

Team ILG

All-Women, All-Stars

Who is your female role model?

Kim Danko, Associate Program Manager

My female role model is my Mom—she is always strong and positive in the face of adversity and reminds me to be the best version of myself that I can be.

Kristy Jensen, Associate Manager of Administration Services

Malala Yousifazi for her fearless voice in the face of a dangerous society.

Karalee Browne, Assistant Executive Director

Michelle Obama, she is a strong voice for education, justice and healthy living. But more importantly, she seems to have found the perfect balance between raising kind, accomplished children, while being successful in her own right.

Hanna Stelmakhovych, Program Manager

My latest inspiration is Maia Sandu, the president of Moldova. Her exemplary life and career journey challenge the stereotypes of women's role in society as historically defined by patriarchal systems of Eastern Europe. The female presidency is especially rare in that part of the world. Maia shows that it's possible to achieve the highest ranks of political leadership despite gender racism, oppression and misogyny.

How do we continue to move the needle on gender parity in government?

Melissa Kuehne, Senior Program Manager

While the number of women in leadership roles is growing, I think there is still a lot of work to do in this space. I'm encouraged to see more women taking leadership roles in local government organizations. For example, I'm part of the MMANC Board, which for the past five years has been led by amazing women dedicated to the local government profession and serving our communities. I hope that we (as an all-female team) can encourage, and lead by example, so that more women not only look to local government as a career path, but also seek opportunities to step up into leadership roles.

Randi Kay Stephens, Senior Program Manager

Our governments can and should reflect the communities they serve; this includes gender, racial and socioeconomic parity. The public sector's workforce includes many women, but not necessarily in leadership roles. By creating pathways for upward mobility and changing organizational culture to reflect evolving needs, we can be more inclusive of women in the workplace. We need to recognize small and large accomplishments and create growth opportunities for all skills so that women entering at lower levels can reach leadership positions.



Nicole Enright, *Senior Program Manager*

Lift up and tell our stories. Learning about women in leadership roles has helped me to see what is possible and that there are no bounds if we work together and don't set limits for ourselves.

Julia Salinas, *Senior Program Manager*

Continuing to attract women in all avenues of local government by removing the barriers to access for these positions, e.g. education, childcare, workplace flexibility and culture, parental leave policies, etc.

Kristy Jensen, *Associate Manager of Administration Services*

Support and teach leadership, empathy, appropriate behavior, how behaviors and actions affect other people, respect, fairness, responsibility, motivation, communication and inclusion. Basically, we all need to realize (regardless of gender) that progress comes from a shared understanding of how to support and encourage growth. Without that goal, the disadvantaged will continue to be the foundation exploiters use to advance themselves.

What impact did the pandemic have on women in government leadership roles?

Randi Kay Stephens, *Senior Program Manager*

The pandemic has challenged women within all levels of government. Leaders created solutions to intractable problems while facing the challenge of sustaining life at home. Working within a virtual environment has accelerated innovation and transparency. Women leaders are both catalysts and implementers of solution-oriented practices and policies in California's communities.

Nicole Enright, *Senior Program Manager*

It has put a finer point on the needs that have existed for a long time from childcare to pay equity to benefits. We have the opportunity to look at the impacts of the pandemic on our work lives and to make meaningful changes to policies that allow for greater flexibility in schedules, investment in our families and communities and training and education that can lead to more and support existing women in government leadership roles.

Kim Danko, *Associate Program Manager*

The pandemic has been challenging in a myriad of ways, but women in government have risen to the challenge, pivoted and addressed their communities in ways never before considered. The pandemic highlighted the many ways women juggle their roles in government with their everyday home lives and how to strike the balance.

“I think the pandemic amplified women in government’s voices. For the first time I can remember people are thinking about women’s contributions and what types of change women can bring to support a more caring society.”

- *Kristy Jensen, Associate Manager of Administration Services*

What do you love most about working with an all-women team?

Kristy Jensen, *Associate Manager of Administration Services*

The ability to speak with genuineness. Also, to feel that one's ideas are measured in regard to the advancement of the organization rather than a personal agenda.

Kim Danko, *Associate Program Manager*

I love working with the women of ILG because it is truly a community of strong, brilliant women who support one another's goals and celebrate each other's achievements.

Karalee Browne, *Assistant Executive Director*

I love that we are all allowed to be ourselves. There is no pretending we aren't experiencing all of the other complexities of life that women often face. Being a part of an all-woman team, I can acknowledge that I am juggling kids, school, sports and family obligations and my colleagues not only support it, they applaud it.

Melissa Kuehne, *Senior Program Manager*

I love how supportive and understanding our team is. We are there for each other professionally and personally in a way that I have not seen in other workplaces. And, at the end of the day, it's amazing to work with a group of smart, talented and remarkable women who I learn from each and every day.

Nicole Enright, *Senior Program Manager*

Our team is there for each other through the good times and the hard times. We support each other not only professionally, but personally, and will go above and beyond to help in any way possible. I am so proud to work side by side with a talented, hard-working and passionate group of women leaders.

“Women are naturally more supportive and empathetic. By sharing a common identity of being a woman, we relate more to each other's experiences.”

- Hanna Stelmakhovich, Program Manager