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Teamwork Makes the Dream Work: Effective City Council-City Manager Relationships Create Thriving Communities

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Session Overview



- Foundation of Effective Governance
- Elements of Successful City Council/City Manager Relationships
- Strategies and Best Practices for Communication
- Building a Cohesive Council/Manager Team

Presented in partnership with Cal Cities Mayors and Councilmembers and City Managers Departments, California City Management Foundation, and Cal-ICMA



Good Governance is About...



- Effective leadership by the Mayor and City Council
- Responsive management and leadership by the City Manager
- Meaningful communication: honest, direct, respectful, proactive
- Understanding roles and fulfilling expectations
- Fostering mutual respect and building trust
- Focus on Ethics



Attributes of High Performing Councils

- True partnership between Members, City Manager, and staff
- Clarity and respect for roles and responsibilities
- Civility and respect for all
- Conduct effective meetings
- Hold each other and City Manager accountable
- Practice continuous learning

Elements of Successful Council/Manager Relationships



- Mayor, Councilmembers and City Manager develop a sense of team, working together in furtherance of common purpose
- The team values diversity of leadership style and perspective
- Clear and mutual understanding of respective roles, responsibilities, and stated expectations
- Develop and sustain effective communication between the chief executive and governing board
- Trust is a crucial characteristic in any successful relationship and communication is essential for fostering trust

It's All About Communication!



Make time for Council/Manager conversations and meetings



Clearly define communication expectations



Communicate consistently and equitably



Baseline information provided to all



Clear guidelines for Council/Staff communications



Commitments

Mayor/Council

- Hold the City Manager accountable for achieving Council goals, priorities, and implementing directives.
- Provides direction to the City Manager and s/he directs staff—chain of command.
- Avoid public criticism of the City Manager or staff—discuss your concerns privately. Fix the issue, not blame.
- Be prepared to do the work
- Model positive behavior to demonstrate effective governance and maintain relationships

City Manager

- Support the entire governing board to be productive and successful.
- Help each Councilmember to succeed as an effective elected official.
- Work collaboratively to keep the council focused on priorities and make progress.
- Guide and develop staff and organizational culture.
- Engage the community to build trust and confidence in local government

Successful Council/Manager Relations Delivers Positive Results



- Organizational effectiveness
- Mutual success and fulfillment
- Positive staff morale
- Heightened accountability
- Enhanced community confidence
- Successful community outcomes





Q & A

Survey link: https://cacities.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_br3MVA66JFWelia