

Appendix I-A

Career Checklist

The First 100 Days on the Job

Here are some tips on what you can do to make a successful transition to a new public sector job.

Take Care of Your Community.

- Learn community basics as soon as possible (names of streets, neighborhoods, great places to meet people, and names of local government employees).
- Subscribe to the local newspaper before day one, and read old clippings for a sense of history.
- Accept all speaking invitations. (Use a phrase or technique that will make your topic memorable as well as significant.)
- List your home phone number in the phone book.
- Develop a list of community activists, and contact each one of them personally.
- Attend a wide range of civic events.
- Initiate regular meetings with the media.
- Develop a way to evaluate how the citizens view your position and local government operations.
- Volunteer to serve on a civic board, the Cancer Society, the United Way, or other public service organization.
- Observe projects and problems at first hand.

Take Care of Your Organization.

- Meet the employees in their workplaces.
- Spend time with your administrative assistant.
- Insist on performance evaluations both for yourself and for your department directors.
- Attend the meetings of citizen advisory boards and commissions.
- Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the annual budget document and the city or county code.
- Take all phone calls. Screen them later.
- Let the administration before yours fire the employees *they* think need to be fired.
- Arrange the office the way you want it. Add personal touches.
- Avoid comparisons, such as, "The way I did it in my last position was...."
- Insist on seeing a written employment agreement or a letter of understanding *before* you accept the job.

Take Care of Yourself.

- Have a clear idea of why you wanted to make the job change and of how this opportunity helps you meet your needs.
- Never accept a position unless your family has seen the new community.
- Use your network to obtain background information on your community.
- Declare that your new address is *home*.
- Identify at least three specific, positive things about your new community that you are willing to share with anyone.
- Say yes to social invitation.
- Develop a clear set of expectations about what you wish to accomplish, and convey these expectations to everyone.
- Move the family only once.
- Become accessible and involved.
- Reestablish your personal support networks as soon as possible.

James Bacon, Jr., city manager, Decatur, Illinois, was a presenter at ICMA's 80th Annual Conference in Chicago/Cook County, Illinois.