



CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: November 10, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Presentation – ICMA Recognition

BACKGROUND:

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is the leading association of professional city and county managers and other employees who serve local governments. A core mission of ICMA is to promote the council-manager form of government and high standards of professional, ethical management.

In June of 2025, I reached out to ICMA to inquire about the ICMA Local Government Recognition program, a formal acknowledgement by the ICMA Executive Board and membership that a local government has established an executive, chief appointed officer position – such as a professional city, town, or county manager – and granted that position certain authorities and responsibilities.

After getting some additional information, I applied for the recognition.

Recently, the City of Independence was notified that it has been awarded ICMA Local Government Recognition for 2025. This recognition is granted to cities, towns, and counties that have demonstrated a commitment to the principles of professional local government management by retaining a full-time, appointed professional manager or administrator.

DISCUSSION:

Receiving this recognition is a significant honor and a testament to the City's commitment to professional management, ethical standards, and high-quality service delivery. It affirms the current professional structure of our city's administration.

However, it is critical to clarify two points for the Council and the public:

1. **This Recognition Does Not Change Our Form of Government:** Accepting this award does not, in any way, alter the City of Independence's legal form of government as established by City ordinance and the Code of Iowa. Our governance structure remains exactly as it is defined by state law.
2. **ICMA Definition vs. Iowa State Code Definition:** The core of the clarification lies in definitions.
 - **ICMA's definition** of a "council-manager" form of government is broad and based on *practice*. They recognize local governments that have an appointed, professional, non-political manager who reports to the elected body and is responsible for daily operations and policy implementation.
 - **The Iowa State Code** has very specific, legal definitions for different forms of city government (e.g., Mayor-Council, Council-Manager-At-Large, Home Rule Charter, etc.).

Our City's professional administrative structure, led by an appointed City Manager, aligns with ICMA's *practical* definition of professional management, which is what earned us this recognition. This award is an endorsement of our *professionalism* and *current operations*, not a legal change to our government classification under Iowa law.

RESULTS:

The City has established priorities during strategic planning sessions. This item supports the Vision from that session of **supporting high-quality City services** and **efficient and effective planning and prioritizing of all available resources**. This item helps achieve that vision by formally acknowledging the professional standards our organization adheres to. This recognition reinforces public trust and highlights the City's commitment to effective, ethical, and transparent governance, which is the foundation for achieving all other strategic goals.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:

There is no financial cost or consideration associated with this recognition. It is an honorary award based on our City's existing governance structure and professional commitments.

RECOMMENDATION:

No Motion is required, as this is just an acknowledgement and receipt of the award.