

Jim Moran
August 28, 2022
Moran Ethics Statement

For this assignment, I have chosen to compare and contrast the code of ethics of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). I picked these two organizations because I have more experience with them personally, plus I am currently a member and plan to remain an active member of ICMA.

Both codes of ethics look to keep a high standard of expectations of the membership for both organizations. Ultimately, the high standards are designed to give the public trust in local government. The ICMA ethics are designed for all types of public administration, while the GFOA is targeted at the finance area of municipal government. Despite the minor difference in the intended audiences of the organizations, the overall goal of each code is to ultimately benefit members of the public. Both codes offer the consistency of expectations of both organizations and provide membership guidelines to follow, which can be especially useful if a questionable situation were to arise for a member of the organization. Both codes have tenets with descriptions to provide clarity.

The most noticeable (and arguably the most controversial) difference between the two codes of ethics is the absence of a specific diversity and inclusion portion of the ICMA code. The GFOA code has a specific section dedicated to “diversity and inclusion.” As was discussed during our class video presented by Dr. Thurmaier and outlined in the August 2020 PM Magazine article “[ETHICS MATTER! Equity and Social Justice](#),” the ICMA organization relies on its requirement to “serve all” as its call for equity and social justice inclusion. ICMA follows its consistency of operational efficiency by not elaborating specifically on diversity or inclusion, instead letting it fall under the broad statement that is already included in the code of ethics [quote it or reference the tenet where the reader can find that broad statement].

Another difference between the two is the ICMA code provides a framework of expectations built around operational and management efficiencies, while the GFOA code focuses more on attributes of honesty, fairness, and inclusion.

The ICMA code of ethics is a useful and important guide for me in my professional role in village administration. I feel that some tenets are more relevant or important than others, however all help guide and maintain the integrity of local government management. For me, maintaining high standards in my daily work in our village is important because that ultimately drives the trust of the community that I work for. Additionally, I feel that the more I am involved in local government, the more I become an advocate for my profession and the high standards that public servants should be held to. When I advocate the worth of local government, it’s not just to the general members of the public, it’s to the elected officials who may not necessarily view government employees in the highest regard, and it is also to my fellow coworkers in the village, reminding my coworkers that their job is valued and important.

Another important tenet of the ICMA code is directly relatable to my role in government communications/relations, setting the standard to “keep the community informed on local government affairs” with the encouragement of communication between the administration, elected officials, and the public. This is a major reason why I wanted to work in local

government. When I ran for village trustee of my hometown in 2011, I ran on a platform that included working to make our village better at communicating with the community. Within a few months of taking office, I helped pass a village social media policy, and I helped our village staff start the process of video recording board meetings and posting the videos online. As a champion for better communication for our village government, I ran into far more obstacles than I imagined I would. The then assistant village administrator of our community told me that my ideas were better suited for the business community, not local government. I met a different village administrator who has since learned to embrace better communications, who told me that when he first started off in local government, most outreach and communication ideas were “unheard of” and “frowned upon.”

Another tenet of the ICMA code that I can identify with, having been both an elected official and staff member of a local government, is tenet # related to refraining from participating in the election of members of my employing legislative body. Personally, this tenet helps me keep mindful of staying out of politics now that I have shifted into the administrative side of local government. The description of this tenet by ICMA goes into great detail that prohibits members from participating in a local election or local politics. In June 2021, a Massachusetts village manager was publicly censured and suspended for three years from ICMA for contributing financially and supporting candidates for his hometown village board, which is nearly 40 miles from the community in which he is employed. A June 25, 2021 article in The Sun newspaper, [“Groton town manager hometown politics leads to censure”](#), by Jacob Vitali offers insight into the village manager’s assumptions that he wasn’t committing a lapse of ethics by being active in his hometown’s politics while working as the administrator in another community.

This assignment offered me the opportunity to not only read and reflect on the code of ethics for a couple of different municipal organizations but also compare the codes, which really helped me think about how these can best be applied to my daily life. I feel emboldened to use the ICMA Code of Ethics as a guide to making sure my actions benefit the residents of the community for which I work. As I analyze these codes of ethics, I can’t help but think of situations where someone I know has at least gone into a gray area of ethics, if not committed an ethics violation of a professional organization.

COMMENTS

This is nicely done, Jim. As my notes indicate, your argument would be more convincing with reference to specific tenets so the reader could find it easily and read the actual language in the code. You should also include a reference list for this paper. Avoid superlatives and broad statements that lack evidence to support them. Overall, very nice work. Keep it up!

Rubric

Background (10)	Contrast (30)	Compare (30)	Adoption (20)	Writing (10)	Points	Grade
10	30	30	20	5	95	A