COMMUNICATIONS & RELATIONS STRATEGY

CAL-ICMA
A State Affiliate of ICMA

Approved October 1, 2023

Background

The Cal-ICMA Communications and Relations Strategy Guide represents a blueprint for our organization's growth, engagement, and success. It is a testament to the commitment and dedication of our Communications and Relations Working Group, who met over the course of six months to present a guide that reflects the organization's shared vision for a thriving local government management community in California. As part of this work, the Committee evaluated our existing practices, identified areas for improvement, and brainstormed innovative strategies to better serve our Corporate Partners, affiliate organizations, and local government professionals in California.

The strategic efforts focused on three main goals:

- **Increase Brand Awareness**
  We recognized the need to amplify the visibility and recognition of Cal-ICMA within the local government management community. An organization's brand is not merely a logo; it embodies its reputation, values, and impact. Our aim is to make the Cal-ICMA brand synonymous with excellence and innovation in local government management.

- **Improve and Focus Communication with Affiliate Organizations**
  Affiliate organizations are integral to our mission. Strengthening our communication with these vital partners is imperative. By ensuring open, regular, and relevant communication, we can foster stronger connections, encourage collaboration, and collectively drive the advancement of our profession.

- **Increase County and Special District Participation**
  Cities, counties, special districts, and other public agencies form the backbone of local governance in California. Placing an importance of encouraging active county, special district, and other public agencies participation in Cal-ICMA is not just an organizational goal but a commitment to the growth and development of our local government community. Their perspectives and expertise are invaluable assets.

To operationalize these goals, we have developed a comprehensive work plan. Key components of this plan include:

- **Bringing together key committees to form a Connections Strategy**
  This collaborative approach will enable us to harness the collective wisdom of our various committees, ensuring that our communication and outreach efforts are aligned and synergistic.

- **Creating an Elevator Pitch**
  Crafting a succinct, compelling message about Cal-ICMA to effectively convey our value proposition to potential members, partners, and stakeholders.

- **Determining a Call for Volunteers Strategy**
  Engaging our members and partners in volunteer opportunities is central to building a vibrant, participatory community. We aim to streamline our volunteer recruitment and engagement process to maximize the involvement of our talented pool of professionals.

- **Logo Redesign**
  As part of our efforts to enhance brand awareness, the committee has refreshed the logo that captures the modern essence of Cal-ICMA and represents our commitment to excellence and innovation in local government management.

Connections Strategy

This collaborative approach will enable us to harness the collective wisdom of our various committees, ensuring that our communication and outreach efforts are aligned and synergistic.

Committee Involvement

The Social Media & Marketing; Nominations, Governance, and Membership; Scholarship & Events; and Sponsorship Committees will work together through the Communications and Relations Working Group.

Communication Efforts

- **Cal-ICMA Website:** The Cal-ICMA Board will work with the ICMA Programs Manager for updating the Cal-ICMA website.
- **Create Bi-Monthly Newsletters:** The Social Media & Marketing Committee will work with the Cal-ICMA President and ICMA Programs Manager on curating content of the organization's activities, initiatives, and events for the bi-monthly newsletters. The newsletters will also feature information from our affiliate organizations including their events and programs.
- **Social Media:** The Social Media & Marketing Committee will disseminate content on the Cal-ICMA social media channels.

Elevator Pitch

Cal-ICMA is your California state affiliate of ICMA. We connect California professionals for the advancement of ethical and inclusive local government management. We do this by developing events and workshops that provide opportunities for professional development, networking, and growth. No matter where you are in your local government management career, Cal-ICMA is here to support you.

(Optional, depending on situation) **If you're an ICMA member, you're already a member of Cal-ICMA.**

Example Use Cases

By incorporating an elevator pitch into our marketing strategy, we aim to increase brand awareness, attract new members and Corporate Partners, and ultimately strengthen Cal-ICMA's position as a leading advocate for excellence and connection in local government management.

- **Networking Events:** During conferences or networking receptions, Cal-ICMA representatives should employ the elevator pitch to introduce the organization to potential members and Corporate Partners. They will focus on highlighting the benefits of the organization, our commitment to professional development, and the resources we offer.
- **Meetings with Affiliate Organizations:** When meeting or participating in meetings with affiliate organizations, Cal-ICMA representatives will use tailored elevator pitches that emphasize the role of Cal-ICMA in advancing local government excellence and its potential to support their initiatives. This may include incorporating the elevator pitch in verbal introductions of the organization or written status updates.
- **General Community Outreach:** Cal-ICMA members should employ the elevator pitch to underscore our commitment to enhancing the quality of life in California communities, demonstrating our dedication to serving the public interest.

Call for Volunteers Strategy

Engaging our members and partners in volunteer opportunities is central to building a vibrant, participatory community. We aim to streamline our volunteer recruitment and engagement process to maximize the involvement of our talented pool of professionals.

The success of Cal-ICMA is in large part due to the number of dedicated volunteers. By inviting volunteers to participate in activities or initiatives, Cal-ICMA will foster engagement and interaction with our members. Volunteers who have a positive experience may become advocates for Cal-ICMA, sharing their experiences and promoting the organization to others.

- **Leading Committee:** The Nominations, Governance, and Membership Committee will lead these efforts, while working with the Social Media & Marketing Committee.
- **Interest List Opening:** Volunteer sign-ups typically open each year in January.

Logo Refresh

Cal-ICMA has embarked on a thoughtful logo refresh to better reflect our organization's dynamic vision and commitment to excellence in local government management. This modernization aims to maintain the essence of our longstanding identity while infusing it with renewed energy and relevance. The refreshed logo will serve as a symbol of our continuous evolution and adaptability, ensuring that it resonates with current and future members, partners, and stakeholders. Through this refresh, we are poised to reinforce our brand's integrity, convey our values more effectively, and reinforce Cal-ICMA's position as a forward-thinking leader in the field of local government management in California.

The new logo uses the colors/shades from the ICMA official branding color palette, honors the great state of California, and clearly notes our relationship with ICMA.

Horizontal Logo

Vertical Logo

CAL-ICMA
A State Affiliate of ICMA

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Authorized Users

The Cal-ICMA logo may be used by the following entities:

- Cal-ICMA Committees, task forces, and subcommittees for official activities.
- Corporate Partners, Sponsors and Affiliate organizations with explicit written approval from Cal-ICMA.
- Other individuals or organizations with written authorization from Cal-ICMA's President or designated representative.

Prohibited Usage

The Cal-ICMA logo may not be used in any of the following ways:

- To endorse or promote any product, service, or entity without explicit written permission.
- In a manner that distorts, alters, or modifies the logo's design or color.
- Inappropriately scaled or stretched that compromises its legibility.
- In combination with any text, graphics, or design elements that may diminish its visual impact or clarity.
- In a manner that associates Cal-ICMA with any illegal, offensive, or harmful content.

Logo Placement

The Cal-ICMA logo should be placed prominently and clearly on materials, websites, or documents where its association with Cal-ICMA is intended to be evident. The logo should not be overshadowed by other graphics or text.

- Minimum Size and Clear Space: To ensure readability and visual impact, the Cal-ICMA logo should not be reproduced at a size smaller than 0.75 inches in width for printed materials and 150 pixels in width for digital use. A minimum clear space equivalent to the width of the "C" in "Cal-ICMA" should be maintained around the logo.
- Color and Background: When using the Cal-ICMA logo, the authorized color version (color, grayscale, or black & white) should be selected based on the background and context. The logo should always be displayed with a clear and uncluttered background that does not obscure its visual clarity.

Modification

Any modifications to the Cal-ICMA logo, including resizing, color alterations, or adaptations, must receive prior approval from Cal-ICMA's President or designated representative.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Increase Brand Awareness

Objective 1.1 - Coordinate a Call for Volunteers

The success of Cal-ICMA is in large part due to the number of dedicated volunteers. By inviting volunteers to participate in activities or initiatives, Cal-ICMA will foster engagement and interaction with our members. Volunteers who have a positive experience may become advocates for Cal-ICMA, sharing their experiences and promoting the organization to others.

- Lead – Nominations, Governance, and Membership Committee
- Frequency – Yearly
- Metric – Number of volunteer applications

Objective 1.2 – Create an Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch allows board members to clearly communicate the organization's unique qualities and differentiators to other professional development organizations. By distilling these elements into a concise pitch, we are reinforcing our identity and ensuring a consistent message across different interactions and touchpoints.

- Lead – Communications and Relations Working Group
- Frequency – As-Needed
- Metric – Approval of elevator pitch

Objective 1.3 – Establish a Webinar Series

Inviting industry experts, affiliate organizations (including non-profit organizations), corporate partners to speak in a webinar series expands Cal-ICMA's reach to their networks, attracting new audiences who may not have been familiar with Cal-ICMA previously. By presenting thought-provoking topics and facilitating engaging discussions, Cal-ICMA will establish itself as a thought leader in the profession.

- Lead – Affiliate Organizations/Corporate Partners working with Sponsorship Committee
- Frequency – Quarterly
- Metric – Number of attendees per webinar

Objective 1.4 – Establish a Communications Review Calendar

A communications review calendar ensures that Cal-ICMA consistently delivers key messages and maintains a cohesive brand voice across various digital media channels. By scheduling and reviewing communications activities, we ensure content is relevant and aligned with current events or future opportunities.

- Lead – Communications and Relations Working Group
- Frequency – As-Needed
- Metric – Approval of Communications Calendar

Objective 1.5 – Review Corporate Partner Program

The Corporate Partner Program provides a wide range of benefits, from financial support to increased visibility and access to resources. It is important to evaluate the impact of partnership levels and benefits to ensure effectiveness of overall brand awareness generated through the partnership.

- Lead – Sponsorship Committee
- Frequency – Yearly
- Metric – Approval of Corporate Partner Program packet

Objective 1.6 – Market ICMA Resources and Programs

Marketing ICMA programs and resources helps educate Cal-ICMA members about the valuable professional development opportunities, training programs, and tools available through ICMA.

- Lead – Social Media and Marketing Committee in conjunction with ICMA Program Manager
- Frequency – Bi-Monthly
- Metric – Number of advertised ICMA resources and programs

Goal 2: Improve and focus communication with Affiliate Organizations

Objective 2.1 – Solicit Affiliate Organization Events

Actively soliciting in affiliate organization events enhance Cal-ICMA's visibility within the local government community resulting in further viability for both the affiliate organization and Cal-ICMA.

- Lead – Social Media and Marketing Committee
- Frequency – Monthly
- Metric – Number of Affiliate Posts

Objective 2.2 – Include Affiliate Organization Events in Newsletter

Featuring affiliate organization events in the newsletter demonstrates Cal-ICMA's ability to connect, support, and collaborate with affiliate organizations. Our newsletters provide an additional avenue for members to stay informed to organizations they may or may not be part of.

- Lead – Social Media and Marketing Committee
- Frequency – Bi-Monthly
- Metric – Number of Clicks on Affiliate Events

Objective 2.3 – Create Bi-Monthly Newsletters

A newsletter serves as a central platform for distributing important information, updates, and announcements to members. Regular newsletters ensures that everyone is well-informed about the organization's activities, initiatives, and events.

- Lead – Social Media and Marketing Committee
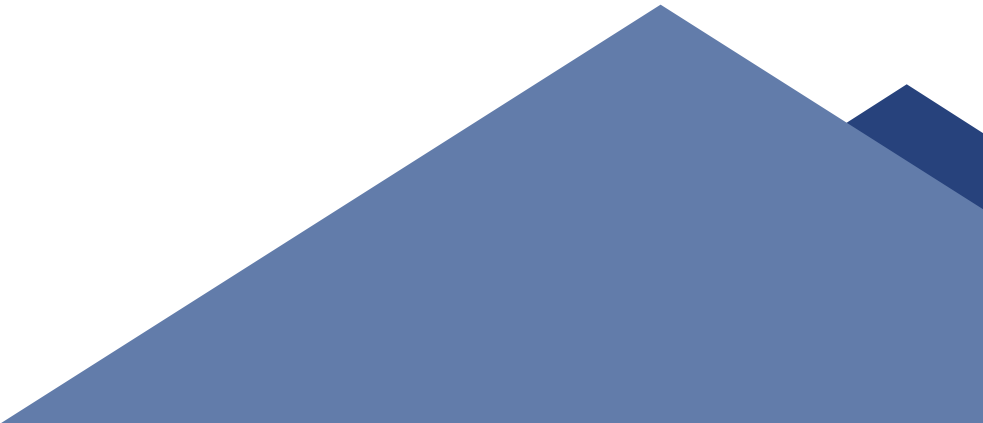- Frequency – Bi-Monthly
- Metric – Newsletter Open Rate

Objective 2.4 – Piggyback on Affiliate Organization Events and Conferences

Affiliate organization (including non-profit organizations) events and conferences provide opportunities for speaking engagement and networking engagement. This targeted approach ensures meaningful connections addressing the needs of each affiliate organization.

- Lead – Scholarships and Events Committee
- Frequency – As-Needed
- Metric – Number of Attendees per Event

Objective 2.5 – Coordinate Statewide Student Chapter Meetings and Events

Student Chapters help build the pipeline for the next generation of local government professionals while integrating students into the local government management profession and familiarizing students with ICMA members and resources. Encourage students to participate at ICMA events and engage with the Cal-ICMA Board.

- Lead – Student Chapter Committee
- Frequency – Quarterly
- Metric – Number of Meetings

Goal 3: Increase County and Special District Participation

Objective 3.1 – Fill County and Special District Board Member Seats

Representation from counties and special districts within Cal-ICMA ensures a well-rounded organization that is inclusive of all facets of local government.

- Lead – Nominations, Governance, and Membership Committee
- Frequency – As Needed
- Metric – Number of Vacant Seats

Objective 3.2 – Understand and Foster a Relationship between County Professional Organizations and ICMA

Understand and foster the relationships between County professional organizations including National Association of County Administrators (NACA), California Association of County Executives (CACE) and ICMA is important for Cal-ICMA as it helps the organization identify County collaboration opportunities, and effectively connect with a broader network of local government professionals.

- Lead – Scholarship and Events Committee
- Frequency – As-Needed
- Metric – Number of events with County professional organizations

Objective 3.3 - Piggyback on County and Special District Events and Conferences

Attending, participating, or organizing in collaboration with county and special district events allows Cal-ICMA members to network with professionals from different sectors of local government and provide awareness to the organization.

- Lead – Scholarship and Events Committee
- Frequency – As-Needed
- Metric – Number of Attendees per Event

Objective 3.4 - Connect Resources with Special District Leadership Foundation

Connecting resources demonstrates a commitment to supporting special district leadership and governance which will lead to further collaboration, resource sharing, and networking opportunities.

- Lead – County and Special District Board Members
- Frequency – Monthly
- Metric – Number of County and Special District Members

Tracking Template

Objective	Status	Metric	Committee Update
Goal 1: Increase Brand Awareness			
Coordinate a Call for Volunteers	Completed	21 Applications Received	Call for Volunteers released Jan. 2023
Create an Elevator Pitch	Completed	Approved Sept. 2023	Approved at Sept. 2023 Study Session
Establish a Webinar Series	On Hold	-	-
Establish a Communications Review Calendar	Completed	Approved Sept. 2023	Calendar begins Nov. 2023
Review Corporate Partner Program	Completed	Approved Aug. 2023	Communicating with potential Partners for 2024
Market ICMA Resources and Programs	In Progress	12 ICMA programs marketed	Continuous marketing of resources and programs in bi-monthly newsletter and social media