



New Partnership with City and County Managers

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The North Carolina City-County Management Association (NCCMA) has decided to enter into an expanded partnership with the School of Government. This is a wonderful opportunity to work with municipal and county managers in new ways that will improve the quality of local government in North Carolina.



In our work with local governments, there is no more important group of public officials than city and county managers. They have broad responsibility for the operation of local government, and they provide continuity over time in a way that differs from local elected officials. NCCCMA and its members are committed to professionalism and upholding high ethical standards. In addition to being non-partisan, their other values align nicely with the School's values.



Rob Shepard

NCCCMA has been exploring different ways to expand their capacity to implement new initiatives that are intended to improve local government. Like so many other voluntary associations, their members have good intentions that go unrealized because of their demanding regular jobs. For many years the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) has provided administrative and logistical support through a services agreement. Rob Shepherd with NCLM has done a terrific job as the NCCCMA Secretariat.

The School also has supported NCCCMA through a services agreement that includes the planning and administration of their winter seminar. We also have supported a number of programmatic initiatives in partnership with NCCCMA. For example, in recent years that has included an Innovation Lab on design thinking organized by Kim Nelson. For many years the School has supported NCCCMA's interest in civic education through a textbook on local government aimed at public school students. Rick Morse is updating Gordon Whitaker's original book. Many folks at the School also were involved in facilitating the development of NCCCMA's most recent strategic plan.



Rick Morse



Kim Nelson



Carl Stenberg

In October 2018 NCCCMA issued a request for qualifications to organizations potentially interested in providing administrative support “and other work aligning to the Association’s Strategic Plan.” After talking with our primary NCCCMA liaisons, Kim and Carl Stenberg, as well as with others who have worked extensively with managers, we decided to submit a proposal. Special thanks to Kim and Carl, as well as Michael Vollmer, for putting together our proposal to NCCCMA. The NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) decided not to submit a proposal and instead sent a letter endorsing our proposal. Triangle J Council of Governments managed the process, which culminated in an interview before an ad hoc committee of managers in December 2018. Kim, Carl, Michael, and I represented the School. NCLM also was interviewed about their proposal, which largely expanded on their strong tradition of providing administrative support for NCCCMA.

Last week at its winter seminar in Winston-Salem, NCCCMA’s Executive Committee voted unanimously to accept the committee’s recommendation to go with our proposal and negotiate an agreement with the School. It means that we will take over administrative support for NCCCMA, including the summer conference. Our proposal included funding to hire a full-time professional with experience as a manager to take the lead on providing operational and other kinds of support. The agreement will take effect July 1, 2019.

We made clear throughout the process that the School would not have submitted a proposal just to provide those important administrative services. I said explicitly that we responded only because we saw it as an opportunity to build a much stronger partnership with NCCCMA to improve local



government in North Carolina. I also said that our “primary interest is in working together with [NCCCMA] as partners to jointly develop programs, initiatives, and services that will improve local government.” The committee evaluating the proposal heard us and agreed. In their recommendation to the Executive Committee, the ad hoc committee said it was based on a “[s]trong partnership commitment from the School of Government leadership” and “[g]reater potential to strengthen educational and training opportunities for members.” The committee also identified the “[g]reater potential to directly connect with future city and county professionals through MPA and Lead for North Carolina programs.”



This partnership is not just about the School. We are committed to partnering with many other key stakeholders in advancing the strategic interests and priorities of NCCCMA. That includes NCLM, NCACC, councils of government, and all other MPA programs.

As we move forward with this new partnership, it will be important to ask regularly how our work can align even more closely with the interests of NCCCMA. In addition to Kim and Carl, many faculty members and other professionals work with city and county managers in their fields of work—finance, leadership, economic development, strategic planning, emergency management, local government law, and many other areas. How can all of us at the School develop this partnership in ways that will have the greatest possible impact on improving local government? Thanks to the good work of faculty and staff over many years, NCCCMA had confidence in our ability to help them accomplish their goals.

Special thanks to the NCCCMA ad hoc committee that evaluated the proposals and recommended partnering with the School: John Connet, Martha Paige, Grant Goings, Rodney Dickerson, Ken



Noland, and Craig Honeycutt.



John Connet, Past President of NCCCMA



Grant Goings, President of NCCCMA