

City Managers, Civic Entrepreneurs.

From ICMA. City Management...

“ICMA is the world’s leading association of professional city and county managers and other employees who serve local governments. City and county managers are responsible for making sure that basic services such as utilities, sanitation, and road maintenance are provided efficiently to citizens in their community. These highly trained, experienced women and men are committed to meeting these challenges each and every day, 24 hours a day. The job involves working with a range of individuals involved in public safety, public works, economic development, and dozens of other service areas to move their community toward a common goal and respond to problems efficiently and effectively.”

LINK: <https://icma.org/local-government-management-career-overview>

The Entrepreneur.

An entrepreneur is someone who takes risks to create value. In a municipal context, a civic entrepreneur, say a city manager, evaluates and takes risks to improve community assets. The primary difference between a civic entrepreneur and a private one, is that private entrepreneurs are usually risking their own assets or the assets of their willing investors.

The Civic Entrepreneur.

Cities and towns are built by people investing in the future of the community. Investing implies risk. Risk implies that the venture may not be successful and in the extreme, all assets are lost. A civic entrepreneur is a public employee, usually a city manager or public enterprise fund manager. They take risks with public monies and assets for the purpose of improving the system. They anticipate changes that will be required from regulatory or growth factors. They help the community build the city with vision-consistent investments.

Civic entrepreneurs can benefit from the ideas related to social entrepreneurs; the leaders of non-governmental organizations [NGOs] usually associated with environmentally and socially responsible organizations. Georgia Levenson Keohane, the author, describes innovative solutions to social problems that also apply to civic issues:

- Shows how social entrepreneurship has radically transformed the nonprofit, private, and public sectors
- Explores the promise of impact investing - what it really is and how it works
- Illuminates the challenges of bringing billions of dollars in private capital to bear on social problems
- Identifies smart public policies that promote social innovation at the local and national levels
- Recommends specific investment opportunities you can act on now

City Management Matters.

City planners make fine city managers. Public administration degrees provide a sound basis for city management. In all cases, the willingness to assess and take measured risks is essential whether it is investing employee retirement funds, issuing bonds or anticipating the impact of new regulations. Any action that relies on future events is risky. Risk management skills are vital for civic entrepreneurs.