

How to Use This Manual

The role of government in this country was conceived of, for, and by the people. Local government grew out of the concept of people working collectively to provide services that they could not provide individually. The role of local government, therefore, is this notion of a collective good. As city managers and local government officials, we are given the public trust and public assets in order to provide those services which benefit people in the community.

Providing these services, obtaining feedback, and distilling the collective vision for the community are the primary roles of the city manager. This handbook has been assembled with the thought of providing a base of information that will be useful for managers in carrying out their function or job; more importantly, it is rooted in the belief that the culture in an organization is fundamental to how well the organization can perform and how the city organization aligns itself with the vision, needs, and expectations of the citizens who make up the community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Empirical research certainly points to the need for building trust and building close, long-term relationships with the people in the community. Intuitively we all know this; however, over the years in building governmental organizations and institutions, we have inadvertently created cultures that are barriers to maintaining the close relationships that organizations must have to carry out the needs and the desires of the citizens who reside in the community.

While this notion of organizational culture is discussed later in this handbook, it is important for the reader to understand the need to maintain an integrative culture. This is a culture based on long-term relationships with suppliers, vendors, and community organizations. It is built around an organization focused on trust, harmony, and teamwork. The management philosophy embodied in such a culture is the quality management movement. The exhibits and many of the references contained in this handbook are geared toward this approach to providing local government services.

Often managers seek to introduce quality management programs into agencies or city organizations which are very clearly administrative in nature. The typical result is very marginal

success or no success at all. This is due to the fact that the management philosophy and the culture of the organization are inconsistent. This handbook is focused on those elements, and the examples that are provided are those elements that are consistent with a foundational piece of an integrative culture. New programs and projects that are not consistent with the existing culture of the receiving organization are doomed to failure. The organizational culture types and the characteristics associated with those cultures are provided in this handbook.

It is hoped that users of this handbook can understand the basic features of organizational culture and can begin to move their respective organizations to an integrative culture and thereby improve the quality of service delivery to the community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Organizational capacity is the availability of resources needed to complete a task. These resources may be employees, political power, money, equipment, or anything needed to successfully carry out a plan. Does the organization have what it takes to do the job? The responsibility for identifying capacity falls largely and practically on the city manager. The manager must assess the ability of employees to produce certain desired outputs based on the skill level of the employees, the money, and the equipment available. The manager must be able to communicate that to the city council and, particularly, to help the council formulate direction and options that the community may have on various issues.

The manager must have the ability to inventory and assess the skill level, money, equipment, political power, or other elements needed to successfully carry out a project. The manager must also be able to tie these various elements together to maximize the use of each of these assets in achieving an organization's goals or vision.

The ability to coalesce these elements is fundamental to the manager's leadership role in the organization and the supportive role the manager must play to the council for council members to be successful on behalf of the entire community. It is this coalescing, the linkages between each of these elements, and the ability to maximize each that will be determinants in the ongoing, long-term success of the organization and community.

While on the surface this may all appear unduly complex or difficult, it need not be because in each case it can be broken down to skill levels and leadership models to help the successful movement of the organization.

This is done daily in communities throughout the country by managers of varying skill levels. The better the manager's ability to understand this notion of capacity, the better the performance that can be expected.

FOCUS

Rather than trying to provide detailed information on how to do each job in a city organization, this handbook focuses on the policy issues a city manager needs to consider to make informed and effective policy decisions.

A city manager should spend his or her time developing overall policies that are consistent with the city council's vision for the community. To this end, this handbook offers a set questions that should inform every policy decision:

- How does this decision support the city's mission, vision, goals, and objectives?
- How will this decision affect the organization's relationship with the community?
- Does the organization have the capacity to successfully carry out this decision?
- What impact will this decision have on the organization's culture?
- What are the financial implications of this decision?
- What liability exposure is associated with this decision?

Although it is helpful for a city manager to understand some of the specifics about each of a city's functions, the primary responsibility for each function usually falls on the department heads. The underlying message for managers of larger cities is "don't micromanage." The manager's job is to work at the policy level; it is the responsibility of staff to know the specifics of how to implement those policies.

In smaller cities, the city manager often must assume the responsibilities of department heads. Smaller communities rely on the city manager to fulfill many of the city government's duties. From performing financial duties, to designing water rate plans, to handling emergency dispatch calls, a city manager is the catchall employee for smaller communities that cannot afford to hire additional professional staff. For these managers, this handbook offers both the philosophical background that is necessary to start developing effective policies for a variety of city functions

and the policies, plans, and training outlines for immediate use. Before a city manager can use the skills of keeping good financial records and developing budgets, he or she should know why these functions are important and how they are instrumental in shaping the future of the community.

Part I — Developing Organizational Abilities

This section discusses how to develop the desired organizational abilities, including the cultural issues involved, developing the city's mission and departmental missions, and the values that give an organization a common purpose and direction.

- Chapter 1 — Cultural Issues
- Chapter 2 — Mission
- Chapter 3 — Values

Part II — City Services

This section contains chapters on services provided by the city for its citizens:

- Chapter 4 — Police Services
- Chapter 5 — Fire Services
- Chapter 5A — Emergency Medical Services
- Chapter 6 — Emergency Management
- Chapter 7 — Planning and Development
- Chapter 8 — Building Inspections
- Chapter 9 — Economic Development
- Chapter 10 — Parks and Recreation
- Chapter 11 — Library Services

- Chapter 12 — Animal Control
- Chapter 12A — Public Works
- Chapter 13 — Airports
- Chapter 14 — Streets and Transportation
- Chapter 14A — Stormwater Utility
- Chapter 15 — Water Management
- Chapter 16 — Wastewater Services
- Chapter 16A — Solid Waste
- Chapter 17 — Gas Utilities

Part III — City Operations

This section deals with the departments that support the city government and its operations. It also contains a model employee handbook for city employees.

- Chapter 18 — Finance
- Chapter 18A — Performance Measurement
- Chapter 19 — Information Management
- Chapter 20 — Legal Services
- Chapter 21 — Human Resources
- Chapter 22 — Model Employee Policies
- Chapter 23 — Risk Management
- Chapter 24 — Model Safety Handbook
- Chapter 25 — Customer Service Program

- Chapter 26 — Governance
- Chapter 27 — Pandemic Preparedness
- Chapter 28 — Treasury

Part IV — Current Issues

This section contains articles on a wide variety of emerging issues that city managers must consider. All articles can be found on the CD that accompanies this manual.