



2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE - PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

SESSION TITLE	SHORT DESCRIPTIONS	SPEAKER NAMES
Wednesday 9:00am-12:00pm		
CGL: Clarity in Action: Communicating with Purpose (Full Credit)	Effective communication is a cornerstone of impactful leadership in local government. This session, led by faculty from the University of La Verne and local government professionals, guides participants in applying clear and purposeful communication strategies to better connect with colleagues, elected officials, and community members.	University of La Verne Faculty
Wednesday 10:00am-11:30am		
CGL: Future-Proof Leadership: Building a Culture that Endures (Half Credit)	In today's rapidly evolving public sector landscape, workplace culture isn't a luxury, it's a leadership imperative. In this inspiring and practical session, seasoned local government leaders Dr. Marcella Marlowe and Lori Sassoon explore what it takes to ignite a culture that empowers teams, strengthens trust, and drives performance.	Dr. Marcella Marlowe, CEO, M2C, Inc. Lori Sassoon, Chief Talent Officer, City of Corona
Wednesday 1:00-2:30pm		
General Session		
Building a Better DOGE – Delivering Outstanding Government Effectiveness	In an era of shrinking budgets and rising expectations, governments are turning to AI and automation in search of a silver bullet. But what if the real transformation begins not with high-tech solutions, but with a shift in mindset? This keynote challenges the notion of quick fixes and presents a compelling case for incremental, constituent-centered improvement. Like treating a health issue, truly effective government service isn't about cutting the fat—it's about understanding the underlying habits.	Darryl Polk, CGCIO – Director of Education, Public Technology Institute
Wednesday 3:00pm-4:00pm		
Roadmap to Growth: Climate, Housing and How to Pay for It!	Agency leaders of today and tomorrow must be strategic about augmenting local resources with other public and private sources to ensure economic and community prosperity. Agency staff must be innovative in their pursuit of grants, financing mechanisms, and incentives to accomplish the housing, climate, and social objectives set forth by our elected officials. This panel highlights case study successes to provide an actionable approach and toolkit that staff can bring back to their communities.	Joseph Dieguez, Senior Vice President, Kosmont Companies Steve Samuelian, CEO, California Consulting Eric Ceja, Assistant City Manager, City of Indian Wells
Mission Control: Are You Prepared for Leadership?	What does it take to be a local government leader? How do I get there? Learn how to rise through the organization and figure out if you're prepared for leadership with Jonathan Nicks, a municipal executive leader with over 25 years of years of local government experience. The presentation will relate leadership concepts to movies, shows, and other pop culture references.	Jonathan Nicks, Assistant City Manager, City of Indio



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Building Equity into Community Engagement: Strategies for Equitable Budgeting and Resource Allocation	Explore how the City of Long Beach has navigated equitable budgeting practices to enhance community engagement and ensure resources are distributed fairly across all neighborhoods. Participants will examine real-world examples from a municipality that has successfully implemented equitable budgeting processes.	Rebecca Bernstorff, Budget Manager, City of Long Beach
Wednesday 4:10pm-5:10pm		
Going for the Gold: How Economic Development Teams are Preparing for the LA 2028 Summer Olympics	Learn how three distinct Southern California cities, including Eastvale, Rancho Cucamonga, and West Hollywood, are leveraging the LA 2028 Summer Olympics to advance local economic development goals. From placement and infrastructure enhancements to marketing and international business readiness, each city is taking a unique approach to turn global attention into lasting local impacts.	Alexander Fung, Economic Development Manager, City of Eastvale Paolo Kespradit, Business Development Manager, City of West Hollywood
Feedback Without Fear: Handle Communication Well to Build Trust	Most people assume they're good listeners and effective communicators, but when tensions rise, a casual approach falls short. This session provides participants with a heightened awareness of their communication habits, equips them with practical feedback techniques, and inspires them to improve their conversations with team members as well as clients. Attendees will leave with actionable skills they can apply immediately to improve their very next conversation.	Dori Eversmann, Owner, Resilient Relationships
Beyond the Comment Card: Designing Public Engagement that Builds Trust in Local Government	A strong public engagement strategy is essential for rebuilding trust in local democracy. This session will explore practical tools and approaches for designing inclusive and intentional engagement that strengthens the connection between government and community.	Robert Jordan, Assistant Director, Davenport Institute



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Thursday 9:15am-10:15am		
Every Second Counts: Crisis Communication Insights from the Palisades and Eaton Fires	Effective crisis communication can make all the difference in how a community navigates an emergency. Explore key lessons and insights from the Palisades and Eaton Fires, where timely, transparent and strategic communication helped guide residents through a natural disaster. Panelists will share their experiences, detailing how real-time communication, collaboration with public safety agencies and community outreach helped build trust and minimize confusion.	Arabo Parseghian, Assistant City Manager, City of La Cañada Flintridge Cynthia Alba, Management Analyst, City of Malibu Captain Erik Scott, Captain & PIO, Los Angeles Fire Department Sydni Overly, Director, Tripepi Smith
The Power of Cross-Departmental Collaboration between Economic Developers, Planners, and Public Works Officials	This panel will bridge departmental silos by showcasing how economic development, planning, and public works departments can work together to create livable and economically vibrant communities. Speakers will share their personal experiences and offer practical takeaways for managers, analysts, and entry-level staff to navigate growth, infrastructure needs, and community expectations. Attendees will also be provided with practical and replicable strategies to boost efficiency and reduce red tape.	Alexander Fung, Economic Development Manager, City of Eastvale Gustavo Gonzalez, Community Development Director, City of Eastvale Bonnie Tam, Public Works Departmental Administrator, City of Ontario
Thursday 10:00-11:30am		
Spotlight Session: Building Tomorrow's Government Today: A Blueprint for AI-Powered Cities	In this spotlight session, learn how today's government leaders can build sustainable AI capabilities that will serve future generations of public servants while honoring the foundational values of effective municipal management.	Felix Ruano, Founder & CEO, Onetera Michael Sherwood, NVIDIA Dr. Jumbi Edulbehram, NVIDIA
Thursday 10:45-11:45am		
First Amendment Auditors: How to Prepare Your Staff Before the Cameras Roll	First Amendment Auditors are increasingly filming in public spaces to test staff responses and capture potential confrontations. This session provides municipal leaders with practical tools to prepare staff across all departments to confidently handle these encounters while protecting employees, the organization, and public trust.	Marnie Schubert, CEO, Worthy Communication



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Navigating the Asteroids: Conflict Resolution in Your Organization

Conflict is inevitable in any workplace, but it doesn't have to be detrimental. This workshop will provide you with proven techniques to identify, address, and resolve conflicts within your firm constructively. We'll dive into conflict resolution styles, active listening techniques, and the importance of empathy in difficult conversations. Empower yourself with the skills to transform conflict into opportunities for growth and collaboration.

Tracy Miller, CEO, TM Consulting, Inc.

Lighting the Fiscal Path: How Goleta Funded Its Future with Tax Measures and Bonds

Discover how the City of Goleta lit a new fiscal path by passing a general transaction and use tax measure and leveraging the revenue with other sources to fund \$35.7 million in tax-exempt bonds. This session offers a roadmap for cities seeking to build their own funding legacy through strategic planning, community trust, and creative financing.

Luke Rioux, Finance Director, City of Goleta

Thursday 12:00pm-2:00pm

General Session



Navigating Change Through Cosmic Times: Flying Steady with Clarity, Resilience, and Purpose

When turbulence hits, great pilots don't panic—they adjust their altitude, trust their instruments, and guide their crew safely through the clouds. In chaotic times, public sector leaders must do the same. In times of uncertainty, leadership is not just about managing change—it's about inspiring hope, fostering resilience, and creating a sense of direction when the path ahead is unclear. This engaging and interactive keynote will equip public sector leaders with practical tools and mindset shifts to not only survive turbulent times, but to thrive within them.

Sommer Kehrl, CEO, The Centre for Organization Effectiveness

Thursday 2:00pm-5:00pm

CGL: Fostering Civil Discourse Between Staff and Elected Officials: Turning Debates into Dialogue (Full Credit)

Local government professionals increasingly find themselves navigating tense and sometimes hostile interactions, both in council chambers and behind the scenes. Disrespectful behavior during public meetings, miscommunication between staff and elected officials, and a blurring of professional boundaries have all contributed to a decline in effective dialogue and trust. This course provides foundational tools to help local government professionals promote civil discourse in their organizations.

ILG

Thursday 2:15-3:15pm

Local Protections During Immigration Enforcement Actions

Cities have found themselves in the middle of immigration enforcement actions that have left them with many questions regarding what they can do during these trying times. This session will provide municipal governments with a summary of federal and state law on immigration and how municipalities can respond within the boundaries of the law.

Henry Castillo, Associate, Best Best & Krieger LLP
Albert Maldonado, Associate, Best Best & Krieger LLP



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How to Make Organizational Improvements without Breaking the Bank	Join this panel for a robust discussion of the various ways in which agencies can continue to improve their bottom lines and operations during periods of fiscal constraint, when hiring a consultant or additional help may not be possible.	Rebekka Hosken, Senior Manager, Raftelis Jenele Davidson, Deputy City Manager, City of Victorville Arabo Parseghian, Assistant City Manager, City of La Canada Flintridge
Speaking with Confidence, Presenting with Purpose: Cracking the Code of Council Chambers	This engaging session, led by former Public Sector Executive and keynote speaker Jacob Green, equips public sector professionals with practical tools and proven strategies to communicate confidently and effectively when presenting to elected bodies or community groups. With humor and insight, attendees will learn how to reduce anxiety, project composure, and navigate council dynamics, and emerge ready to face the spotlight like a Jedi Master.	Jacob Green, President & CEO, Jacob Green & Associates
Thursday 3:45-4:45pm		
Finding the Chosen One(s): Using the Force to Attract, Recruit, and Select Your Padawans and Jedi Knights	This session will deep dive on one of the core principals of recruiting and retaining top talent: culture! Learn how your culture can lead the way on finding your chosen ones.	Dr. Marcella Marlowe, CEO, M2C, Inc.
Parks & Recreation: Catalyst for Thriving Communities	This session explores how parks and recreation serve as powerful catalysts for thriving communities by driving innovation, advancing equity, and generating economic impact. Attendees will learn how cities are transforming public spaces through inclusive design, community-driven programming, and strategic partnerships that boost local economies. Real-world examples and actionable strategies will equip leaders to position parks as essential tools for long-term community success.	Nicholas S. Gonzalez, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Palm Springs Ben Dieterle, Community Services Supervisor, City of Fountain Valley
Public Works Roundtable		



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Friday 8:30am-10:00am		
CGL Course: Empowering Local Government Talent Development for Success (Half Credit)	As a part of its Talent Initiative, Cal-ICMA created and now offers all local government agencies four new talent development tools that are aimed at helping agencies better develop and retain their employees. This CGL program is designed to be a shared learning experience where participants understand and practice utilizing these development tools. This hands-on course will provide exposure and the opportunity to utilize those tools.	Shannon DeLong, Assistant City Manager, City of Whittier Nancy Hetrick, Vice President, Raftelis Dr. Frank Benest, ICMA Senior Advisor for Next Generation Initiatives/Co-Chair of the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program
Friday 9:00am-10:00am		
Monrovia Canyon Park: A Case Study in Disaster Recovery and Community Resilience	In September 2020, the Bobcat Fire burned more than 115,000 acres of the San Gabriel Mountains, including Monrovia Canyon Park. Located at the foot of the Angeles National Forest, the park experienced multiple disaster events, including floods and debris flows in 2021 and 2023. Learn how one City navigated state and federal emergency management processes to recover from multiple disasters, reconstruct a regional park, and re-engage with the community's roots as "the Gem of the Foothills".	Alex Tachiki, Public Works Director, City of Monrovia Christopher Castruita, Senior Management Analyst, City of Monrovia
MMASC Business Meeting	Join the MMASC Board for its annual business meeting. Get a glimpse into the governance of the organization, and learn how get more involved.	
Friday 10:15am-11:30am		
 General Session		
Lifting the Future: Building Leaders Through Mentorship	Join this exciting panel discussion on the impact of mentorship on careers, and learn how you can build leaders through every step of your career.	TBD