

# **MEMBERS IN TRANSITION**

**A Guide for Members in Transition Prepared by the  
Minnesota City/County Management Association**



**MCMA**  
**Minnesota City/County  
Management Association**  
A State Affiliate of **ICMA**

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

This guide is meant to serve as a resource for those Minnesota managers/administrators and assistants who are "in transition." One must be a member in good standing of the Minnesota City/County Management Association (MCMA) to receive the benefits of this program as well as a member in good standing of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to receive the benefits of the ICMA program that is referenced within this document. It is organized into the following sections:

- Immediate Steps
- Exit Strategies
- ICMA & MCMA Benefits for Members in Transition
- Job Search Guidance
- MCMA Membership Responsibilities. Keep in mind; **your MCMA and ICMA memberships follow you.** They do not stay with your municipality or county.

Remember, finding yourself in transition happens to the best. It is a difficult period for you and your family. Managers find themselves in transition usually because of political reasons such as a change due to elections, a different policy direction determined by the governing body, or personality differences. Most managers DO NOT find themselves in transition due to a lack of technical proficiency or an inability to do the job. Grant yourself the time and grace necessary to make the right decisions as you move forward to your next opportunity. Your fellow members are a solid source of support, friendship and ideas. Use them. We're here for each other.

## **Section 2: What to Consider When Asked to Resign**

1. Do not volunteer your resignation until you have worked out a satisfactory written separation/severance agreement approved by the council (see the model separation agreement in Appendix A of this manual);
2. Councils/boards usually want the manager to resign quietly (*to avoid public controversy*).
3. Managers/administrators at first often feel that they should accede to the resignation request but upon reflection decide that they should not resign unless they can do so "on terms that they can live with;"
4. Councils/boards usually are willing to provide severance benefits (*dollars, time, and employee fringes*) if the manager/administrator will voluntarily submit his/her resignation (with those benefits usually larger than those provided for in the manager's employment agreement).
5. Managers/administrators should consider hiring an attorney versed in employment law to negotiate a written separation agreement detailing the terms of separation. This is recommended so as to avoid any misunderstandings and to do a better job than the manager can do by himself/herself. Attorneys are especially important if the separation is likely to be contentious or if there is an indication the governing body will backtrack on

terms or provisions of the previously approved employment agreement or contract. To ensure your interests are preserved, an attorney is advisable. However, hiring an attorney will likely ramp-up the level of contention but the trade-off is necessary if your interests are threatened. Alternatively, attorneys will add a personal expense at a time when you can least afford it. If you have contributed to the MCMA Legal Services Fund, please visit the [MCMA website](#) for information on accessing your consultation time with our contracted attorney. If the separation appears to be proceeding amicably, an attorney is usually not necessary. Additionally, manager/administrators should consider reaching out to colleagues for advice; particularly if that person has been through a separation agreement previously.

### **Section 3: Immediate Steps-“The First 24 Hours”**

Regardless of whether you saw it coming or not, the critical time is the first 24 hours after your council or board has made its decision. This short time frame will probably have more impact on your immediate future than anything else you do in your whole transition. Once it is clear that you are going to be terminated, your whole concentration and effort must be to focus on one objective—taking care of yourself and your family by making the best exit agreement possible.

Putting your own well-being first is hard to do if you are like most of us in this business. You want to take care of the staff, make sure that your projects are on track, figure out how this can make the least impact on the community, etc. It simply is not your problem anymore. All those things will sort themselves out in due time. While they may not get done as completely, or efficiently, or elegantly as you would have done them—they will get done.

**BEWARE!!** You will want to defend yourself and your actions. You will want to respond to the outrageous statements and half-truths that your council or board members have uttered in defense of their decision to get rid of you. You will want that public hearing to tell the community the real truth about what has been going on. It may prove satisfying to hold that public hearing, ask for the list of charges, have your say, rally your supporters, etc. Think twice, then think again.

None of that is going to pay your bills for the next little while, and that is the key concept you must stay focused on during the first 24 hours after the bombshell drops. Don't rush to judgment. This is why you spent the time to be prepared and (if you have one) have your attorney up to speed on your situation. Talk with him or her before you take any action. Is it worth it to act in haste so you can repent at your leisure?

Here is the real situation. You have somewhere between one and three days to position yourself financially for the indeterminate future until you get another job. Again, all of your energy must go at once toward accomplishing this objective and nothing else. Here is the recommended punchlist:

**#1. Review Employment Agreement.** Review your employment agreement, the city charter, the ordinance creating your position, and any state statutes that may pertain to your position. If you are like most managers, you are in an at-will position, but sometimes you will find that you have additional legal protection in the form of one or more of those documents—check to see if your contract incorporates some or all of the municipality's personnel policies by reference.

**#2. Consider hiring an Attorney!** Make no formal or informal agreements to ANYTHING, including resigning, without careful review or until you have had a chance to talk with an

attorney. Your attorney, not the city attorney (or county attorney if you are a county employee.) Remember, the city attorney may be a good person, may even be a good friend of yours, but the city attorney—from the instant the council has made its decision to jettison you—does not work for you and will endeavor to represent the best interest of the city, which may or may not coincide with your best interests.

**#3. Make no Public Announcements.** No hasty press conferences, no letters to the editors, no talk radio shows, no verbal haranguing in front of the staff. Nothing. No matter how good you think it will make you feel, it cuts out your negotiating room and will harden resolve on the other side. If you feel bitter and hurt, show them what professionalism is all about. Take the high road. Give them nothing to feed on. It will enhance your reputation and drive them nuts. As a general rule—even if procedures were not followed, even if there was an illegal executive session, even if you can prove it all beyond a shadow of a doubt—probably your best bet is to use that as leverage in your negotiation.

**#4. Accept the Situation.** Unless your elected officials were extraordinarily conscientious, there has been some procedural error they committed in the course of giving you the boot. Trying to use that error to keep your job is probably a strategic mistake. If they don't want you there, you don't want to be there. Use the fact of that illegal executive session or lack of specific charges or improper notification as leverage in your exit agreement negotiation.

**#5. The Exit Agreement.** An exit agreement, like much in politics, is about the art of the possible. Think about what it is (besides money, of course) you will need in the course of your transition to the next job. It is almost impossible to provide any specific guidance on what or how much to ask. So much depends on the political context you find yourself in at the moment.

**#6. Know Your Benefits.** Understand the benefits you are entitled to, even if you are no longer employed by the city. Get what you can get; in many ways the benefits are more important than the cash settlement. COBRA registration deadlines are especially important to understand in order to keep continuous medical insurance coverage for you and your family while you are floating toward your next job.

**#7. Tax Consequences.** Also, think about the tax consequences of whatever you agree to. A lump-sum payment of six-months severance pay issued on December 28 will likely have catastrophic tax implications. Talk to an ICMA representative before deciding to cash in that 457 retirement plan. Their timelines are very tight (within 60 days after termination), and the decision is irrevocable.

**#8. Remain Professional.** When it is time to go, do so. Hand in the keys, clean out the office, walk out the door, and don't look back. As tempting as it is to engage in anger and vengeance, your job is to think about the future. You will have plenty of time to relive the past. Be a professional to the very end. Reflect on the accomplishments you have achieved and the progress the community has made during your tenure.

#### **Section 4: MCMA Financial Assistance**

MCMA believes it is important to provide Members in Transition with the necessary support. Each member's needs will vary depending on the unique circumstances. Please contact Secretariat, Madison Hagenau, on what resources are available to you. You may be eligible to receive financial resources for the following services:

- Attorney/Legal
- Mental Health Professionals
- Financial Planning
- Resume Building
- Professional Coaching/Mentoring

### **Section 5: Press Relations**

- Agree with the city council that neither side will speak negatively about the other; cite “philosophical” differences and wish each other well.
- Develop a mutually agreeable press release, if you are able; otherwise, prepare your own statement for the press.
- Draft a letter of resignation in such a way that it says what the manager wants the press to know. Let the letter speak for itself, rather than commenting further to the press.
- Stay away from the press for a couple of days to let things die down. When you do talk, don’t talk about the council (it will not help). Talk about the things you are proud of in your tenure. Make no public pronouncements defending yourself; take the high road.
- Remember that your greatest asset is your professional reputation. The way you exit creates a lasting image and reflects on how you value your work and your colleagues.

### **Section 6: Day 2 - Next Steps for the Road Ahead**

Terminations are extraordinarily stressful events for you and your family. In many cases—especially if there has been a long buildup leading up to being fired—one of the first emotions is relief. It is all finally over, and you won’t have to sit through any more of those contentious, withering meetings where you have constantly been in the crosshairs.

There is likely a gamut of emotions you will go through in the first weeks of your new avocation of suspended animation. You will likely be in a state of slight shock and unreality, as if all this was happening to someone else. It may feel very uncomfortable to go out of the house. Midnight grocery shopping suddenly becomes appealing.

It is OK to indulge yourself for a bit. Sleep late. Eat ice cream for breakfast. Get a massage. See an afternoon matinee. Go to the museum. Take a long bike ride. Stuff like that. But do keep in mind that it is just an indulgence, not the start of a new lifestyle. You will want to begin building up a new routine within a couple of weeks. Meanwhile, you deserve a break, so take it.

Folks will want to talk to you. Do not shut them out. It is important to remember that you are not a different person, you just happen to be between jobs at the moment. You are going to have those down times—call a friend, a relative, someone you are close to and tell them what is going on with you.

Things may get tense around the house for a while. You have been used to being the boss. Your family does not look at you as being the boss; you are one of the family. They are not going to jump

at every suggestion you make. It may make you cranky that they do not, and they may get cranky because you expect them to.

The kids may not know what to make of you being around the house in the afternoon when they get home—it will seem odd to them. Money issues may start to dominate the household conversation, even over relatively minor purchases. Emotional flare-ups may emanate from any family member at the drop of a hat. Be aware of that and try to cut everyone a little extra slack. All the family is uncertain and nervous about what is going to happen next. Be kind.

If at all possible, get out of town for a while. You don't have to go to Costa Rica (although it is a pretty nice place to go). It doesn't have to be far, or even for long, but a change of scenery will do you good. When you get back, you can start thinking about the future.

- Call ICMA Member Services at (202) 962-3680 or e-mail them at [membership@icma.org](mailto:membership@icma.org) to notify them of your change in status. ICMA can provide information about positions available throughout the country. You can also seek advice from their members in transition staff. ICMA information is also available at their website at [www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org).
- Call MCMA Secretariat at 651-215-4048 or e-mail [mhagenau@lmc.org](mailto:mhagenau@lmc.org) to notify them of your change in status. Give them your updated home address, phone number, and e-mail so you can continue to receive correspondence.
- Call a Senior Advisor for general support. They are:
  - Geralyn Barone  
(612) 280-5248  
[geralynbarone@gmail.com](mailto:geralynbarone@gmail.com)
  - Bill Craig  
(763) 497-3577  
[peggcr@aol.com](mailto:peggcr@aol.com)
  - Craig Dawson  
(651) 699-8689  
[cdawson956@hotmail.com](mailto:cdawson956@hotmail.com)
  - Mark McNeill  
(612) 599-1941  
[mcneillmh@gmail.com](mailto:mcneillmh@gmail.com)
  - Jeff Weldon  
(320) 557-8006  
[jtwelldone@gmail.com](mailto:jtwelldone@gmail.com)
- Apply for unemployment insurance by contacting your local state employment office. Rules vary from time to time. The state can interpret current rules for you.
- Call neighboring members.

- Contact any member of the MCMA Board of Directors found in your Who's Who Directory or any MCMA member with whom you are acquainted for general support and information.
- Look for interim jobs in communities that have special projects or local colleges and register for the MCMA Professional Resource Service program.
- Network with regional commissions and public, non-profit and university entities and private sector consulting firms to identify temporary assignments for members in transition (MIT's).
- Update your resume and interviewing skills.
- Consider counseling for yourself and your family.
- Check the MCMA newsletter, MCMA website, ICMA newsletter, ICMA website ([www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org)) Member Benefits section and Members in Transition section, ASPA newsletter, college placement office, outplacement firms, and executive search firms for possible employment.
- Check into the variety of reading material available regarding life changes and transforming disappointment.

### **Section 7: MCMA - Member In Transition Benefits**

MCMA membership stays with the individual, not with the employing agency. MCMA offers the following benefits for members in transition:

- Your membership dues will be waived while you are in transition and actively seeking local government employment.
- You will continue to receive the MCMA Newsletter.
- You will retain all membership privileges of your current membership category.
- You may receive complimentary registration to the winter and summer conferences. Special instructions are on the conference registration form. Lodging expenses are not covered; however, employed members are encouraged to invite managers in transition to share a room to help defer expenses.
- You are encouraged to maintain contact MCMA Senior Advisors (see prior section)
- At your request, you can be listed in the "MCMA Newsletter" and in the "Members Only" section on the MCMA website as being in transition to let your colleagues know where you are and to receive support from your colleagues. Contact the MCMA Secretariat at 651-215-4048 or e-mail [hagenau@lmc.org](mailto:hagenau@lmc.org).
- You may participate in member in transition meetings that are held periodically. These meetings will be held by MCMA Senior Advisors.



Many of MCMA's affiliate organizations have policies in place to waive luncheon and meeting fees for managers in transition. Please check with your affiliate organization(s) for details.

### **Section 8: ICMA - Member In Transition Benefits**

Remember, ICMA membership belongs to the individual, not the local government. Staff at ICMA changes from time to time; therefore, the following number is the general number for Member Services: 202-962-3680. E-mail: [membership@icma.org](mailto:membership@icma.org); visit the ICMA website: [http://icma.org/en/icma/members/benefits/members\\_in\\_transition](http://icma.org/en/icma/members/benefits/members_in_transition).

ICMA provides the following:

- Your membership dues may be waived for up to three years (in six-month increments) while you are in transition and actively seeking local government employment.
- You will continue to receive the "ICMA Newsletter" and "Public Management" (PM) magazine. It may be in electronic format.
- You will retain all membership privileges of your current membership category.
- ICMA holds bi-monthly conference calls for members in transition.
- You may receive complimentary registration to the next annual conference. Special instructions are on the conference registration form.
- ICMA provides one 90-minute web conference per month to members in transition.
- You have access to personal support from the ICMA leadership, senior management staff, Senior Advisors and members to deal with issues of severance, relocation and job hunting. ICMA Member Services can direct you to the right place depending on your question.
- You will receive a copy of "Notes from Beachcombers" and the January 1992 issue of "PM" magazine dealing with being in transition.
- At your request, you can be listed, in the "ICMA Newsletter" as being in transition to let your colleagues know where you are and to receive support from them.
- For complete up-to-date information on the ICMA Member in Transition Program visit [http://icma.org/en/icma/members/members\\_in\\_transition](http://icma.org/en/icma/members/members_in_transition).

### **Section 9: Job Search**

#### **Municipal Search Firms**

There are professional organizations dedicated to the placement of executives in the private and public sector. There is a fee that may or may not be paid by a prospective employer. A quick internet search under "executive search consultants" for a list of firms in your area. Also check

the classified section of the ICMA's Public Management magazine for firms that specialize in public sector searches.

Online job listings are available in the ICMA JobCenter at <http://jobs.icma.org>. The ICMA JobCenter offers a database of current job openings for local government professionals. Positions listed are with local governments, related local government and nonprofit organizations, and universities. The JobCenter also offers an online resume service and job agents for ICMA Members. Log in on the right side of the page to take advantage of these services.

The *ICMA Newsletter* is published every two weeks, and is posted at [www.icma.org](http://www.icma.org) by the prior Thursday to the publication date. The ICMA newsletter has job openings posted in it.

### **Section 10: Preparing for an Interview**

- Review your resume and cover letter or perform a mock interview.
- Follow the application instructions provided, key in on the desired skills specified in the job ad in your cover letter, and double check grammar, spelling, etc. They are often “part of the test” of the applicant’s skill level and eye for detail.
- It is prudent to be aware of and address any potential shortcomings. To shorten their list of qualified candidates, search teams and governing bodies will tend to look for information to disqualify a candidate from further consideration. Check whatever information is available electronically about you. Explain anything negative in the cover letter and discuss it with the search team. In addition, a record of short tenures, especially if due to terminations, can be hard to overcome. Some personal “soul searching” about the profession or a separate explanation, either in the cover letter or as a separate document in the resume materials, is advised.
- Be comfortable and relaxed. You may have been without full-time work for some time and do not want to come across as intense or desperate. Speak slowly, clearly, and concisely.
- Show genuine interest and excitement about the position and community. Be able to say why you want the job.
- Know the community. Do your research. Review the community’s website, meeting minutes, news articles and if possible visit the community prior to your interview. Talk with neighboring managers or consultants you know who are familiar with the organization. Ask a couple of questions at the end to demonstrate your knowledge.
- Focus on the key criteria listed in the recruitment brochure and how your skills address specific issues facing the community.
- Remember all of the finalists will usually be qualified. You need to stand out from the others. "Senior" candidates should: dress in current business fashion, wear up-to-date glasses, avoid old hair styles, get up-to-speed on technology, and point out their advantages in perspective and range of experience.
- Be aware that you are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you. The recruiting

process could be indicative of the way an organization addresses issues. You may or may not be comfortable with their style or see it as opportunity to introduce a more effective approach. Have questions ready for the recruiter and employer that will lead to a dialog which can help reveal whether a “best fit” is truly present.

- There are organizations and decision-makers who value improvement more than they fear mistakes and are already conducting methodical, high quality recruiting.
- Get to know the recruiters and your potential future employers. If they know you and feel comfortable with you, they will be more likely to share feedback with you.
- Be yourself. Nobody is perfect and a lot depends upon the current circumstances in that municipality.
- The process can be very subjective, feedback is hard to generate, and **“Best Fit” is not 100% definable.**
- If you don’t get a job offer, just accept that this wasn’t the right fit for you and that **your time will come!**
- Be aware that some people simply do not have the personality and demeanor to be a long-term success in this profession. They should recognize it and move on to a profession that is a better fit for them.
- Finally, don’t forget to view the wealth of MIT tips and resources provided by the ICMA and various state associations.

### **Section 11: Two Months Have Passed... Where’s the Net?**

A month or two has passed. You’ve had all the phone calls of concern. You’ve read the letters to the editor praising and damning you. Your colleagues have called and offered their support and understanding. People have been kind and said kind things about you and your family and the difference you have made to the community. It’s been rewarding and gratifying. (It also makes you wonder in your more cynical moments where were all these people were when you needed them.)

The shock is wearing off. You really and truly do not have a job any more, and chances are you don’t know when you will have one again. You are having a hard time focusing on what happens next. Your life, which so recently was so busy, is now a big blank.

Your job is to fill it up again.

There are a number of books and articles out on time in transition (Appendix D). Without taking away from their message, some of the lessons learned after reading them are:

- Take time out to get in touch with yourself and what is important to you. Understand your goals and motivations. Know what makes you happy and go after it.
- Enjoy the time this opportunity has given you to get closer to your family. Get involved at school, be a coach for your kid’s team, take the family cross-country skiing, go camping. There’s a lot you can do that doesn’t take a lot of money. It’s the time that is important.

- Take up activities that will improve your life, and you, in some way. Explore a hobby, take up golf, play with the kids, write a book, garden, read the ten books you always wanted to but never had time, become a gourmet cook, travel, take up body-building, be a volunteer, do SOMETHING with your time besides mope around the house and watch TV all day.
- If you don't have a new job, don't move. It's expensive, stressful, and an energy-drainer. Stay involved in the community. Just because you are not the manager doesn't mean you resigned your citizenship. Play in the softball league, go to that Rotary lunch, take your turn driving the kids to a soccer meet. You didn't lose your life, just a job.
- You need to stay in touch with your friends, especially those in the business. The phone calls from other managers will drop off dramatically after the first month. It's not that your colleagues don't care, they just have to get on with their lives as well. So call them. Stay in touch about current issues, and remember: you are still a city manager if you say you are.
- As with any wirewalker, your ultimate protection is the net(work) you have created throughout your career. Build it, maintain it, and then use it when you need it—like now. After all, that is what it is there for.
- Search out every opportunity you can find to have some face time with your colleagues. Stay in touch with Senior Advisor. If you are living in the metro area, go to the metro manager meetings. Drop by the League of Minnesota Cities Office and have the staff give you an update on what is happening statewide. MCMA offers scholarships to attend both the winter and summer conference for managers in transition. Take advantage of it. It will give you an opportunity to maintain that network and find out the latest skinny on new job opportunities.
- It is especially encouraged you to take you and your family to the annual summer conference. It is hosted at wonderful facility for the entire family and a great chance to spend time with other managers and their families. An actress is always an actress, whether she is on Broadway, or doing voice-overs for commercials, or just waiting tables—because she says she is one—and everyone accepts her as being an actress. I suggest the same thing is true of managers, regardless of whether or not they are employed by a local government at the moment. If you believe in this statement, it helps others immensely to believe it about you.
- It is also important to take some time to reflect on the gifts received from your most recent experience. You worked hard there and it shows in the improvements that you were able to accomplish for the community and within the organization. Now that you have a little distance from it, you should take this chance to have an honest look back on your performance.

Ask yourself questions like:

- Out of everything that happened, what skills or attributes served me well over the course of your tenure?
- What new skills did I acquire?
- What lessons have I learned about project management, public speaking, consensus building, conflict management, goal setting, etc.?
- What were the biggest frustrations? What can I do, or what skills will I need, to avoid or minimize that frustration next time around?
- If I had it to do over, what would I do over?

- What are my biggest weaknesses? What will I do with this time to improve upon it?
- What was the most fun? What will I do to replicate it next time around?
- And other questions in the same vein.

This is not a formal writing exercise, but it is important to sort through the experience you have just had and cull out the good, the bad, and the strange. Take the time to learn from yourself. It's not often in life that you get chances like this.

## **Section 12: Five or Six Months Have Passed... Where am I Going?**

It's been four or five months now since you've been let go. By now, you have had a chance to look at a lot of things for a living. Some you tried and didn't like as much as you thought you would. You might have applied for a couple of positions and didn't make it. Things are getting boring, and perhaps even a little scary. This is no time to give up. In the immortal words of Hunter S. Thompson, "When the going gets tough, the weird turn pro."

Maybe you are in the fortunate situation of having a good severance package that allows you the luxury of considering many options. Maybe you didn't get anything at all, or you are somewhere in between. No matter what the particulars of your situation, there are some universally good rules-of-thumb to follow. Here are a few tips about job hunting:

- Be clear about your professional expectations and **STICK TO THEM**. It is awfully tempting to be out of work for six months and grab the first job offer that comes by, regardless of how it fits with your established goals. My advice is: don't do it. After the joy of being at work again wears off in a few weeks, you will realize you are back again in a job you don't really like. (Didn't you just finish doing that?)
- Know what job-search style works for you and use it. Some people are most comfortable having specific goals and then working to achieve them on a daily or weekly basis—three job contacts a day, two hours a day on Internet search, meet once a week with a colleague, etc. Some people just need a good menu of activities to choose from and then go from there. There are a thousand books out there on how to get a job, but they don't mean anything if they don't fit your way of problem-solving.
- It never hurts to tune up your interview skills. If you can, seek out your colleagues and have them critique you in a mock interview.
- Be open to possibility. You may find a career possibility far outside your experience that will give you a chance to utilize your talents and expertise in completely unexpected and novel ways. Check those career expectations again and see if they have the words "must be a city or county manager" there. If not, go check it out. You might like it.
- Take a temp job. Many communities need someone for just one project, one study, one community process. It gets you out of the house, back in stir, and being productive at the things you do best. You may like it enough to find yourself suddenly being a consultant.
- This last one is easy to say and incredibly hard to do—stay positive in your outlook and attitude. It is incredibly frustrating to interview, and interview, and interview again but never get the job offer. But being frustrated and angry projects to others much more than you ever realize—especially to those you are interviewing with. It doesn't do much to promote domestic tranquility, either. Stay positive. As a wise city manager once said, "Your next city just hasn't quite gotten itself ready for you yet. But it is working on it, so be a little patient."

- Somewhere out there right now, one of your colleagues is in trouble, is about to get the boot, or just did. You ought to give them a call and see how they are doing, be a friendly ear. They would appreciate it.

### **Section 13: Emotional Challenges and Transition Mind Set**

Entering the state of Transition for a manager is a mixed bag of emotions. It can be one of the most stressful times of your life. For some it is a shock. Some find it absurd and unfair. For others it's a relief, the pain is finally over. In reality it is all of these things and more. Being in transition is something we don't all go through but it can happen to anyone regardless of skill or tenure.

The loss of a job includes not only a financial decline but also a blow to one's ego. The manager faces losses of self-esteem, daily routine, purposeful activity, predictability and sense of security as well as income. Losing your job through a forced resignation or being fired can be very traumatic. It takes an emotional toll on you and your family much like the grieving process when a loved one dies. There is a finality to it that takes some time to get over. The process takes time and no two individuals respond in the same way or timeline.

Thinking through the loss of your job requires coping skills and recognition of a new beginning. Getting there is the goal but with high emotions it can be difficult to bring an objective view to the forefront. Understanding the stages to coping with the loss may be helpful in moving towards a new beginning.

#### Shock/Denial

Regardless of your situation or effort prior to the finality of being in transition there is a shock involved with the immediate response to a change. This shock is sometime followed with "I can't believe this happened" or "I don't think they understand what this means" or other such thoughts. The shock response is also one of what happens now and what am I going to do.

#### Anger and Frustration

Anger is derived from feelings of helplessness or that we have been wronged. There is resentment that this has happened and it is so unfair. We have no power to change it and as such we resort to anger as a coping mechanism. Anger can take the course of guilt, or anger at oneself. It can also become destructive if not kept in check.

Anger is natural and a part of the process of loss. When anger is acknowledged, honored and accepted for what it is, it can be dismissed so that we can move on. Letting go of bitterness and anger is essential for resolving any personal crisis

#### Introspection

Almost immediately you think about the issues or instances that lead to the change that is upon you. You bargain with yourself about how if this or that would have happened differently you wouldn't be in this situation. You imagine how you could be still doing your job if a person or situation changed. You dwell on the negatives with no real way to change the results.

Part of introspection is the understanding that the issues you have had are the result of changing values. A council's values may no longer align with yours and it becomes healthier for the manager to not to continue to work for them. An enlightened council may believe they know better only to find some solutions don't work. Being removed from the situation in hindsight

maybe a blessing.

This is perhaps one of the most difficult stages to get through. At times you think you have resolved these issues only to have them creep back into your thoughts. Care must be taken to avoid guilt or intense feelings of remorse. Thinking about these areas dredges up ill feelings and is really nonproductive. You can't change the past, you can only learn from it. You only have control of you in the present. The sooner you recognize these thoughts make you feel bad and work towards the present the sooner this stage can be overcome.

### Depression

Not all will deal with this but many will have moments of depression. Feelings of loneliness, isolation, and self-pity are common. Symptoms of depression include lack of energy or concentration, appetite disturbances or excessive sleeping. If these continue over a period of time some professional help may be warranted. Some people need to go through a period of this to move to a new beginning. Keeping in contact with one's peers and keeping engaged is helpful. Staying busy with fulfilling activities is also important. Depression is temporary if you get busy and take control of your future.

### Acceptance

Allow time to get to this point and thoroughly experience your thoughts and feelings to yourself. Acknowledge both positive and negative feelings. Find a place to accept the situation and move on. The process of transition is one of self-discovery, reengaging with your family, and time to pursue activities that weren't a priority when working. The situation provides an opportunity for growth. Moving towards a new beginning can and will occur when you allow yourself to move on.

### Pitfalls:

- Don't avoid or minimize how you feel.
- Accept your emotions and address them. Don't overindulge in drugs or alcohol to self-medicate.
- Don't isolate yourself.

### Things that can help:

- Keep a journal or write down how you feel.
- Involve your family in the situation including your children.
- Get together with peers or others in the same situation to talk to concerning your situation.
- Take advantage of employee assistance resources through your health plan or former employer.
- Rebuild your self-esteem by listing your skills and positive attributes. Seek out people who know what you are capable of and get feedback. Find a part time job or volunteer to build your confidence. Think about other rewarding aspects of life which are truly of value.
- List the problems that went away with the job loss. Remember that this situation isn't about you, it's about them.
- Realize that the negative that was handed to you has benefits in that you now have a stressful situation behind you. The situation has created a break from the work routine and allowed you to grow personally and pursue other interests. Enjoy the time off while you have it.
- Recognize that everyone who is successful has setbacks and failures.

- Use this time of Transition to take care of yourself and explore where you truly want to spend your time in the future.
- Your next job will be better than the one you left.

### **Section 14: Financial Considerations**

When a manager is involuntarily terminated from employment the aspect of personal finances becomes one of great concern not only for the manager but also for the family. Serious consideration needs to be made to adjust as soon as possible, regardless of a severance package.

It has been suggested that a three to six month living expense should be a minimum set-a-side for covering living expenses in the event of a job loss. Accomplishing this ahead of time with give you and your family added security but the majority haven't committed resources for this purpose. In the alternate a strategy needs to be implemented that deals with the present situation.

Developing a financial plan and budget needs to be accomplished as soon as possible. This plan should deal with the time during severance as well as post severance. Severance payments can take on different forms such as a lump sum payment or ongoing salary for a period of time. With ongoing salary payments, look towards accumulating cash as well as dealing with your creditors.

First steps include reducing expenses that may not be entirely necessary. Look for *economies* that can be gained through changes in services or vendors. Think about *wants* versus *needs* and develop a new mindset. Consider the fact that a change in location may require a move and additional possessions become not only an unnecessary expense but added items to move.

Your priorities are to deal with the mortgage, utilities, food and health insurance (likely post severance benefits).

Do preserve cash but also look towards the reduction of debt accumulated in higher interest credit cards or loans. Weigh the benefits or detriments of minimum payments versus elimination of debt vehicles. Consider these within your financial plan(s) as they may be difficult to address post severance.

If your plan shows there will be problems do what you can to address them with timely notification to your creditor. Work towards a solution that you can live with and maintain your credit rating.

Your financial plan needs to consider all areas of assistance that can be brought to the table. Do an inventory of what assets you have that can be brought into a solution even if these include "fall back scenarios". Understand the process and expected resources that can be received through unemployment assistance. Severance payments do not automatically preclude you from unemployment benefits. Thoroughly understand how each of your retirement approaches work. A deferred compensation program has different rules than an IRA.

When a lump sum is given for severance, the same principles apply but managing the cash flow during the time of transition is a concern. Investment of these funds in some form is advised. Some portion could be used to pay off debt if you determine that to be your best option. The financial plan should address your needs and matching investments with liquidity should be your



goal.

The bottom line is knowing where you're going to be financially at a certain point in time prior to getting there. Having resources during a severance period allows for adjustments to be made to minimize the downside during the time of transition and understand what your financial realities are.

### **Section 15: Disclaimer & Limitation**

The above policy is designed to assist members in transition within one's own comfort zone. Every effort must be made to respect the member in transition's dignity, desire for privacy and comfort with each level of support available.

### **Appendix A: Model Employment Agreement**

The following document serves as a model employment agreement template for administrators of municipal governments. Complete in its content, the agreement covers a wide array of topics including business expenditures, performance evaluation, relocation expenses, indemnification, and many more. It provides additional language on various topics, allowing local governments to choose the option which best fits their organization. This agreement can also be found online at [www.mncma.org/](http://www.mncma.org/).

## **EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT**

**AGREEMENT** made this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, by and between the CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_, a Minnesota municipal corporation ("Employer"), and \_\_\_\_\_ ("Employee").

The parties agree as follows:

1. **POSITION.** Employer agrees to employ Employee as its City \_\_\_\_\_. Employee agrees to serve as City \_\_\_\_\_ in accordance with state statutes, City ordinances and the ICMA/MCMA Code of Ethics and to perform such other legally permissible and proper duties and functions as the City Council shall from time to time assign.
2. **MOVING AND RELOCATION ALLOWANCE.** Employer shall reimburse Employee an amount not to exceed \$\_\_\_\_\_ for moving his/her household goods and an amount not to exceed \$\_\_\_\_\_ for house hunting expenses such as travel expenses, temporary lodging, and meals. Payment shall be made upon receipt by the City of documentation that the expenses have been incurred and deemed reasonable.

3. **PENSION PLAN.** Employer shall contribute to PERA as required by State law for Employee or an alternate pension plan, if selected by Employee, authorized by State law.

4. **SALARY.** Employer shall pay Employee a salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per year starting \_\_\_\_\_. Employer and Employee agree that an initial performance review will be conducted on Employee after six (6) months and annually thereafter. The Employer agrees to consider an increase in compensation to the Employee dependent upon the results of the performance evaluation.

5. **SENIORITY.** For purposes of employment benefits such as sick leave, vacation leave, and the like, Employee will be credited with having completed \_\_\_\_\_ years of employment with the City upon his/her first day of employment.

6. **SICK LEAVE.** Effective upon Employee's first day of employment, Employee shall be credited with \_\_\_\_\_ days of accrued sick leave. In addition, Employee shall accrue sick leave in accordance with the City's personnel policies.

7. **VACATIONS.** Effective upon Employee's first day of employment, Employee shall be credited with \_\_\_\_\_ days of accrued vacation leave. In addition, Employee shall accrue vacation leave in accordance with the City's personnel policies.

8. **HOLIDAYS.** Employer shall provide Employee the same holidays as enjoyed by other non-union employees.

9. **GENERAL INSURANCE.** Employer shall pay 100% of the cost of the premiums to provide hospital, medical and dental insurance to employee and his/her dependents under a plan

offered to other non-union employees. Employer shall provide Employee the same life and disability insurance benefits as provided to all other non-union employees.

10. **DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.** Employer shall budget and pay the professional dues and subscriptions for Employee which are deemed reasonable and necessary for Employee's continued participation in national, regional, state and local associations necessary and desirable for Employee's continued professional participation, growth and advancement.

11. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** Employer shall budget and pay necessary and reasonable registration, travel and subsistence expenses of Employee for professional and official travel, meetings and occasions adequate to continue the professional development of Employee and to adequately pursue necessary official and other committees thereof which Employee serves as a member. Employee shall use good judgment in his/her outside activities so he will not neglect his/her primary duties to the Employer.

(For Sections 10 and 11, employer and employee may wish to agree to list specific organizations whose dues and professional development opportunities will be covered – i.e. International City/County Management Association, Minnesota City/County Management Association, League of Minnesota Cities. The list would not be all inclusive; other organizations or training opportunities that might arise would be covered under the general “reasonable” language.)

12. **CIVIC CLUB MEMBERSHIP.** Employer recognizes the desirability of representation in and before local civic and other organizations. Employee is authorized to become a member of such civic clubs or organizations as deemed appropriate by Employee and Employer; and at Employer's expense.

13. **AUTOMOBILE.** Employee shall be paid a monthly allowance of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for use of his/her personal automobile for Employer business.

14. **GENERAL EXPENSES.** Employer shall reimburse Employee reasonable miscellaneous job related expenses which it is anticipated Employee will incur from time to time when provided appropriate documentation.

15. **HOURS OF WORK.** It is understood that the position of City \_\_\_\_\_ requires attendance at evening meetings and occasionally at weekend meetings. It is understood by Employee that additional compensation and compensatory time shall not be allowed for such additional expenditures of time. It is further understood that Employee may absent himself/herself from the office to a reasonable extent in consideration of extraordinary time expenditures for evening and weekend meetings at other than normal working hours.

16. **TERMINATION BENEFITS.** In the event that Employee is terminated by the Employer during such time that Employee is willing and able to perform the duties of City \_\_\_\_\_, then in that event, Employer agrees to pay Employee at the time of receipt of his/her last pay check a lump sum cash payment equal to \_\_\_\_\_ months aggregate salary and to continue to provide and pay for the benefits set forth in paragraph 9 for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ following termination. However, in the event Employee is terminated because of his/her gross misconduct, conviction for a felony, or conviction for an illegal act involving personal gain to Employee, then Employer shall have no obligation to pay the termination benefits.

If Employer at any time during the employment term reduces the salary or other financial benefits of Employee in a greater percentage than across-the-board reduction for all non-union employees, or if Employer refuses, following written notice, to comply with any other provisions of this Agreement benefiting Employee or Employee resigns following a formal suggestion by Employer that he/she resign, then Employee may, at his/her option, be deemed to be "terminated" on the effective

date of Employee's resignation and the Employee shall also be entitled to receive the termination benefits set forth above.

If Employee voluntarily resigns his/her position with Employer, Employee agrees to give the Employer thirty (30) days advance notice. If Employee voluntarily resigns his/her position with Employer, there shall be no termination pay due to Employee.

17. **GENERAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.** Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent, limit or otherwise interfere with the right of Employer to terminate the services of Employee at any time, for any reason, subject only to the provisions of this Agreement and statutory requirements. Furthermore, nothing in this Agreement shall prevent, limit or otherwise interfere with the right of Employee to resign at any time from his/her position with Employer, subject only to the provisions of this Agreement.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, Employer has caused this Agreement to be signed and executed on its behalf by its Mayor and \_\_\_\_\_, and Employee has signed this Agreement, in duplicate, the day and year first written above.

EMPLOYER:  
CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE:  
\_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Its Mayor

AND

\_\_\_\_\_  
Its

**Appendix B: Sample Severance Agreement & Release of Claims**

The following is a sample severance agreement. Should you decide to use this agreement, be sure to review it with your personal legal counsel before executing the agreement.

**SEPARATION AGREEMENT AND RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

**THIS SEPARATION AGREEMENT AND RELEASE OF CLAIMS** (“Agreement”) is entered into by and between \_\_\_\_\_ (“Employee”) and the **City of \_\_\_\_\_**, a Minnesota Municipal Corporation (“City”). Employee and the City are collectively referred to as the parties.

**WHEREAS**, the City currently employs Employee as its City \_\_\_\_\_; and

**WHEREAS**, the City and Employee are parties to an Employment Agreement that details separation matters; and

**WHEREAS**, the Employee is subject to the City’s Personnel Policies that detail separation matters; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council seeks the termination of the employment relationship with Employee, and the City and Employee mutually desire to conclude their employment relationship in an amicable manner, to resolve all existing or potential claims that may exist and to ensure that no potential claims or conflicts arise.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF** the mutual promises contained in this Agreement, the relinquishment of certain legal rights, and other valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. **Effective Date.** Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §465.722, the effective date of this Agreement will be \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, which is fifteen (15) days after approval by the City Council at a public meeting. Prior to the effective date, either the City or Employee may rescind this Agreement.

2. **Termination of Employment.** Employee's last day of employment with the City is \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_. Effective \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_, Employee will be on-call. While on-call, the Employee shall be available on an as-needed basis to consult with the City. Employee's salary and benefits may not be decreased from what Employee was receiving prior to the date Employee signs this Agreement but are subject to increase in accordance with the applicable pay plan.
3. **Severance Pursuant to Employment Agreement and Personnel Policies.** Pursuant to the terms of the Employment Agreement between Employee and the City and the City's Personnel Policies, Employee shall receive the following payments from the City upon separation from employment with the City:
  - A. A lump sum payment which is equivalent to six months' salary. This amount will be characterized as income and will be subject to applicable federal and state taxes, employment taxes, and other customary withholdings but will not be subject to PERA.
  - B. Payment for 100% of accrued and unused vacation. This amount will be characterized as income and will be subject to applicable federal and state taxes, employment taxes, and other customary withholdings but will not be subject to PERA.
4. **Sick Leave.** Upon separation from employment with the City, the City shall pay Employee for 100% of Employee's accrued and unused sick leave. This amount will be characterized as income and will be subject to applicable federal and state taxes, employment taxes, and other customary withholdings but will not be subject to PERA.
5. **Insurance.** Through \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_, the City will keep Employee and Employee's dependents covered and pay 100% of the monthly premiums for life insurance, dental insurance, long term disability insurance and group health insurance with the same or better coverage provided on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_. After \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_, Employee's group health insurance benefits will lapse subject to rights under COBRA and state law.
6. **Transition Expense.** The City shall reimburse Employee up to \$\_\_\_\_\_ for transition expenses that Employee incurs in 20\_\_\_ and 20\_\_\_. Transition expenses include travel, lodging, and registration for attendance at (i) ICMA conferences and training (ii) the Minnesota League of Cities conference (iii) MCMA conferences, and (iv) advanced management education, including classes and related material; outplacement service; resume preparation; employment and recruitment agency services. Employee will provide receipts of such expenses prior to reimbursement.
7. **Payment for Disputed Claims.** Within twenty (20) calendar days after \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_ the City shall pay Employee \$\_\_\_\_\_ in settlement of and release of all existing or potential claims as noted in this Agreement.
8. **Attorney's Fees.** Upon separation from employment with the City, the City shall pay Employee \$\_\_\_\_\_ for attorney's fees.
9. **No Further Claim to Compensation.** This Agreement fully and completely satisfies any and all obligations between Employee and the City that arise out of or relate to Employee's employment and resignation. Employee has no claim to any compensation from the City, in any form, beyond the compensation that is specifically described in this Agreement.

10. **Release of Claims by City.** In consideration of the terms and benefits described in this Agreement, and as an inducement for Employee to enter into this Agreement, the City hereby fully and completely releases, acquits, and forever discharges Employee and Employee's attorneys, agents, representatives, insurers, heirs, executors, assigns, and other affiliates from any and all liability for any and all damages, actions, or claims, regardless of whether they are known or unknown, direct or indirect, asserted or unasserted, that arise out of or relate to any action, decision, event, fact or circumstance occurring before the City signs this Agreement. The City Council understands and agrees that by signing this Agreement it is waiving and releasing any and all claims, complaints, causes of action, and demands of any kind against Employee that are based on or arise under any federal or state law, including but not limited to the federal constitution, the state constitution, and any federal or state statute, regulation, rule, or common law.
11. **Release of Claims by Employee.** In consideration of the terms and benefits described in this Agreement, and as an inducement for the City to enter into this Agreement, Employee hereby fully and completely releases, acquits, and forever discharges the City, its current and former Council members, its current and former officers, its current and former employees, and its current and former agents, representatives, insurers, attorneys, and other affiliates from any and all liability for any and all damages, actions, or claims, regardless of whether they are known or unknown, direct or indirect, asserted or unasserted, that arise out of or relate to any action, decision, event, fact, or circumstance occurring before Employee signs this Agreement. Employee understands and agrees that by signing this Agreement, Employee is waiving and releasing any and all claims, complaints, causes of action, and demands of any kind that are based on or arise under any federal or state law, including but not limited to the federal constitution, the state constitution, and any federal or state statute, regulation, rule, or common law, which Employee may have against the City arising out of employment including, but not limited to, claims for breach of contract; breach of personnel policies or regulations; breach of fiduciary duty; fraud or misrepresentation; violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, unauthorized or improper releases of private or confidential data related to the Employee in violation of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, denial of due process; defamation; intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress; breach of the covenant of good faith and fair dealing; promissory estoppel; negligence; wrongful termination of employment; and any other claims for unlawful employment practices; except Employee does not waive any claim or cause of action Employee may have under Minnesota Statutes, Section 466.07.
12. **Claims Not Waived.** By signing this Agreement, neither the City nor Employee is releasing or waiving any rights or claims that are based solely on events that occur after this Agreement is signed, or any right to institute legal action for the purpose of enforcing this Agreement. Additionally, Employee does not waive the following: (a) any right to apply for unemployment compensation benefits; (b) any claims arising under the Workers' Compensation Act; or (c) any right to file a charge with a governmental agency, including the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, although Employee agrees that Employee will not be able to recover any award of compensation, damages, or any other monies if Employee files a charge or complaint or has a charge or complaint filed on Employee's behalf with any federal, state, or local government agency.
13. **Acceptance Period.** Employee has the right to review and consider this Agreement for a period of twenty-one (21) calendar days after receiving it. Employee is advised to seek the advice of legal counsel regarding this Agreement. If Employee signs this Agreement before twenty-one (21) calendar days have elapsed from the date on which Employee first received



a copy of the Agreement to review, Employee will be voluntarily waiving Employee's right to the twenty-one (21) day review period.

14. **Revocation under ADEA.** Employee recognizes that by signing this Agreement Employee is waiving and releasing any employment discrimination, retaliation, or other claims that Employee might have under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act ("ADEA"). After Employee signs this Agreement, Employee will have seven (7) calendar days to revoke Employee's waiver and release of any claims arising under the ADEA. This right of revocation applies only to claims arising under the ADEA. For a revocation of claims under the ADEA to be effective, it must be delivered to City Attorney \_\_\_\_\_, either personally or by United States mail within the seven-day period. If delivered by mail, the revocation must be postmarked within the seven-day period, properly addressed to \_\_\_\_\_ and sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.
15. **Rescission under MHRA.** Employee recognizes that by signing this Agreement, Employee is waiving and releasing any employment discrimination and retaliation claims that Employee might have under the Minnesota Human Rights Act ("MHRA"). Under the MHRA (Minnesota Statutes §363A.31), Employee has the right to rescind Employee's release of claims in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days after signing it. This right of rescission applies only to any claims arising under the MHRA. For a rescission of claims arising under the MHRA to be effective, it must be delivered to City Attorney \_\_\_\_\_, either personally or by United States mail within the fifteen-day period. If delivered by mail, the rescission must be postmarked within the fifteen-day period, properly addressed to \_\_\_\_\_ and sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.
16. **Effect of Rescission of Release of Claims.** If Employee revokes or rescinds any part of the Release of All Claims in this Agreement, paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this Agreement will automatically be rescinded without further action by either party.
17. **Return of Property.** Upon separation from employment, Employee agrees to immediately return any City property that is in Employee's possession, with the exception of \_\_\_\_\_ which the Employee shall retain as Employee's property. The City will provide Employee with a reasonable opportunity to remove Employee's personal effects from Employee's office in a manner that is not embarrassing and at a time when other City staff are not present.
18. **Representation by Counsel.** Employee acknowledges that Employee has been or has had the right to be represented by legal counsel of Employee's own choosing with respect to this Agreement and all matters covered by and relating to it. Employee further agrees and represents that Employee has not received or relied upon any advice or representations by the City or the City's counsel in entering into this Agreement. The parties acknowledge that they have consulted with their own legal counsel, that they have thoroughly read and understand the terms of this Agreement, and that they are voluntarily entering into this Agreement.
19. **No Admission of Wrongdoing.** Nothing in this Agreement may be construed to be an admission of liability or wrongdoing by, against, or on behalf of the City or Employee. Any form of wrongdoing or liability is expressly denied by the City and its representatives and by Employee and Employee's representatives.
20. **Choice of Law, Forum and Severability.** This Agreement is governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota regardless of Employee's domicile or status as a resident of Minnesota or

any other state. The parties agree that the Minnesota state and federal courts will have exclusive jurisdiction over any dispute arising out of this Agreement. If a court determines that any part of this Agreement is unlawful or unenforceable, the remaining portions of the Agreement will remain in full force and effect.

- 21. **Entire Agreement.** This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties relating to Employee's employment and separation from employment with the City. No party has relied upon any statements, promises, or representations that are not stated in this document. No changes to this Agreement are valid unless they are in writing and signed by all parties. A copy of this Agreement will have the same legal effect as the original.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties have approved and executed this Agreement on the dates shown by their signatures.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CITY OF** \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix C: MCMA Membership Responsibilities**

The MCMA Membership and Recognition Committee has developed the following guidelines for Members on how to assist a fellow Member in Transition (MIT). All members are encouraged to contact fellow members who are in transition to offer support and encouragement.

Members are also encouraged to let the MCMA Secretariat know of a member who is in trouble or transition, so MCMA support can be offered.

These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive and individuals will have different comfort levels, but the bottom line is members have a responsibility to support one another.

The time of termination and transition are extremely difficult, stressful and emotional. MITs have often been under intense stress for a lengthy period leading up to the termination. MITs often feel isolated or left behind, especially if they are not in the metro area, so reaching out and staying in touch with colleagues matters.

#### **Ways you can personally help a Member in Transition**

- Attend the Council meeting where your colleague will be fired. You don't have to speak, but sometimes just having support in the audience can be helpful.
- Be willing to have a coffee, lunch or conversation and listen... especially as the time in transition grows longer. Realistically a manager can be in transition for six months to a year, if not longer. Many colleagues reach out in the initial weeks after someone is fired, but as the months go on, colleagues don't reach out with the same frequency or urgency.
  - You can reach out via email, phone or text, but don't underestimate the value of a handwritten and personal note.
  - Reach out more than just once or just in the immediate weeks following termination.
- Offer to help your colleague practice interviews or prep for an upcoming recruitment, especially if you have more recent experience with interviewing and recruitment.

- You can help your colleague practice an answer to “tell us what happened in your last position?”
- Hire an MIT for interim work or special projects. Income and continued work are important needs for someone in transition.
- When going to ICMA or MCMA conferences, invite a member in transition to share your room at no cost. While both ICMA and MCMA will waive conference fees, travel and lodging expenses are difficult for an MIT.
- Drop off a bottle of wine, a growler, coffee, or a gift card for dinner. The gesture may seem small, but it is meaningful.
- Be positive, talk about “when” not “if” the colleague will return to work.
- Consider being a reference for a colleague or providing information on opportunities the colleague is pursuing.
- Become familiar with the resources that ICMA and MCMA offer MITs and encourage your colleague to take advantage of any resources offered by MCMA or ICMA.

## **Appendix D: Suggested Reading Materials**

Notes for Beachcombers: A Survivor's Manual for Local Government Managers and Spouses  
By Fran and Frank Aleshire, Editors

Job Hunting Handbook: for the Local Government Professional  
By Bill Kirchoff (Available through the ICMA Bookstore)

The Public Executive's Complete Guide to Employment Agreements  
By Ronald Holifield (Available through the Innovation Groups, 6604 Harney Road, Ste. L, Tampa, Florida 33610; 813-622-8484)

The Fallback Position: A Manual for Local Government Managers, Executive Directors and Others Reporting to Governing Bodies Who May Be Fired at a Moment's Notice  
by an Employer with the Potential to be Completely Unfair, Unreasonable, and Inconsiderate By John Arnold

\*ICMA has a publication entitled *Maintaining your Economic Wellness* which is helpful towards establishing a financial plan. This publication is sent out with the transition packet from ICMA.

\* ICMA has also published a collection of articles titled "Job Loss" compiled from Public Management Magazine.