



LOCAL GOVERNMENT
**HISPANIC
NETWORK**

LGHN

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

January 27 - 29, 2025

Mesa Convention Center

MESA, ARIZONA

CONNECT. COLLABORATE. SUCCEED



LGHN

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

January 27 - 29, 2025

EVENT PROGRAM

Mesa Convention Center
MESA, ARIZONA

**MONDAY
JAN 27**

12 - 5pm

Conference Registration

Mesa Convention Center

7 - 11am

Preconference Events

Golf | Scottsdale Chapter - Continental Golf Course, Preregistration (registration form), Contact golf course directly to reserve and pay, transportation on your own 480-941-1047
User Mountain Regional Park Hike
Preregistration required, no cost. 40 person capacity.

9am - 12pm

Welcome Reception

Delta Hotel Mezzanine

5:30 - 8pm

Dinner on your own

**TUESDAY
JAN 28**

8 - 9am

Conference Registration

Mesa Convention Center

Continental Breakfast and Network with Sponsors

8:45 - 10:15am

Opening Session & Keynote

Conference Theatre

- **Welcome Remarks**
 - Samantha Tavares, President
 - LGHN Affiliates
 - Remarks and offerings from City of Mesa, AZ
 - City of Mesa Story Telling Project with local youth and Tomas Stanton, Arts Engagement Manager
- **Keynote Speaker**
 - Reyna Montoya with Aliento

CONCURRENT WALKING TOURS

10:30am – 1:15pm

Box lunch provided on tours

Option 1: ¡Abre Puertas y Conecta! The Impact of Spanish Media in Government Management

Channel 11 Studios, Mesa City Plaza

Option 2: Transforming Downtown Mesa: Uniquely Local

Downtown Mesa

Option 3: The Art of Storytelling

Mesa Art Center

Option 4: Taking Flight in Mesa!

Falcon Field Airport, transportation provided

Option 5: Investing in Our People - Prioritizing Mental Health in the Workplace

Mesa City Council Chambers

**TUESDAY
JAN 28**

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

1:30 – 3:00pm

Session 1 - GFOA

Using AI for Local Governments

PALO VERDE I

Session 2 - LGHN

Leading While Latino. Hear Leadership Lessons

Learned by LGHN Seasoned Professionals

PALO VERDE II

Session 3 - ICMA

Innovative Talent Mining: New Approaches to

Recruiting Local Government Leaders

PALO VERDE III

CONCURRENT SESSIONS
3:15 – 4:45pm

Session 4 - GFOA

Digital Transformation: Mexico City Success Stories
PALO VERDE I

Session 5 - MissionSquare Retirement

Student Debt Impacts on Public Sector Employees (and Employers)
PALO VERDE II

Session 6 - ICMA

Leading with Passion: Insights and Support Strategies from top city and county executives.
PALO VERDE III

Awards Reception

Location: THE POST
hosted by the City of Mesa
(From 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm: networking, music, dancing, bites and drinks; 6:45 pm to 8:00 pm: awards and sponsor recognition)

5:30 - 8pm

- **Welcome from the City of Mesa**
- **Partners and Sponsorship Appreciation**
- **Emerging Leaders Award Presentation**

Dinner on your own

TUESDAY
JAN 28

**WEDNESDAY
JAN 29**

8 - 9am **Continental Breakfast and
Network with Sponsors**

Opening Session & Keynote

Conference Theatre

Welcome Remarks

9 - 10:15am

- **Marcus Steele, President-elect**
- **LGHN Affiliates**
- **MissionSquare Retirement**
- **Keynote Speaker**
*Joelle Martinez, President and CEO of
the Latino Leadership Institute*

CONCURRENT WALKING TOURS

10:30am – 1:15pm

Box lunch provided on tours

Option 1: Discovering Mesa's Asian District

Asian District, Transportation provided

**Option 2: Enhancing Public Safety with Technology
and Innovation**

Mesa Municipal Court

**Option 3: Cultivating Leadership Potential: The My
2.0 Apprenticeship Program**

The Post

**Option 4: Empowering Leadership: Navigating
Challenges with Courage and Inclusion**

Mesa City Council Chambers

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

1:30 – 3pm

Session 1 - Cigna Healthcare

Building a world-class culture of employee health and wellness in the City of Scottsdale.

PALO VERDE I

Session 2 - LGHN Chapters and Members Collaborative

Community Engagement Lessons from the Frontlines with the Cities of Chandler, AZ and Fort Lauderdale, FL

PALO VERDE II

Session 3 - LGHN/Adams County, CO

Relationship Intelligence with the Core Strengths SDI 2.0

PALO VERDE III

WEDNESDAY
JAN 29

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

3:15 – 4:45pm

Session 4 - GFOA

Telling Your Financial Story

PALO VERDE I

Session 5 - LGHN-ICMA International Committee Collaboration

Using AI to Break Down Barriers

PALO VERDE II

Session 6 - NFBPA

Revitalizing Communities – Harnessing Small Business and Neighborhood Association Engagement in Minority Communities

PALO VERDE III

WEDNESDAY

JAN 29

5 - 6pm

Closing Session

Conference Theatre

City of Mesa Story Telling Project

- with local youth and Tomas Stanton, Arts Engagement Manager

Attendee Appreciation Performance

6 - 7pm

Closing Reception

Mesa Convention Center Hall

Dinner on your own



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WALKING TOUR DETAILS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28 10:30 - 1:15PM

Business casual attire, comfortable shoes, and light rain gear recommended

Option 1: ¡Abre Puertas y Conecta!: The Impact of Spanish Media in Government Management

Channel 11 Studios, Mesa City Plaza, hosted by Mesa Hispanic Network, Grecia Cervantes & Lucy Hambright, Speakers Ana Periera, Mariano Reyes, Capacity:50

In this session, we'll explore how storytelling, coupled with data, can revolutionize government management through Spanish media channels. Discover the art of weaving narratives that resonate with diverse audiences while leveraging data-driven insights to inform policy decisions and enhance community engagement. Learn from real-world examples and practical strategies on harnessing the combined power of storytelling and data analysis to drive impactful governance practices. Join us as we uncover the potential of this dynamic approach in shaping a more inclusive and responsive government.

Option 2: Transforming Downtown Mesa: Uniquely Local

Downtown Mesa, hosted by Mesa Hispanic Network Angelica Guevara & Erica Navarro, Speaker Jeff McVey, Downtown Transformation Manager This session will be primarily walking and outdoors, please wear comfortable shoes. Capacity: 50

Downtown Mesa, the heart of the third largest city in Arizona, is driving new development while working to maintain its historical character and support a diverse mix of local businesses that set Downtown Mesa apart! Explore downtown Mesa's Main Street area, including the home of the future restaurant incubator – focused on equitable success for local entrepreneurs. Learn about downtown's growing locally-owned retail and nationally recognized cuisine and brew. Stroll past award-winning eateries, microbreweries, and cider house and get some samples along the way. Find out what tools the City of Mesa is using to drive this growth.

Option 3: The Art of Storytelling

Mesa Art Center, Hosted by Lucy Lopez & David Peña, Capacity 50

Everyone has a story and if YOU don't tell that story someone else may get it WRONG. Furthermore, the closest distance between two people is a story. The power of storytelling is infinite but the act of telling your story isn't that easy. It takes courage to make a part of yourself available for the world to witness.

In this interactive workshop, we will learn and practice the art of storytelling. We will experience the power and individuality of all voices by listening and effectively connecting with each other. These skills will make you a better communicator whether it is for your next staff meeting, department presentation or job interview!

WALKING TOUR DETAILS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28 10:30 - 1:15PM

Business casual attire, comfortable shoes, and light rain gear recommended

Option 4: Taking Flight in Mesa!

Falcon Field Airport (Transportation will be provided for this location)

Hosted by Zenia Cornejo & Diana Aguero, Capacity 50

Take a flight onto an original WW II hangar! Join us at Falcon Field Airport and learn about its rich history of training the British Royal Air Force and American pilots during World War II. Falcon Field is a general aviation (GA) reliever airport that serves as an alternative for civilian and military aviation use (such as business, recreation, fixed-wing and helicopter training) so that Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and Phoenix Mesa-Gateway can focus on international and commercial airline services. Falcon Field is the home of more than 130 businesses providing more than 1300 jobs with a payroll of more than \$104 million dollars.

Option 5: Investing In Our People - Prioritizing Mental Health In The Workplace

Mesa City Council Chambers, Moderators: Marrisra Ramirez-Ramos & Andrea Alicoate, Capacity 100

In today's dynamic work environments, mental health has emerged as a crucial component of employee and family well-being, as well as organizational success. This session emphasizes the importance of prioritizing mental health in the workplace and explores practical systems for fostering a supportive culture. Our panel will showcase Mesa's innovative program that destigmatizes mental health needs and implements robust internal strategies that work to create a mentally healthy and thriving workplace.

WALKING TOUR DETAILS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 10:30 - 1:15PM

Business casual attire, comfortable shoes, and light rain gear recommended

Option 1: Discovering Mesa's Asian District

Asian District (Transportation will be provided for this location), Hosted by Cynthia Ezcurra & Diana Agüero, Capacity 25

In 2019, the City of Mesa's Economic Development team launched a dynamic branding initiative for the Asian District, in collaboration with local business stakeholders. Once a hidden gem, the district has since flourished, drawing attention to its vibrant array of ethnic shops and restaurants, and revitalizing the community by highlighting its unique cultural attributes.

Join us for an exclusive tour that delves into the Asian District as it stands today, proudly featuring its distinctive logo inspired by the tangram, a seven-piece Chinese geometric puzzle dating back 2,000 years. This tour will immerse you in a rich tapestry of culinary delights and cultural experiences, showcasing over 70 Asian-themed restaurants, grocery stores, and diverse retail businesses along a lively two-mile stretch. You will also have the opportunity to admire stunning cultural murals that add to the district's charm. Discover the essence of the Asian District and witness firsthand the thriving community and its vibrant contributions to Mesa's cultural landscape.

Option 2: Enhancing Public Safety With Technology and Innovation

Mesa Municipal Court, Hosted by Lucy Lopez & Isela Devora, Capacity 50

Supporting public safety efforts is a vital goal for the City of Mesa. This session covers the efforts of the Mesa Police Department's Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) and the City of Mesa Prosecutor's Office to prevent and reduce crime. The Real Time Crime Center is a state-of-the-art operations center that serves as the Department's information hub, working to provide real-time information sharing, quick identification/apprehension of criminals, and situational awareness for first responders. Additionally, the Mesa Prosecutor's Office handles misdemeanor cases in the city, utilizing specialty courts such as Domestic Violence Court, Veteran's Court, Community Court, and Mental Health Court. These specialty courts are designed to manage and serve those defendants coming into the criminal justice system with homeless, mental health or drug/alcohol issues, while also focusing on accountability. Together, they are nationally recognized agencies for their efforts to enhance public safety services.

WALKING TOUR DETAILS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 10:30 - 1:15PM

Business casual attire, comfortable shoes, and light rain gear recommended

Option 3: Cultivating Leadership Potential: The My 2.0 Apprenticeship Program

The Post, Hosted by Vanessa Gonzalez & Scarlett Wright, Capacity 50

Join us to learn how the City of Mesa is setting a new standard for employee development and leadership training through the My 2.0 Apprenticeship Program. The My 2.0 Apprenticeship Program is a pioneering initiative designed to enhance the professional development of field, entry-level, and public-facing staff. This program focuses on developing soft skills and leadership abilities, providing a pathway for employees to grow and excel in their careers. This session will inspire and equip you with the knowledge to implement similar initiatives in your own organizations.

Option 4: Empowering Leadership: Navigating Challenges With Courage and Inclusion

Mesa City Council Chambers, Hosted by Lucy Hambright & Grecia Cervantes, Capacity 100

In today's dynamic organizational landscape, leaders are called upon to navigate a myriad of challenges, from ethical dilemmas to fostering and sustaining a healthy team culture. This engaging panel session brings together a diverse group of leaders who will share their personal stories of resilience, courage, and the transformative power of inclusive leadership. Panelists will explore pivotal leadership moments, tools to overcome imposter syndrome and strategies for becoming a reliable "clutch player" in their organizations. They will also discuss creating safe spaces, overcoming adversity, and building strong, resilient teams. Attendees will leave inspired to stay true to their values, advocate for underrepresented voices, and lead with authenticity.

SESSION DETAILS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28 1:30 – 3:00PM

Session 1 – GFOA – *Using AI for Local Governments*

PALO VERDE I

AI has been the buzzword for the last couple of years. However, local governments have hesitated to adopt it due to perceived risks, privacy concerns and fear of excessive automation. This session will focus on how local governments can use AI to better serve their communities, by presenting a set of best practices and use cases where AI can be helpful. The session will also focus on how to mitigate risks in general and outline essential principles for AI policies.

Moderator: Mike Mucha, Deputy Executive Director GFOA

Session 2 – LGHN – *Leading While Latino-Hear Leadership Lessons Learned by LGHN Seasoned Professionals*

PALO VERDE II

Join LGHN leaders and learn about how each navigated professional confidence and imposter syndrome in various leadership roles, as well as how each amplifies their team's potential particularly during challenging times and how they develop and grow team members to deliver meaningful community outcomes.

Moderator: Marcus Steele, LGHN President-Elect, City of Scottsdale

Session 3 – ICMA - *Innovative Talent Mining: New Approaches to Recruiting Local Government Leaders*

PALO VERDE III

In an era where local governments face increasing challenges in attracting and retaining top talent, innovative strategies are essential. This session will explore cutting-edge approaches to recruiting local government leaders and provide practical tools and strategies to enhance recruitment efforts. Attendees will gain valuable knowledge on how to effectively mine talent within their communities and beyond.

Moderator: Laura Savage, Senior Program Manager, ICMA

Panelists:

- Sophia Rome, Community Relations Manager (PIO), City of Salinas, CA, sophiar@ci.salinas.ca.us
- Sarah McKee, Senior Consultant, MGT, smckee@mgt.us
- Helen Gandara, Assistant Chief – Operational Services, Scottsdale Police, City of Scottsdale, AZ
- gandara@scottsdaleaz.gov (awaiting confirmation)

SESSIONDETAILS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28 3:15 – 4:45PM

Session 4 – GFOA - *Digital Transformation: Mexico City Success Stories*

PALO VERDE I

Local governments provide services to residents in their communities. However, some local governments have delayed innovating and modernizing their services to improve delivery. This session will focus on the experiences and challenges that Mexico City encountered while modernizing and digitizing its services. The session will also outline a set of principles that any government can adopt for their modernization efforts.

Moderator: Chema Macedo

Session 5 – MissionSquare Retirement - *Student Debt Impacts on Public Sector Employees (and Employers)*

PALO VERDE II

Employee financial concerns do not neatly stay on the personal side of work/life balance, and they have implications for both on-the-job productivity and job changes that may provide a higher salary or better education-related benefits. MissionSquare Research Institute will share the findings of its survey of both public and private sector employees on how that debt impacts financial wellness, career choice, and workforce retention. The session will include consideration of how those impacts vary by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and occupation and a discussion of steps employers can take to support their staff with a variety of education or debt-related benefits, while addressing concerns about fairness.

Moderator: Gerald Young, Senior Researcher, MissionSquare Research Institute

Session 6 – ICMA - *Leading with Passion: Insights and Support Strategies from Top City and County Executives*

PALO VERDE III

Join us for an engaging panel discussion featuring esteemed city and county executives who will share their experiences and insights from the top seat. This session will delve into the challenges and rewards of leadership in local government, focusing on how leaders can support themselves and their teams while maintaining their passion to serve. Attendees will gain valuable perspectives on sustaining motivation, fostering a supportive work environment, and navigating the complexities of executive leadership.

Moderator: Laura Savage, Senior Program Manager, ICMA

Panelists:

- Tanya Ange, County Administrator, County of Washington, OR and ICMA Executive Board President, tange@icma.org or Tanya_Ange@washingtoncountyor.gov
- Marcy Flanagan, Assistant County Manager, County of Maricopa, AZ, Marcy.Flanagan@maricopa.gov
- Mario Diaz, City Manager, City of North Miami Beach, FL, Mario.Diaz@citynmb.com

SESSION DETAILS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 1:30 – 3:00PM

Session 1 – Cigna Healthcare - *Building a world-class culture of employee health and wellness in the City of Scottsdale*

PALO VERDE I

Join us for a discussion with the City of Scottsdale and hear how they support their 2600 employee's engagement with incentivized programming – spanning the full spectrum of employee wellness, including physical, mental, financial, social, and emotional health.

Moderator: Niki Logan, Sr. Strategic Account Executive, Cigna Healthcare

Panelist:

- Lynna Soller, HR Benefits Manager, City of Scottsdale
- Patty Jacobs, Cigna Onsite Well-Being Coordinator for the City of Scottsdale

Session 2 - LGHN Chapters and Members Collaborative – *Community Engagement Lessons from the Frontlines with the Cities of Chandler, AZ and Fort Lauderdale, FL*

PALO VERDE II

Panel Presentation: Innovation in Problem Solving: Using the Bloomberg-Harvard Innovation Cycle to Solve Big Problems while Enhancing Community Engagement

Moderator: Amber Cabrera – Senior Assistant to City Manager

Session 3 - LGHN/Adams Co, CO - *Relationship Intelligence with the Core Strengths SDI 2.0*

PALO VERDE III

The Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI) is a powerful workplace personality assessment that provides deep insights into your motivations, behaviors, and relationship dynamics in professional settings. These insights help you know yourself more fully, understand others more accurately, manage yourself more effectively, and achieve better results by building healthier relationships.

Moderator: Matt Rivera, Director Community Safety and Well-Being, Adams County Colorado

Co-Presenter: Joe Camacho, Race Equity Coordinator, Adams County, Colorado

SESSION DETAILS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29 3:15 – 4:45PM

Session 4 - GFOA – *Telling Your Financial Story*

PALO VERDE I

Local government staff often need to share financial information in reports, presentations, budgets, and other communications. However, many face challenges in communicating this information in an easily understandable manner for those without finance training. GFOA will provide best practices and strategies for both internal and external communication of financial material to ensure more effective communication between teams and alignment across the board.

Moderator: Mike Mucha, Deputy Executive Director, GFOA

Session 5 - LGHN and ICMA International Committee Collaboration - *Using AI to Break Down Barriers*

PALO VERDE II

This session will highlight Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and case studies in service to diverse and socio-economically challenged communities such as those served by the LGHN membership. Examples will include multilingual integration, translation services, and increased accessibility of social services to underserved populations.

Moderator: Noel Bernal, Founder, Main Street Public Financial

Session 6 - NFBPA – *Revitalizing Communities – Harnessing Small Business and Neighborhood Engagement in Minority Communities*

PALO VERDE III

Empowering small businesses and neighborhood associations can create unique opportunities for revitalization in Hispanic and African-American communities. This workshop emphasizes the importance of effective communication in fostering collaboration, amplifying local voices, and driving equitable economic and social change. Learn how to build strong communication channels and strategies to strengthen these critical community pillars for sustainable progress and long-lasting impact.

Moderator: Melissa Mata, Economic Development, City of Fort Lauderdale

Panelists:

- Dr. Philip C. Harris, NFBPA MIT, South Florida, drphilipharris4@gmail.com
- Amber Cabrera, Senior Assistant to the City Manager, City of Ft. Lauderdale, amcabrera@fortlauderdale.gov
- Peggy Castano, Assistant City Manager, City of Lauderdale Lakes, peggyc@lauderdalelakes.org