



**OCCMA**

**Oregon City/County  
Management Association**

A State Affiliate of **ICMA**

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**Civic Education Toolkit**

# Hello, my name is: Ashleen McGirk



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# Civic Education - Goals and Purpose

The OCCMA 2022 work plan created an ad hoc Civic Education Committee that will work to provide **tools, resources, and information** to OCCMA members for when they are **educating newly elected officials, the community, and future local government employees** about local government and what city managers do.

# OCCMA Civic Education Subcommittee

- **Zoe Mombert**, Chair & Board Liaison, Asst. to the City Manager Wilsonville;
- **Scott Derickson**, City Administrator, Woodburn
- **Heidi Bell**, City Manager, Sheridan
- **Andy Varner**, City Manager, North Plains
- **Dan Huff**, City Manager, Molalla
- **Rachael Fuller**, Interim Assistant County Administrator, Washington County
- **Angela Speier**, LOC Staff

# Civic Education Matters

- Mistrust of government, lack of positive news coverage for local government, social alienation, and insufficient civics education requires managers and professionals to take action.
  - In 2018, only 24% of eighth graders performed at or above proficient in civics. Black and hispanic students performed 20-30 points worse than white students in civic education tests. (National Assessment of Educational Progress).
  - 56% of U.S. adults can name all three branches of government (up from 33% in 2006). (Annenberg Civics Knowledge Survey 2021).
  - SB 513 High School Civics Credit Requirement

# Definitions

- **Civic education:** The teaching of knowledge, skills, and virtues needed for competent citizenship in a democracy, including the ability to communicate effectively about issues, collaboratively work to solve problems, and make judgments that affect the performance of government.
- **Civic engagement:** The direct involvement of citizens in the problem-solving and decision-making processes in their communities. It is a collaborative and communicative process between administrators and citizens.
- **Civic gap:** The civic gap is the “lack of basic education for citizenship in the education system” and the subsequent lack of participation in local government activities. There is a disparity between the participation and engagement of ethnoracial minority and low-income communities, and White and middle- class and wealthy residents.
- **Civic capacity and civic capacity building:** The capability and willingness of different community actors (residents, local officials, chambers of commerce, or community groups) to engage in collaborative and collection action and the activities and initiatives that enhance the ability of community actors to be engaged as partners in governance.

# Civic Education in Oregon: Citizen Academies

## Wilsonville Civics Academy

- **What:** overview of elected officials, community development, parks, transit, public works, police and safety
- **Who:** open to residents of Wilsonville;
- **When:** Free Annual Program; 8 meeting dates December through July

## Medford Citizen Academy

- **What:** City government overview, budgeting, parks, community development, public safety, infrastructure
- **Who:** All residents 18 and older
- **When:** Annual program; free; 8 sessions limited to 20 participants

## Bend 101

- **What:** City government overview, finances, public works, community development, public safety
- **Who:** Residents, community groups
- **When:** Scheduled ad-hoc or as needed by groups

## Hillsboro Civic Leadership Academy

- **What:** Leadership Academy that focuses on a topic of importance. Past years include earthquake preparedness, volunteer engagement, and housing.
- **Who:** Any residents of Hillsboro
- **When:** Annual program; Six weekly workshops; September to November

# Civic Education in Oregon: Engagement Opportunities

- Let's Talk, Wilsonville!
- Molalla Current
- Engage Eugene
- Engage Milwaukie
- Engage Tigard!
- Sandy Speaks



# Gaps in Civic Education

- Citizen academies focus on specific communities.
  - Academies may have **limited space**
  - Classes may not be available to all residents (**time of day, location**)
- Organizations (League of Oregon Cities or Portland State University) focus on educating elected officials and professional staff
- OCCMA does not have educational materials specific to Oregon
- Quickly accessible information is limited (but not nonexistent!)
- Staff capacity of cities and counties

# Toolkit, Resources, and Information

**Audience:** Residents, community organizations (non-profits, chambers of commerce), and elected officials

**Medium:** Website, videos, and customizable handouts

**Topics:** City managers, local government basics, public works, community development, local government budgets, civic engagement

[Click here for the toolkit:](#)

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Civic Education Toolkit**

# Recommendations

- Make the Civic Education Subcommittee a **permanent subcommittee**.
- Work with **ICMA Student Chapters** for resources and content.
- Partner with your **local news organizations** to provide education materials on local government.
- **Education for youth:** offer internships to high school students or partner with local schools to present to classes.
- **Local organizations:** Share toolkit with local organizations in your community

# Thank You!

**Acknowledgements:** Zoe Mombert, Scott Derickson, Heidi Bell, Andy Varner, Dan Huff, Rachael Fuller, Angela Speier, Phillip Cooper, Susie Marston, Masami Nishishiba, ICMA Student Chapter