

Nat Rajanasathira

ILG Board Member Assistant City Manager, City of Monterey

In your own words, what do you love about local government?

Local government is the form of government closest to the people. Local government and having local control is critical because it allows community members to have a say in what services and policies they value. I love working for the City of Monterey because we provide fire, police, library, recreation, sports center, harbor, cemetery, roads, sewer, beaches, forestry, and a variety of other services to the community. The opportunities and challenges to make a difference are great.



What does it mean to you being a person of color in your role in local government?

It means that I can bring a different perspective to the community. While I was born and raised in Northern California, I'm a first generation American. Both of my parents emigrated from Thailand to the United States. **I had language barriers growing up and relied on public libraries and city recreation programs to connect with others in the community. I can attest to how critical these local government services are** to immigrants and first-generation citizens, and provide that unique perspective here in Monterey, "The Language Capital of the World."

What are challenges you see in your position or with local government in general?

One of the biggest challenges we face right now during COVID is explaining about the services we provide and how we receive funding. We need to tell the story about how local government finance works, and that in order to pay for services we cherish, we need sustainable funding sources. We're already "doing more with less" and must continue to find more ways to be innovative during this unprecedented time.

What advice do you have for the next generation currently working in public service or looking to serve?

Keep your family involved. (My wife has supported me throughout my local government career.) Lean on that person who tells you that you can do it, when you think you can't. Keep them involved and engaged with the work you do.

Seek coaching and guidance. I was very fortunate to have strong mentors and coaches throughout my career with decades of experience more than me. I took every opportunity to stretch myself and learn from those inspiring mentors.

Find “your peeps.” I found a strong network of like-minded local government professionals who wanted to make a difference in their communities. These are the friendships and connections you will keep and make that will last a lifetime.

Enjoy the journey. This is not easy. The challenges are endless. But have resolve that you are making a difference in your community, and in other people’s lives.

Note: [Nat Rajanasathira’s profile was featured in ILG’s May 2020 Newsletter.](#)

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that you can do it, when you think you can’t.
Keep them involved and engaged with the work you do.”*

- Nat Rajanasathira

