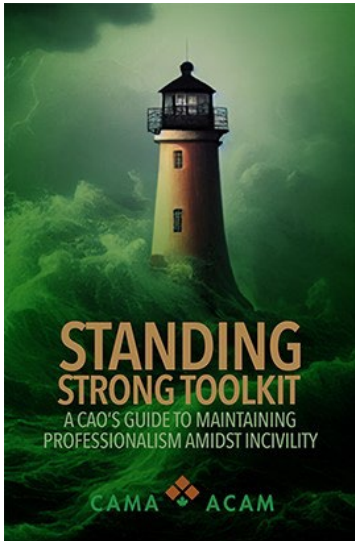




STANDING STRONG TOOLKIT: A CAO'S GUIDE TO PROFESSIONALISM AMIDST INCIVILITY



The ***Standing Strong Toolkit: A CAO's Guide to Professionalism Amidst Incivility*** serves as an essential guide for Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) in local government, helping them navigate the increasing challenges of incivility from citizens, elected officials, staff, and external stakeholders. This comprehensive resource equips CAOs with strategies and best practices to maintain professionalism and foster a respectful work environment, even in the face of hostility.

Why This Toolkit? CAOs operate at the center of local government, a role that demands balancing professional integrity, political acumen, and resilience. Increasingly, incivility from various audiences can disrupt these efforts, potentially leading to toxic work environments, decreased staff morale, and governance inefficiencies. This Toolkit addresses these concerns, offering actionable insights to help CAOs identify, manage, and mitigate incivility.

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KEY SECTIONS:

- **Recognizing Early Warning Signs of Incivility.** This section helps CAOs identify the signs of deteriorating relationships with elected officials, staff, and the public. Monitoring communication patterns, noting behavioral shifts, and being alert to increased grievances are crucial first steps in preventing conflict escalation.
- **Addressing Incivility by Elected Officials.** CAOs often face direct or indirect abuse from elected officials, which can manifest as verbal harassment, micromanagement, or public criticism. This section provides tips for addressing such behaviors, fostering respectful relationships, and protecting staff from the negative effects of abuse.
- **Protecting Your Team.** One of the key responsibilities of CAOs is ensuring that their teams remain resilient and protected from incivility. This part of the Toolkit focuses on creating a supportive work environment through strong team-building initiatives, clear conduct policies, and confidential reporting mechanisms.
- **Managing Incivility Among Elected Officials.** Incivility can also occur between elected officials. CAOs must mediate conflicts and uphold professional conduct standards to prevent tensions from affecting municipal governance. The Toolkit provides strategies for navigating these challenges and ensuring that incivility does not hinder decision-making.

- **Legal Obligations and Crisis Management.** CAOs must be aware of their legal responsibilities when handling incivility. This section covers how to document incidents, involve legal counsel, and take immediate steps when incivility escalates into crises. The Toolkit also emphasizes the importance of having a crisis response plan in place.
- **Building Resilience and Self-Care.** Dealing with incivility can take a toll on a CAO's well-being. The Toolkit provides techniques for building resilience, managing stress, and fostering a culture of support within the organization. By focusing on self-care, CAOs can maintain the stamina needed to lead effectively.
- **Strategic Social Media Management.** In today's digital age, social media has become a significant source of public incivility. This section outlines best practices for managing social media interactions, addressing online harassment, and ensuring that digital engagement aligns with municipal policies.

The Standing Strong Toolkit is more than a guide; it's a call to action for CAOs to assert their rights, foster respect, and drive positive change in their organizations. Whether dealing with elected officials, staff, or the public, CAOs will find practical strategies to help them maintain professionalism and promote a healthy, productive work environment.

This Toolkit is a must-read for CAOs looking to enhance their leadership in the face of increasing incivility in local government. Download the full Toolkit to explore in-depth case studies, expert tips, and actionable steps that can make a significant impact in your municipality.