

Reviewing Tenets 8 and 10 of the ICMA Code of Ethics The final two tenets in this 10-year effort!

Background

In 2013, the ICMA Executive Board approved a plan to engage the membership in a structured review of the Code of Ethics (Code). The Code celebrates 100 years of guiding the membership in 2024, and this approach ensures its continued relevance for those working in service to local government.

Only Tenets 8 and 10 remain for review and feedback in this effort. The history and discussion questions, below, provide information to consider in potential revisions to the language in Tenets 8 and 10.

Current language of **Tenet 8: Make it a duty continually to improve the member’s professional ability and to develop the competence of associates in the use of management techniques.**

The first statement of an emphasis on professional development appeared in the Code’s 1952 version, “The city manager considers it his duty continually to improve his ability and his usefulness and to develop the competence of his associates in the use of management techniques.” That principle was restated three times with the last revision reflecting the language, above, in 1976:

1969: Make it his duty continually to improve his ability and his usefulness and to develop the competence of his associates in the use of management techniques.

1972: Make it his duty continually to improve his ability and to develop the competence of his associates in the use of management techniques.

In 1995, two guidelines were added:

Self-Assessment. Each member should assess his or her professional skills and abilities on a periodic basis.

Professional Development. Each member should commit at least 40 hours per year to professional development activities that are based on the practices identified by the members of ICMA.

Current language of **Tenet 10: Resist any encroachment on professional responsibilities, believing the member should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.**

The principle was first included in the Code’s 1938 version, “The city manager, in order to preserve his integrity as a professional administrator, resists any encroachment of his control of personnel, insists on the exercise of his own judgment in accomplishing council policies, and deals frankly with the council as a unit rather than secretly with its individual members.” It has been amended over the years with the most recent version reflecting the language, above, in 1995:

1952: The city manager, in order to preserve his integrity as a professional administrator, resists any encroachment on his responsibility for personnel, believes he should be free to carry out council policies without interference, and deals frankly with the council as a unit rather than with its individual members.

1969: Resist any encroachment on his responsibilities, believing he should be free to carry out official policies without interference.

1972: Resist any encroachment on his responsibilities, believing he should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.

In 1995, a guideline was added:

Information Sharing. The member should openly share information with the governing body while diligently carrying out the member’s responsibilities as set forth in the charter or enabling legislation.

Discussion Questions

Tenet 8: Make it a duty continually to improve the member’s professional ability and to develop the competence of associates in the use of management techniques.

- Is Tenet 8 still relevant to the profession? YES NO
- As you review the language of the Tenet, what areas would you like to see addressed that are not?
- Do you think it is an ethical issue when a manager fails in the obligation to continued professional development by lacking competency the governing body and community expect of a member working in the local government management profession?
- What recommendations do you have for changes to the existing guidelines on self-assessment and professional development? Are any additional guidelines needed?

Self-Assessment. Each member should assess his or her professional skills and abilities on a periodic basis.

Professional Development. Each member should commit at least 40 hours per year to professional development activities that are based on the practices identified by the members of ICMA.

Tenet 10: Resist any encroachment on professional responsibilities, believing the member should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.

- Is Tenet 10 still relevant to the profession? YES NO
- As you review the language of the Tenet, what areas would you like to see addressed that are not?
- What ethical challenges have you encountered regarding professional responsibility encroachment?
- What recommendations do you have for changes to the existing guideline on information sharing? Are any additional guidelines needed?

Information Sharing. The member should openly share information with the governing body while diligently carrying out the member’s responsibilities as set forth in the charter or enabling legislation.