



2025 EMO Student Engagement REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

To support future local government professionals in identifying and implementing actions to advance upward economic mobility and opportunity in communities, ICMA will provide \$10,000 grants to facilitate experiential learning opportunities for the next generation of public administrators.

These opportunities are to be coordinated through a capstone course, practicum, or other type of classroom experience for public administration students. The expectation is that a team of students will conduct an economic mobility and opportunity centered project in partnership with an area local government. The project can be an assessment, planning or engagement process, and/or similar activity.

ICMA expects to award up to nine grants to support learning opportunities/projects to be completed within the Fall 2025 term. This program from ICMA is made possible with support from the Gates Foundation.

ELIGIBILITY

- Applications must be submitted by a professor or university representative from a U.S. based university. The university should have an established capstone course for public administration students (or similarly structured program) through which this learning opportunity will be provided.
- University applicants should identify a partner local government that will define the scope of work for the students and serve as a liaison to the project team during their work period.

PROCESS & SELECTION CRITERIA

To ensure enough time to work through a selection and grant award process, ICMA is requesting applications now for Fall 2025 activities. Interested universities should submit the brief [application online](#).

ICMA will conduct a first review of applications received by April 11, 2025, 11:59 PM (ET) to select recommended partners for moving forward based on the anticipated timeline listed below. Applications received after that deadline will be considered on a rolling basis only if project funding remains (not guaranteed).

The application requests preliminary information about the partner local government and prospective scope of work for the students. While these are subject to further refinement, applications will be evaluated on strength of initial concept (e.g., established partnership with a local government, description of project intent, etc.).

As grants will still need to be executed in a relatively short time frame, we are also looking for indications that the university program has capacity to efficiently receive and deploy external funding of this modest scale. Prior to final selections, ICMA staff may hold brief follow up interviews with applicants to discuss detailed expectations and potential implementation challenges.

For questions or additional information, please reach out to ICMA staff at emo@icma.org.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

- After selection, a refined scope of work and budget must be submitted to and approved by ICMA.
- As part of the project kickoffs with the student teams, ICMA will provide a brief orientation to several evidence-based resources that the student teams can use in support of their work with government partners to identify, refine, and advance local EMO priorities. Final reports should reference how these resources were used in support of the project:
 - [Economic Mobility Catalog](#) (Results for America): Case studies and implementation guidance on evidence-based strategies
 - [Upward Mobility Framework](#) (Urban Institute): Comprehensive framework of EMO dimensions, pillars, and predictors; includes a data dashboard and other resources to help inform local action
 - [Opportunity Atlas](#) (Opportunity Insights): Research and data to identify and dismantle barriers to economic opportunity
- Students' scopes of work on behalf of the local government partner are to be completed by the end of the Fall 2025 term.
- Student teams will present their work and findings to the governing body of their partner local government and ICMA staff along with a written final report.
- Each class will be asked to send at least one representative to present their findings at a 2026 ICMA-sponsored event (e.g., a Local Government Reimagined Conference or Economic Mobility Convening). Funding to support student travel should be allocated as needed within the grant budget.

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Milestone	Target Date
Application selections	April 2025
Administrative kickoff meetings between ICMA/university representatives	May 2025
University representative submits scope of work and budget and complete contractual agreement process	May – August 2025
Project kick off meeting with ICMA staff and local government representative; student teams begin the scope of work	Within the first 2 weeks of the Fall 2025 term
Mid-semester check-in: submission of brief report	October 2025
Students present final reports to local government partners	December 2025
Student(s) representative present at ICMA sponsored event	2026

APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. University Key Personnel

- a. **Faculty Liaison** (name, title, email, phone)
 - i. Describe any prior practical and/or teaching experience with EMO topics, if applicable (prior experience is not required)
- b. **Grants and Contracts Liaison** (name, title, email, phone)
- c. **Enter the university name and program through which the course is provided.**
- d. **Briefly describe the capstone course or similar structure through which this learning opportunity will be facilitated** (typical profile of a class can include professionals attending school, full-time students, etc.).

Brief descriptions of or links to any outputs of relevant partnerships/projects that students have completed in the past through your university program are helpful.

2. Local Government Partner

- a. **Local Government Representative** (name, title, email, phone)
- b. **If the specific local government representative is not yet known, detail how you will go about identifying and confirming a local government partner ahead of the term start. ICMA will not disburse funds without an approved scope of work tailored to a specific local government-defined EMO priority.**

- 3. **Provide a preliminary description of the proposed scope of EMO-focused work for the partner local government to be completed by the students. What issue(s) are they expected to focus on and through what processes; what is the anticipated output/deliverable for the local government?**

This should be developed by or with the local government partner. Focus areas could include, but are not limited to (see Results for America's [Economic Mobility Catalog](#) for more ideas): early childhood; post-secondary education and workforce development; health and well-being, justice and public safety; housing and community development; financial security.

- 4. **If selected, university partners will be required to submit a brief budget for spending the \$10,000 in grant funds and have flexibility over how to allocate those funds. Eligible costs include stipends for student team members, travel for team representative(s), and other costs associated with project implementation. ICMA encourages payment to students for time and travel.**

Use the box below to briefly describe preliminary plans for allocating and any questions for ICMA staff about the grant funds.