



WCMA
Washington City/County
Management Association
A State Affiliate of **ICMA**

This Strategic Plan was developed through a multi-session process designed and facilitated by Una McAlinden of Creative Strategy Solutions, WCMA's strategic planning partner. Her services were provided pro bono in support of WCMA and its membership.

Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA)

Strategic Plan 2026–2031

Executive Summary

The Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA) exists to support, connect, and strengthen local government professionals across Washington State. Building on recent momentum, stronger member engagement, and increased programmatic impact, this Strategic Plan establishes a clear, disciplined framework to guide WCMA's work over the next three to five years.

This plan is the result of a multi-session strategic planning process led by the WCMA Board of Directors between November 2025 and January 2026. Through facilitated discussions, reflection on WCMA's past and present, and candid examination of challenges to success, the Board identified a shared vision for the future, key strategic directions, and early implementation priorities.

The Strategic Plan is designed to:

- Deepen member value and connection;
- Strengthen organizational clarity, focus, and sustainability;
- Expand and diversify the pipeline of future local government leaders; and
- Ensure WCMA remains a trusted, relevant, and impactful professional association.

This document is intended to be both aspirational and practical. It articulates clear strategic directions while emphasizing accountability, alignment, and follow-through.

Vision Framework

In 3–5 Years, as a Result of Our Work, We Will See:

- **Clear roles, responsibilities, and structures** that support organizational continuity and reduce reliance on informal or ad hoc systems.
- **Strong resources and support systems** that help members advance good governance, build trust, and uphold the value of the profession.
- **A dynamic, engaged peer network** that promotes collaborative learning, mentorship, and professional growth.
- **Active and engaged members in every Washington city and county**, with increased participation across regions and organization types.
- **A strengthened pipeline into local government management** that is attractive, obtainable, and diverse.
- **Durable partnerships** that help WCMA accomplish its strategic goals and extend its reach.

Strategic Directions (2026–2031)

To achieve our vision, WCMA will focus on five strategic directions:

1. Strengthen Governance, Roles, and Organizational Infrastructure

WCMA will establish clear, sustainable systems that support continuity, accountability, and effective decision-making.

Key Outcomes:

- Clearly defined board and committee roles aligned with strategic priorities.
- Consistent onboarding and leadership development for board and committee members.
- Improved transparency and follow-through in governance and decision-making.

2. Deepen Member Value, Engagement, and Connection

WCMA will strengthen its role as a trusted professional home by increasing meaningful engagement opportunities and clearly communicating value.

Key Outcomes:

- Increased membership participation across regions, disciplines, and career stages.
- Expanded opportunities for peer learning, mentorship, and connection between conferences.
- Improved understanding among members of WCMA programs, resources, and benefits.

3. Build and Sustain a Strong Leadership Pipeline

WCMA will intentionally support the next generation of local government leaders by expanding pathways into the profession and strengthening professional development.

Key Outcomes:

- Stronger connections with academic institutions, students, and early-career professionals.
- Increased participation in mentorship, Senior Advisor, and leadership development programs.
- Greater diversity of experience, background, and geography represented within WCMA leadership.

4. Elevate the Profession and Strengthen Recruitment

WCMA will proactively shape the narrative around local government management, highlighting its impact, relevance, and public value.

Key Outcomes:

- Clear, compelling messaging that articulates the value of the profession.
- Practical tools and resources to support recruitment and retention.
- Increased visibility of positive stories, innovations, and leadership successes across Washington.

5. Align Capacity, Priorities, and Partnerships for Long-Term Sustainability

WCMA will align its workload, partnerships, and financial resources with its strategic priorities to ensure long-term organizational health.

Key Outcomes:

- Focused annual work plans aligned with strategic directions.
- Strong partnerships that enhance program delivery and reduce duplication.
- Financial sustainability that supports innovation while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Implementation and Accountability

Initial Implementation Focus (2026)

To build momentum and ensure accountability, the Board will prioritize these early actions:

- Confirm mission, vision, and strategic priorities.
- Launch a coordinated communications plan to articulate WCMA's purpose and value.
- Conduct a member survey to inform program refinement and engagement strategies.
- Clarify committee structure, roles, and expectations aligned with the Strategic Plan.
- Develop an annual work plan tied directly to strategic directions.

Measuring and Communication Success

Progress will be monitored through:

- Annual review of strategic priorities and work plans with a commitment to communicating progress to the general membership.
- Membership trends, participation metrics, and survey feedback.
- Board self-assessment and regular check-ins on implementation progress.

The Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document, revisited and refined as conditions evolve.

Conclusion

This Strategic Plan reflects WCMA's shared commitment to clarity, focus, and collective leadership. By aligning purpose with action, and values with systems, WCMA is positioned to strengthen its impact, better serve its members, and advance the local government management profession across Washington State.

Together, we will advance with intention, accountability, and optimism for the future.