

Wyoming Municipal Institute helps clerks, treasurers *UPGRADE SKILLS*

Situation

The Wyoming Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers (WAMCAT) seeks to promote professional improvement and efficiency of clerks, treasurers, or finance officers in Wyoming cities and towns. Certification for clerks is offered through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). IIMC requires clerks to participate in 120 hours of education, which is primarily achieved by attending an approved institute hosted by a university. Treasurers have a similar process for certification through the Association of Public Treasurers of the United States and Canada (APT-USC).

Although certification for clerks and treasurers is not required statewide in Wyoming, a number of communities recognize its benefit and provide support for clerks and treasurers and in some cases make employment or raises contingent on obtaining certification. Until 2012, Wyoming clerks and treasurers had to attend out-of-state institutes to receive this education and certification. Training did not cover statutes and rules pertinent to Wyoming.



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In 2010, members of the WAMCAT leadership team approached members of UW Extension's Community Development Education team about hosting an IIMC institute for Wyoming municipal clerks.

Over the next year and a half, the community development team, working with WAMCAT to research the requirements for hosting an IIMC-approved institute, developed and submitted a proposal to IIMC for an accredited institute, which was approved. The team attended the Montana Local Government Center's Institute for Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers to increase understanding of programming and logistic requirements. They then developed a curriculum to meet IIMC and APT-USC certification requirements and obtained approval from APT-USC for offering an accredited institute.

Certification requires 120 hours of training. The first Wyoming Municipal Institute (WMI) was September 10-13, 2012, in Casper. Seventy-six clerks and treasurers attended 24 hours of training over four days of the initial session. The remaining 16 hours of education were offered June 12-14, 2013, with 62 participants. The second and third annual institutes of 40 hours training each were September 2013 and 2014, with 101 clerks and treasurers attending.

Impacts

Six municipal clerks obtained their Certified Municipal Clerk designation,

and one clerk obtained Master Municipal Clerk designation. To earn credit for the institute from the IIMC, participants were required to complete an assessment that involved writing short essays addressing the "big ideas" participants took away from the sessions, how they would implement the new ideas into their work, and how they would overcome barriers or challenges to implementing the new information.

One example written by an attendee:

"The rights of the public to know and participate are very important. We have to make sure we can educate our communities in their rights as citizens. Whether it be open meetings, closed meetings, committees for different projects or general information that they should be aware of and what they need to do if they choose to participate in these. We need to stress that this is their constitutional right to know and how their local government works. I believe this is one of the most important rights we can have as a citizen of my community and the United States of America."

Evaluation results show the majority of participants believe the three institutes were valuable learning opportunities.

- 94 percent agreed institute curriculum was very good or excellent.
- 92 percent agreed session variety was very good or excellent.
- 91 percent believe opportunities to network with colleagues and experts were very good or excellent.
- 96 percent believed that, overall, the WMI was very good or excellent.



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Wyoming Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers members during Wyoming Municipal Institute training in Casper.

