their roles in implementation of recommendations; develop implementation plan.
- Establish a “Great Places to Work Award” to assess talent development efforts and acknowledge organizations that are implementing the best practices in this Report.
- Update the Cal-ICMA website to include tools, a knowledge base, and other resources for organizations to use in implementing the Talent Initiative locally.

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<b>Entrepreneurial Solutions for Local Government Challenges</b>	10:30-noon PT (1:30-3 p.m. ET), Wednesday, March 28 <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4115724198837411330">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4115724198837411330</a>
<b>Creating a Culture for Cultivating Talent and Getting Results</b>	10:00 – 11:30 a.m. PT (1-2:30 p.m. ET), Thursday, May 10 <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7583614659167558658">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7583614659167558658</a>
<b>Recognize and Eliminate Bias: Keys to Being a Better Leader and Team Player</b>	10-11:30 a.m. PT (1-2:30 p.m. ET), Wednesday, Sept. 19 <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8862265318410960898">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8862265318410960898</a>
<b>Taking Smart Risks and Rebounding from Setbacks</b>	10:30-noon PT (1:30-3 p.m. ET), Thursday, October 25 <a href="https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3388916226551529218">https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3388916226551529218</a>
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