

The City Manager's Code of Ethics

(1938)

In order to achieve effective, democratic government, the council-manager plan provides that municipal policy shall be determined exclusively by a legislative body elected by the people and that the administration of policy shall be vested in the city manager who, as administrative head of the city, shall be appointed by and responsible to the council. The International City Managers' Association is a professional organization of city managers; its purpose is to increase the proficiency of city managers and to aid in the general improvement of municipal administration. To further these objectives, the Association believes that these ethical principles should govern the conduct on every professional city manager.

1. No member of the profession seeks or accepts a position as city manager unless he is fully in accord with the principles of council-manager government and unless he is confident that he is qualified to serve under these principles as city manager to the advantage of the community.
2. The city manager has a firm belief in the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and a deep sense of his own social responsibility as a trusted public servant.
3. The city manager is governed by the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all his public and personal relationships in order that he may merit the respect and inspire the confidence of the administrative organization which he directs and of the public which he serves.
4. The city manager believes that personal aggrandizement or personal profit secured by confidential information or misuse of public time is dishonest.
5. The city manager is in no sense a political leader. In order that policy may be intelligent and effective, he provides the council with information and advice, but he encourages positive decisions on policy by the council instead of passive acceptance of his recommendations.
6. The city manager realizes that it is the council, the elected representatives of the people, which is entitled to the credit for the fulfillment of municipal policies and leaves to the council the defense of policies which may be criticized.
7. The city manager keeps the community informed on municipal affairs but keeps himself in the background by emphasizing the importance of the facts.
8. The city manager, in order to preserve his integrity as a professional administrator, resists any encroachment of his control of personnel, insists on the exercise of his own judgment in accomplishing council policies, and deals frankly with the council as a unit rather than secretly with its individual members.
9. The city manager handles all matters of personnel on the basis of merit. Political, religious, and racial considerations carry no weight in appointments, salary increases, promotions, and discipline in the municipal service.
10. The city manager curries no personal favors. He is the administrator for all the people and handles each administrative problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.