



CAMA CONFERENCE FOR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT



2024 CAMA EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

A Visual Journey Through Our Time in Fredericton
November 3-5, 2024 | Fredericton, New Brunswick



A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I introduce this Post-Conference Brochure, capturing the memories and impact of our inaugural CAMA National Conference for Executive Assistants in Local Government.

A year ago, we set out with a vision to create a space dedicated to recognizing and uplifting the essential work that Executive Assistants do each day to support effective, resilient local government. What unfolded in Fredericton went beyond our expectations, and I am thrilled to celebrate the success of this gathering with each of you through these pages.

From the moment attendees began to arrive, there was a shared sense of purpose and CAMA-raderie—a feeling that grew stronger through each keynote, session, and conversation. This Conference was more than just an event; it was a testament to the power of community and collaboration, reminding us all of the vital contributions Executive Assistants make every day.

The success of this Conference would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the CAMA Board, whose commitment turned this vision into a reality. I am deeply grateful to our partners, the incredible Elm City Events team, and most of all, to each of you—the Executive Assistants who attended with such passion, enthusiasm, and dedication. You reminded us of the importance of your roles, and this gathering was a celebration of all that you contribute to your organizations and communities.

As you read through this brochure, I hope it brings back fond memories, newfound connections, and the inspiration to continue making a difference. Thank you for being part of this milestone event, and I look forward to seeing you next year in Ottawa as we continue to build and grow together.

With appreciation and admiration,

Jennifer Goodine
CAMA Executive Director

CONFERENCE DAY ONE - SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Welcome Reception: Mix, Mingle, and Capture Memories!

Delegates gathered for the first time to kick off the EA Conference at this lively event, where delicious food, exciting networking opportunities, and soothing background music set the perfect atmosphere.

And guess what? This reception wasn't just about mingling—it offered delegates the unique chance to capture professional headshots, courtesy of our onsite photographer. Delegates queued with excitement, adjusting their attire, smoothing out collars, and exchanging encouraging smiles. Whether delegates were updating their LinkedIn profiles or seeking a polished portrait to commemorate their journey, this was their time to step into the spotlight. Each click of the camera captured not just an image but the essence of the incredible, hardworking professionals they are. It was more than a photo—it was a celebration of identity and professional pride, sparking conversations about accomplishments and aspirations.



To make the night even more special, there was an unexpected touch of creativity that captivated everyone's hearts: personalized poems written on demand. At the center of the room, a talented poet sat poised at a vintage typewriter, the rhythmic clack of keys adding a nostalgic and charming soundtrack to the event. Delegates approached with curiosity, watching as thoughtful words transformed into poetic keepsakes, line by line. Each poem encapsulated a unique moment, a characteristic, or an experience, turning into a cherished memento that resonated with the individual's spirit. The delighted reactions of attendees created a vibrant and thoughtful ambiance, where laughter, smiles and even some tears were exchanged as poems were read aloud and shared.

As Executive Assistants from across the country mingled, they forged new friendships, exchanged ideas, and broadened their professional networks. This evening was more than just an event—it was just the beginning of an electrifying start to a week filled with inspiration, collaboration and discovery!





"Meeting all of the amazing people in attendance was the best! I am the only EA in my organization, so it can be a little lonely at times. Thank you for empowering us to connect, feel appreciated, know we aren't alone and that our work matters."

- Connected and Empowered EA





Opolahsomuwehs
(Dr. Imelda Perley)

Opening Ceremonies



CONFERENCE DAY 2 – MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Connection, Inspiration, and Maritime Magic

The first day of the inaugural CAMA EA Conference was simply inspiring!

Delegates kicked off their morning with a motivating start, choosing between two unique experiences: enjoying intricate and captivating latte art by Barista Brian, a renowned Canadian artist, or participating in an invigorating wellness session led by fitness expert Tammy Ward. Brian's artistry turned each cup into a mesmerizing masterpiece, offering the perfect opportunity to relax, recharge, and connect with peers before the day's sessions began. Alternatively, Tammy Ward's uplifting session focused on movement, breath work, and stress-relief techniques, energizing participants and setting a positive tone for the day ahead.

We started the day with a special ceremony from Wolostoqey Elder Imelda Perley, along with Fredericton Mayor Kate Rogers and Deputy CAO Sara DeGrace who graciously welcomed us to their beautiful city.





Tina Varughese delivered an energetic opening keynote on belonging, and about how to embrace authenticity, and reminding us – “Leaders don’t create more followers. Leaders create more leaders.” Great advice!

Our morning panel featured Mayor Rogers and the Peel Region team of CAO Gary Kent, and Executive Assistant Cassandra Rutland. They shared with moderator Victoria Bowering, Executive Assistant from Nanaimo, BC, how trust and communication are essential in the relationship between an EA and the CAO and/or the Mayor.



Being a confident communicator can help in many ways, from interacting with the public, leading a meeting, or presenting in front of senior leadership. Jan Enns gave us lots of tools to add to our communications toolbox and reminded us that your words matter.

After lunch, Suzanne Gibson led an interactive workshop about building up leadership capacity and the art of having courageous conversations and navigating change. Lots of great nuggets to take home and into our daily work.



Philip Hicks, CEO and Founder of Government Frameworks, gave us a quick tour of the innovative FARMER platform, helping to streamline decision-making and improving efficiency in municipal governments across the world. We are so appreciative of the ongoing support of Government Frameworks through their sponsorship of CAMA, and the CAMA EA Conference.





The day's final session was delivered by Krystin Stitt, Project Management Specialist from the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, ON. She shared some valuable tips and tricks for good minute-taking, leveraging technology and managing projects effectively, all while navigating the nuances of municipal governance. Delegates were treated to an evening of true Maritime hospitality at the *Lobster Fest Extravaganza*! The night began with a warm and spirited welcome by Highland dancers, whose lively performances set the perfect tone for what was to come. The festivities continued with an engaging lobster-cracking demonstration by Chef Mike, guiding attendees through the art of enjoying a classic Maritime delicacy.

As the evening unfolded, guests savored a feast fit for a captain, complete with options to suit all tastes, ensuring everyone enjoyed a meal to remember. The atmosphere buzzed with toe-tapping Maritime tunes, laughter, and CAMA-raderie, enriched by fun-filled snapshots in the themed photo booth, where quirky props and costumes added a splash of humor and excitement.

The entertainment reached new heights with the local talents of Dram and Draw, captivating the audience with their performances and keeping the energy and laughter flowing throughout the night. The Lobster Fest was truly an unforgettable highlight, showcasing the vibrant spirit and warm culture of the Maritimes, leaving delegates with lasting memories and connections.





CONFERENCE DAY 3 - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Celebrating Empowerment and Unity

Coming off the high of day one, day two started off with an energetic and engaging session with Mayor Kate Rogers and Sakom Polchies of Sitansisk (St. Mary's) First Nation. Moderator Calvin Thompson led a valuable discussion about collaborative relationships between municipalities and First Nations and how transparent and responsive dialogue can support coordinated priorities.

Next on the agenda was Todd Pugh from CivicInfo BC, a proud CAMA supporter for many years. His entertaining session gave us lots to think about, and how political acumen should be a skill that we all hone.





Flo Follero-Pugh's presentation on multi-generational workplaces provided insight as to how different generations need different things to be productive and feel appreciated in today's environment.

Let's face it - whether or not we like it - "Event Planning" often ends up becoming a task of Executive Assistants. The Elm City Events Team - planners extraordinaire Julia McDevitt, Carolina Correa and Alisha Bainbridge-Trites provided their expertise and resources to plan your next special event.

Nina McCarthy, Fredericton's Deputy Fire Chief, spoke eloquently about how we all have impact and influence, and how credibility and trust can become superpowers.



We ended our day with Michelle Cederberg, who brought energy and insight in droves! Michelle encouraged delegates to "own their awesome" and reminded them to look after themselves as they look after others.



Jennifer Goodine, CAMA Executive Director, concluded the inaugural CAMA EA Conference with heartfelt and inspiring remarks that captured the spirit of the event. She emphasized the strong sense of CAMA-raderie fostered among the attendees, and noted the unique bond that had formed, which Suzanne Gibson fondly described as a circle of “goddesses,” – a symbol of empowerment and shared experiences that extended beyond the Conference itself.

Jennifer shared a personal story emphasizing the importance of appreciation and recognition, not just from leaders but between colleagues and peers. She reflected on her time at City Hall, where she had the privilege of working with supportive leaders and colleagues, and the profound realization of just how much she was valued only after she left. Her message was clear: express gratitude daily to those around you, including your bosses, as everyone faces their own challenges, and benefits from acknowledgment.

She affirmed that the role of Executive Assistants is vital in local government and that their contributions help build stronger teams and thriving communities. As the Conference came to a close, Jennifer encouraged attendees to continue showing appreciation, supporting one another, and recognizing the powerful impact of their work.

To end on a high note, she led the group in a moment of unity and optimism, sending them off with the song ‘Don’t Stop Believin’. This was a powerful reminder to hold on to the energy and inspiration from the Conference and to carry it forward in their professional journeys.



HONOURING THE TEAM BEHIND THE SCENES

Celebrating CAMA's All-Star Conference Champions

It's with great pride and gratitude that we recognize the exceptional team that made this first Conference a memorable and seamless experience. A special thank you to Julia, Alisha, Carolina, and Sorcha from Elm City Events for their unwavering dedication and expertise, and to Alycia Bartlett, currently the Director of Communications for the Province of New Brunswick who assisted with our communications. Their hard work, shining personalities and unbeatable teamwork brought our vision to life and created an unforgettable event for all.

"The keynote speakers were exceptional, delivering powerful insights and leaving me inspired. The highlight for me was the sense of belonging and the collective energy that embraced every moment of the Conference. From the thoughtful welcome to the final note of 'Don't Stop Believing,' I felt valued and part of something bigger. The encouragement to celebrate ourselves and our profession was truly uplifting."

- Inspired Conference Attendee



Jennifer Goodine



Julia McDevitt



Carolina Correa



Alisha Bainbridge-Trites



Sorcha Beirne



Alycia Bartlett

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the dedicated Master of Ceremonies from the CAMA EA Connections group who played a pivotal role throughout the Conference. Taking the stage with confidence and poise, their energy, professionalism, and seamless facilitation enriched each session, creating an atmosphere that was both welcoming and engaging. Their presence brought warmth and structure to the event, ensuring that each moment resonated with attendees and contributed to the Conference's success.

- Andrea Chambers, Executive Assistant to the CAO & Mayor, Town of Lincoln, ON
- Carol Pegg, Executive Assistant to the CAO, Municipal District of Bighorn No. 8, AB
- Andrea Palichuk, Executive Assistant to the CAO, Municipality of Leamington, ON
- Terri Brennan, Executive Coordinator, Office of the Mayor & CAO, Municipality of North Cowichan, BC
- Wendy Leaman, Executive Coordinator, Office of the Mayor & City Manager, City of Lloydminster, AB/SK
- Jennifer Sparks-Zahn, Executive Assistant to the CAO & Administration Lead, Office of the CAO, Administration, Regional Municipality of Niagara, ON

"This conference was a game-changer. Being surrounded by such an accomplished group of peers reinforced the importance of our work. I left with not only new connections but new motivation to bring back to my workplace."

- Recharged EA



Andrea Chambers



Carol Pegg



Andrea Palichuk



Terri Brennan



Wendy Leaman



Jennifer Sparks-Zahn

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 CONFERENCE PARTNERS

The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) extends its sincere appreciation to our valued Conference Partners for their steadfast support and dedication in making the inaugural EA Conference a resounding success.

We are particularly grateful to the City of Fredericton, home to the CAMA National Office, for their unwavering commitment to CAMA and their continuous support of the Executive Assistant profession. Special thanks to the Fredericton Administrative Professionals team for their invaluable contributions. Your gold-level partnership has been instrumental in fostering innovation and excellence, not only for this event but across the entire administrative field in Canada.

We also extend a heartfelt thank you to Government Frameworks, our esteemed Silver Partner. Your expertise and insights shared during one of our plenary sessions enriched the conference and greatly contributed to the professional development of all attendees.

Together, we are shaping a future rooted in connection, strength, and excellence in administration and governance.

Fredericton



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SAVE THE DATE

CAMA 2025 in Ottawa - A Can't-Miss Event!

Get ready to reunite and continue building connections at the 2nd Annual CAMA EA Conference!

Mark your calendars for October 5-7, 2025, as we gather at the prestigious Delta Hotel by Marriott Ottawa City Centre in the heart of Ottawa, Ontario. This event promises an even more enriching experience filled with dynamic sessions, meaningful networking, and memorable moments that will inspire and empower.

Stay tuned for the hotel room block opening in April 2025—secure your spot early to be part of this extraordinary gathering. The journey of connection, learning, and professional growth continues, and we can't wait to share it with you in Canada's vibrant capital!

