



ROSE INSTITUTE
OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

CCMF Releases Rose Institute Study on California City Managers

California City Management Foundation (CCMF), in partnership with the [Rose Institute of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College](#), developed the "[2023 CALIFORNIA CITY MANAGER SURVEY: A PROFILE OF THE PROFESSION](#)," which provides a comprehensive overview of city managers in California. CCMF commissioned this survey to develop a profile of the profession and identify needs for continued development. [Tripepi Smith Talent Solutions](#) and [California Joint Powers Insurance Authority](#) contributed additional support.

The report presents the results of a survey conducted by the Rose Institute earlier this year collecting data on average tenure, background, and education of California's city managers. The research team collected survey data over the course of 10 weeks, netting responses from 321 of California's 482 cities. The research team supplemented the survey responses with data gathered from city websites, news outlets and LinkedIn.

"City managers act as the CEOs of nearly every city in California," Rose Institute Director Ken Miller said. "As a group, they are the most important local officials in the state; yet not much research had been done on this group. This new study sheds a lot of light on the city manager profession."

The survey, which was conducted by Rose Institute staff and 13 student researchers, included three primary sections: demographic profile, employment profile and city profile. Within the demographic profile, survey participants submitted answers about their age; race or ethnicity; gender; level of education; major studied in university and whether or not the respondent is a California native. The employment profile section included questions about current position, length of time in the position, prior experience and total years as a city manager. The city profile section included questions about the city's population and the most pressing issues facing the city.

Among the key findings, the report indicates 24% of responding city managers are women, which is well ahead of the national average. The percentage of women in chief administrator roles has been growing steadily nationwide. The International City Managers Association (ICMA) [reported](#) that 18.6% of city managers were women in 2021, up from only 1% in the mid-1970s.

Survey results also show that 64% of responding city managers report they are originally from California. Similarly, a large sum of California city managers (83%) began their local government careers in California, while 17% began their careers outside the state.

The findings also show that a vast majority of California city managers are in their 40s and 50s. 45% of respondents listed 51-60 as their age, and another 33% listed 41-50 as their age. The results demonstrate that younger city managers tend to serve in small cities (less than or equal

to 35,000 in population). Managers in the 60+ age bracket were also noted to serve in small or medium cities. Meanwhile, managers in large cities (population of 75,001 - 200,000) and very large cities (population of 200,001+) are largely in the 41-50 and 51-60 age groups.

In addition to the state's increase in gender diversity, California is also seeing a steady increase in ethnic diversity within the profession. While 74% of respondents identified as White, 15% (the second highest percentage) identified as Hispanic or Latino. Six percent identified as Asian and 5% identified as Black or African American, with smaller percentages identifying as American Indian or Pacific Islander. Seven percent identified as "Other." The percentages totaled more than 100% because respondents could select more than one category.

CCMF looks forward to seeing cities use the Profile of the Profession as a guide to further recruitment and retention efforts. As the profession welcomes greater diversity in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, cities must now look to creatively promote the profession to the next generation of city managers. With older city managers taking on mentorship roles, they may have opportunities to encourage younger local government leaders and further position them to take on opportunities in larger cities.

"The growing diversity among city managers is a testament to the power of embracing different perspectives and experiences in driving effective governance," said CCMF President Ken Striplin. "With an average current tenure of just over four and a half years, we recognize the importance of cultivating an environment that fosters long-term stability and continued growth. These findings reinforce CCMF's commitment to championing equal opportunities and empowering individuals from all backgrounds to excel in public service. Together, we are building a stronger, more vibrant California for all."

CCMF also gives special thanks to the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority and Tripepi Smith Talent Solutions for their sponsorship.

To view the 2023 CALIFORNIA CITY MANAGER SURVEY: A PROFILE OF THE PROFESSION, visit <https://www.cacitymanagers.org/citymanagersurvey/> or <https://roseinstitute.org/2023-california-city-manager-survey-a-profile-of-the-profession/>.

Contacts:

California City Management Foundation
Executive Director: Ken Pulskamp
(844) 226-3411
ken@cacitymanagers.org

Rose Institute of State and Local Government
Claremont McKenna College
Director: Ken Miller
(909) 607-7575
kmiller@cmc.edu