



ILCMA Summer Conference

Beyond Right and Wrong: Decisions, Dilemmas,
and Dialogue

June 4, 2025



[Link to Kahoot](#)



Panel Introductions

- Mark Franz, Glen Ellyn Village Manager (Moderator)
- Stephanie Dawkins, Geneva City Administrator
- Cara Pavlicek, Northbrook Village Manager
- Scott Hartman, McHenry Deputy County Administrator
- All are members of the ILCMA Committee of Professional Conduct.....more on the Committee to come!

Session Objectives:

- Reinforce a strict adherence to ICMA's Code of Ethics and how enforcement of the Code is critical to the profession.
- Share observations on trending ethics issues relevant to professionals at all career stages
- Modifications to the ILCMA rules and procedures on enforcement of the Code of Ethics and new workflow process
- Share scenarios and case studies to illustrate ethical challenges and how ethical principles apply in practical situations.
- Guide to assist in managing ethical responsibilities
- Fun and interactive session planned
 - Survey
 - Small Group



ICMA Code of Ethics-Turned 100 Years Old in 2024

- The mission of ICMA and ILCMA is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide. For over 100 years, ICMA has had this mission that certain principles, as enforced by the Rules of Procedure, shall govern the conduct of every member of ICMA.
- ICMA has completed a review and update of the Code of Ethics over the last 8-10 years
- ICMA updated rules of procedure of enforcement of the Code (Committee of Professional Conduct)
- ICMA provided additional educational sessions at the Annual Conference in Pittsburgh last year and provided some of the following information:

ICMA Code of Ethics



**Defines the local
government
management
profession's
principles and
expectations**



**12 tenants address
personal and
professional conduct**



**Why?
Build and maintain
public trust**

ICMA Code of Ethics (Since 1924)

- **Goal is public trust.** These particular principles should be noted:
 1. We believe professional management is essential to effective, efficient, equitable, and democratic local government.
 2. Affirm the dignity and worth of local government services and maintain a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant.
 3. Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, of other officials and employees, and of the public. *
 4. Serve the best interests of all community members.
 5. Submit policy proposals to elected officials; provide them with facts, and technical and professional advice about policy options; and collaborate with them in setting goals for the community and organization.

*Tenant 3, 7 and 12 are the tenants most commonly violated

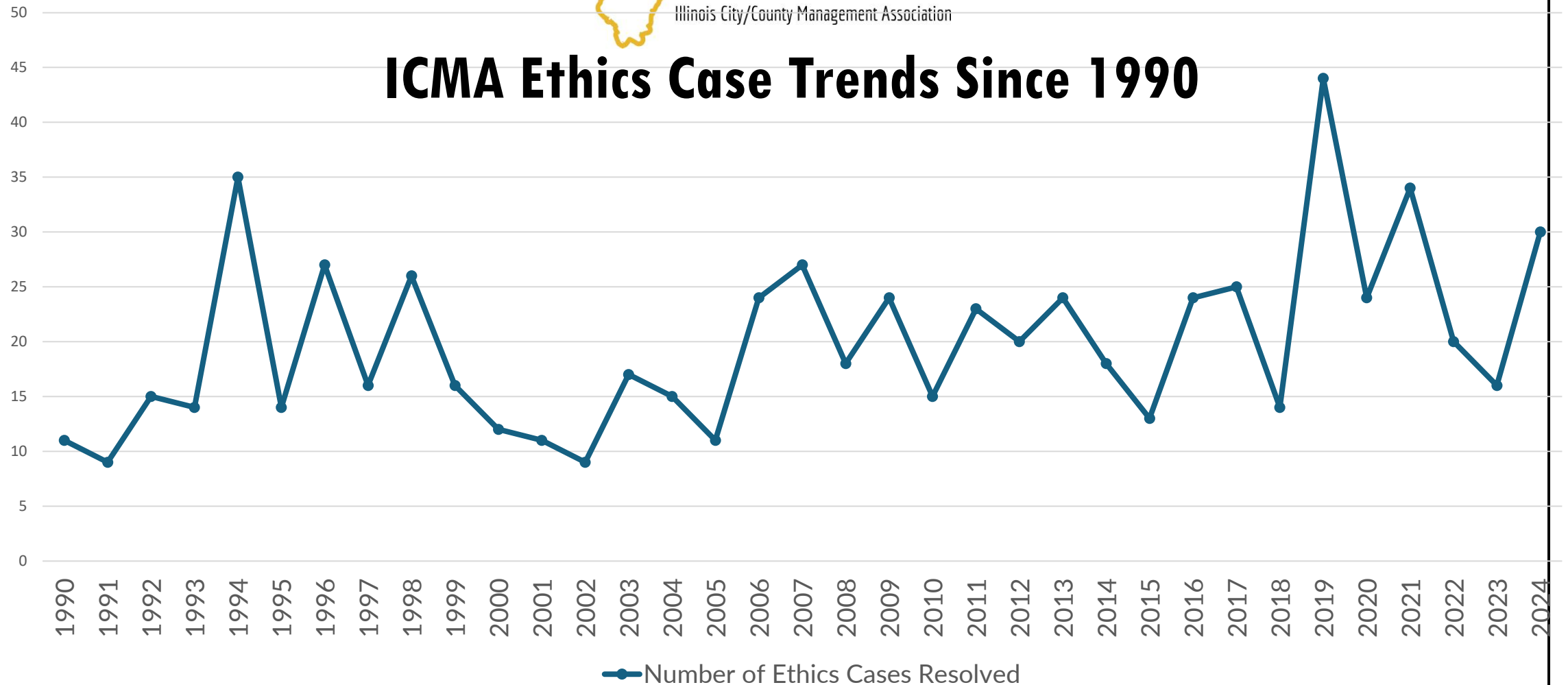


ICMA Code of Ethics (Since 1924)

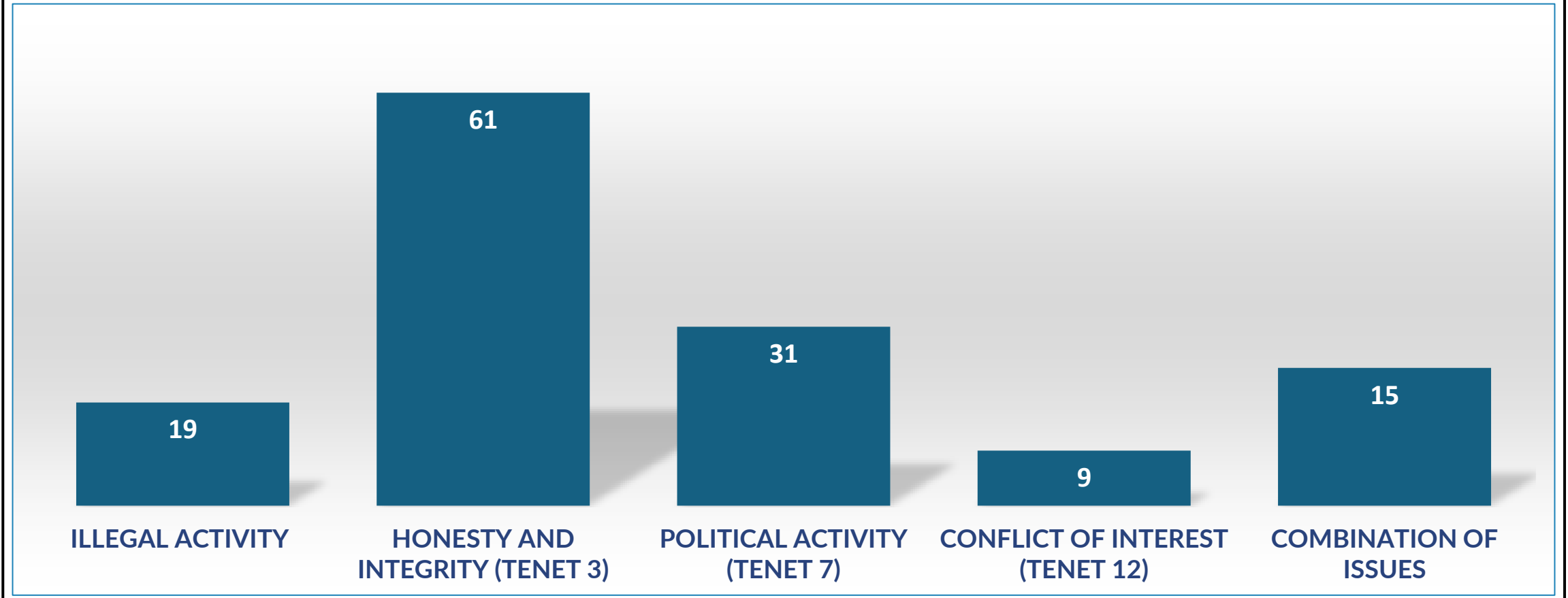
6. Recognize that elected representatives are accountable to their community for the decisions they make; members are responsible for implementing those decisions.
7. Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation in the election of the members of the employing legislative body. *
8. Make it a duty continually to improve the member's professional ability and to develop the competence of associates in the use of management techniques.
9. Keep the community informed on local government affairs. Encourage and facilitate active engagement and constructive communication between community members and all local government officials.
10. Resist any encroachment on professional responsibilities, believing the member should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.
11. Manage all personnel matters with fairness and impartiality.
12. Public office is a public trust. A member shall not leverage his or her position for personal gain or benefit.*

ICMA Ethics Trends

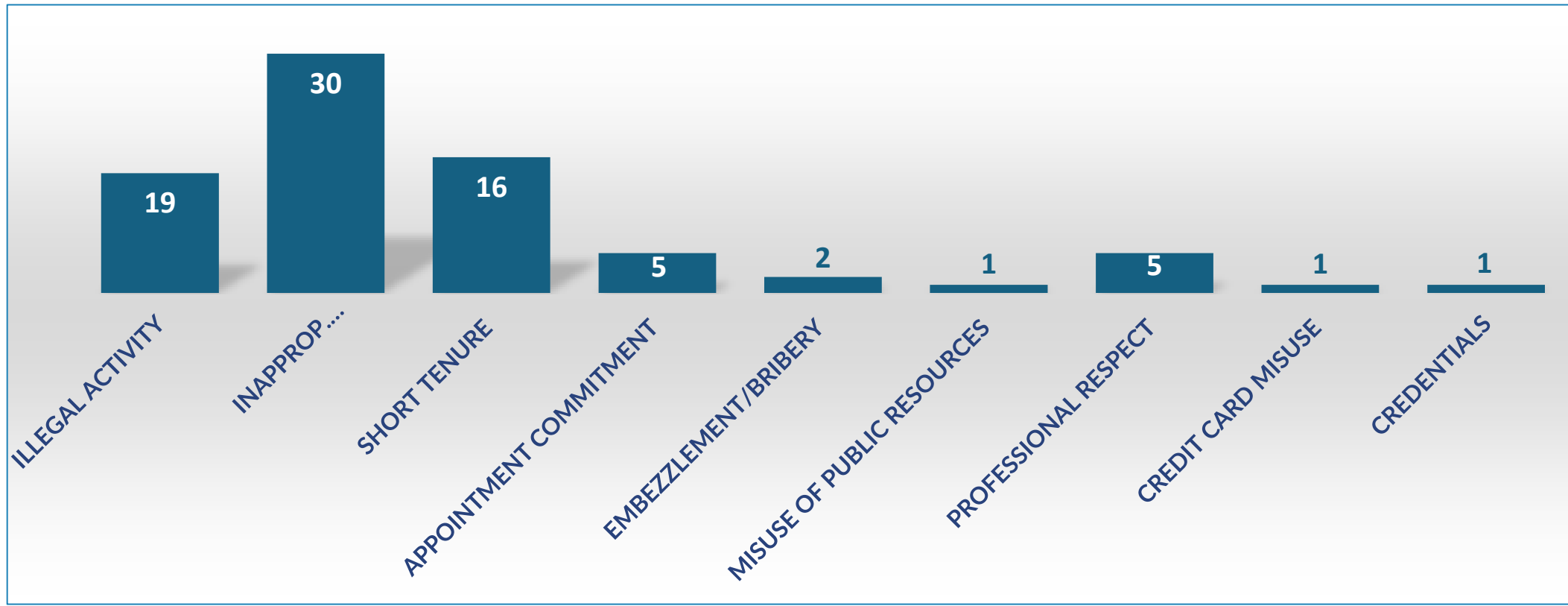
ICMA Ethics Case Trends Since 1990



ICMA Number of Cases by Violation Issue (FY 2015-2024)

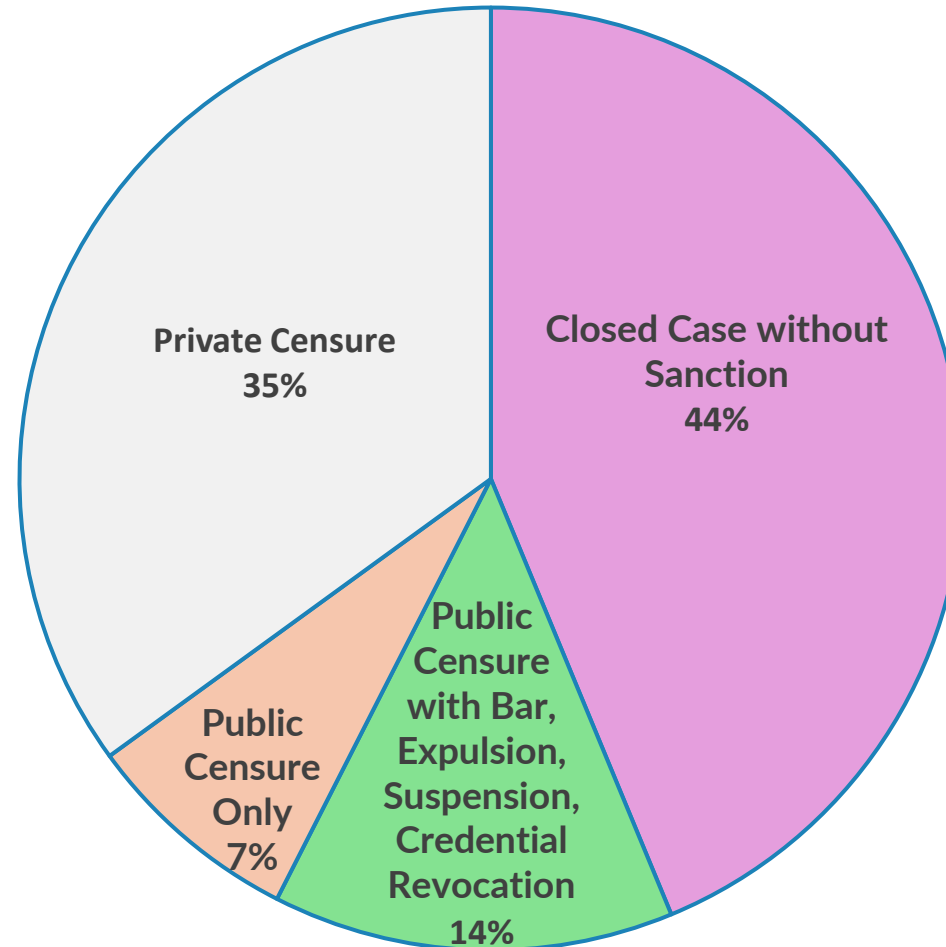


ICMA: Number of Tenet 3 Violations by Issue (FY 2015-2024)



ICMA 240 Total Ethics Cases: FY 2015-2024

Resolution of Ethics Complaints:





Ethical Scenarios

Kahoot Survey



ILCMA Committee on Professional Conduct (CPC)

Responsible for:

- Serving as a fact-finding committee to review ICMA ethics complaints or questions involving Illinois members
- Developing and carrying out education and training activities to promote the highest ethical standards of conduct
- Serving as the primary liaison with the ICMA Committee of Professional Conduct

➤ Does not adjudicate complaints

Committee Makeup:

Chair: Mark Franz, Village Manager, Glen Ellyn

Vice-Chair: Walter Denton, City Administrator

Elijah Bebora, Management Analyst, Lincolnwood

Stephanie Dawkins, City Administrator, Geneva

Scott Hartman, Deputy County Administrator, McHenry County

Cara Pavlicek, Village Manager, Northbrook

Pamela Reece, City Manager, Normal

Pietro Scalera, Village Administrator, Bloomingdale

Mike Strong, Village Administrator, Lake Villa

Brian Townsend, Village Manager, Schaumburg

Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager, Flossmoor



ILCMA Committee on Professional Conduct

- Over the last six months, sub-committee has worked to update the policy and workflow
- ILCMA Board approved the new policy and workflow at their Board meeting in May 2025

Special Thanks to Subcommittee below for their work on the update:

- Stephanie Dawkins, City Administrator, Geneva
- Pamela Reece, City Manager, Normal
- Scott Hartman, Deputy County Administrator, McHenry County



Modifications to the Rules of Procedure for Enforcement of the ICMA Code of Ethics

Overall Goals:

1. Clarifies/streamline the complaint filing, processing and adjudication procedures
2. Align with the ICMA Rules of Procedures
3. Ensure a respondent has due process and confidentiality
4. Ensure timely disposition/resolution of complaints
5. Create a process workflow chart



Modifications to the Rules of Procedure for Enforcement of the ICMA Code of Ethics

Key Changes:

1. These only apply to members of ILCMA who are NOT members of ICMA (ICMA rules apply to those who are members of both)
2. Proceedings are confidential
3. Complainant must put their name on the complaint but may remain anonymous throughout the process
4. Timeframes are binding unless extended by the ILCMA President upon written request and for reasonable cause
5. New policy allows for a Consent Agreement option for efficient resolution of a complaint on mutually agreeable terms.
6. The CPC Chair is notified of the complaint resolution and sanctions imposed
7. All filed complaints are resolved, regardless of whether a member discontinues membership in ILCMA
8. Includes a process updated workflow chart

Ethical Questions or Concerns

Ethics Resources:

- <https://icma.org/ethics>
- <https://icma.org/ethics-issues-and-advice>

Ethics Questions, Contact:

- Jessica Cowles, Ethics Director jcowles@icma.org
- Dawn Peters, Executive Director of ILCMA, dpeters@niu.edu
- ICMA Senior Advisors
- Mark Franz, ILCMA Committee on Professional Conduct Chair, mfranz@glenellyn.org

Key Ethics Topics – Small Groups (Questions and QR Codes on the Table)





Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

1. Honesty and Integrity: You are a well-regarded assistant in a well-run and stable larger community. A smaller community not too far away is recruiting for its first City Manager. Seeing the opportunity to take the next step in your career, you apply and are ultimately selected, although the board is divided on your appointment. Even though the pay is only slightly higher, and you know you will face organizational, financial and political challenges, the opportunity to move up in your career is more valuable and you accept the position. The next year and a half is at times very tumultuous, and you are often at odds with certain members of the board and even have concerns about being retained. Your previous manager retires, and the mayor asks you to come back as the City Manager. Seeing this as an opportunity to return to a stable and supportive organization which you know well and truly miss, not to mention, the higher pay and further career advancement, you accept. Would that be a violation of the Code of Ethics?





Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

2. Honesty and Integrity: A current Village Manager continues to have discussions with elected officials of the community he/she formerly worked for without sharing this with the current Village Manager. As a Village Manager in a neighboring community, you are privy to these conversations when you hear these comments firsthand at regional meetings. If you do not report this matter, would that be a violation of the Code of Ethics?





Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

3. Honesty and Integrity: A Village Manager made negative comments on social media about decisions made in the community in which she lives but does not work. The community in which she resides does have a Village Manager who is an ICMA member. Her LinkedIn account clearly states that opinions are her own and not those of the organization in which she works. Would that be a violation of the Code of Ethics?



Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

4. Honesty and Integrity: A nearby municipality is going through a referendum to eliminate the Council Manager form of government. ICMA and ILCMA are sharing information and coordinate efforts to defeat the referendum. As a Village Manager in a neighboring town, you want to go and speak on behave of the current form of government. The current mayor knows you and would likely take offense to this effort to get involved in what he perceives as a local issue. Would that be a violation of the Code of Ethics?





Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

5. Political Activity: You are the Assistant Village Administrator and live within a subdivision in that community. Seeing an opportunity to also serve your subdivision, you want to run for your HOA board even though there are times at which the HOA board will intersect with your municipal duties. Would running for the HOA board violate the Code of Ethics?



Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

6. Political Activity: You own a rental property several towns over in another county. Your sister-in-law is running for County Coroner of that county and asks if she can put a campaign sign in the yard. Would allowing her to put the sign be a violation of the Code of Ethics?



Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

7. Political Activity: A Trustee requests that you interview and hire a friend for a position. The person is the best person for the job, but the hiring will be linked to this Trustee. What if this is just a summer internship position? Would that be a violation of the Code of Ethics?





Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

8. Political Activity: A group of city residents is organizing a “Hands Off” protest to speak out against the actions taken by President Trump’s administration, including the reduction or elimination of grant programs that support local government programs and services. The activities include a demonstration at a city-owned/maintained park and will include speeches by a number of Democrat government officials including congressional representatives, state legislators, and county commissioners. The City Council has not taken a position on the actions of the Trump administration, or the impacts on the local government. The City Manager attends with a group of personal friends. Would that be a violation of the Code of Ethics?





Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

9. Conflict of Interest: You are talking with a good friend and fellow City Manager about projects they are working on, and she references a possible water and sewer extension project that, if it were to proceed, will create a new area for development in a few years. By chance, you happen to notice a parcel in that vicinity for sale and if the utilities are installed, you know the value will significantly increase. If you buy or invest in that parcel based on this information, would that be a violation of the Code of Ethics?





Small Group: Working within your group, please review this scenario by referencing the ICMA Code of Ethics and decide if a violation occurred and if you as an ICMA member should report such infraction?

10. Conflict of Interest: The Village Manager is asked to be on the Chamber Board and serves for a few years before agreeing to be the Chamber President. A major downtown project has become controversial, and the Chamber is asked for and endorsement of the project. Is this a violation of the Code of Ethics?





Additional Thoughts: (ICMA PM Magazine-February 2025)

One of the most common reasons we fail to do what is right is because we don't want to deal with the ramifications of doing the right thing. A few ideas to help you avoid failing your ethical responsibilities when you have a lot to risk.

- Decide in advance where your ethical “lines” are drawn.**
- Remain vigilant of potential ethical implications of issues or circumstances you may encounter.**
- Rid yourself of the notion that only dishonest or clueless people make ethical mistakes. Be humble!**
- Appreciate that many fall into an ethical trap without fully comprehending the ethical implications of an issue they are managing.**



Additional Thoughts: (ICMA PM Magazine-February 2025)

- Be vigilant of ethical missteps in your organization.
- Be sensitive to the potential for exhibiting a sense of entitlement when faced with achieving a beneficial outcome.
- Understand that the negative impacts of doing the right thing are quite often less than the negative impacts of not doing the right thing. When confronted with a serious ethical challenge, recognize that doing nothing is in fact a decision for which you are likely to be held accountable.
- Enlist the help of others.
- When in doubt, ask!!!

Ethics Resources

- ✓ Confidential ethics advice to members
- ✓ Monthly Ethics Matter! column in *PM* Magazine
- ✓ Frequent issues and advice on [ICMA.org/ethics](https://www.icma.org/ethics)
- ✓ Ethics training and education opportunities

Final Thought:

- Trust in government is at an all-time low, ILCMA members need to continue to differentiate ourselves.....this needs to define our profession, we are different!
- Adherence to ethical standards is our calling card and our brand.