

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS



Divya Brown
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Department of Homeland Security
Current NGMA Board Member

Background

I hold a bachelor's degree in international relations and Spanish from Virginia Tech and a Master's of Public Administration (MPA) from George Mason University. I have also completed specialized certifications in education finance and philanthropy and nonprofit organization management through Georgetown University, further strengthening my expertise in the public and nonprofit sectors.

Throughout my career, I have focused on grants and contract management with an emphasis on K-12 education and federal and local government acquisitions. I have built a strong record of supporting programs that drive equitable access, operational effectiveness, and responsible stewardship of public funds. I am passionate about grants management and committed to advancing excellence in the field. My professional path reflects a deep dedication to public service, and I would be honored to continue serving on the NGMA Board of Directors, bringing my experience, commitment, and perspective to a second term.

Candidate Profile: Education

I meet the candidate profile criteria for Local Government, Nonprofit, and Education Sectors, bringing over a decade of experience in K-12 education. I served as director of grant administration for DC Public Schools, where I managed all federal, intradistrict and private grants awarded to the district. I led a team of nine grants managers and oversaw more than \$400 million in funds, ensuring cradle-to-grave administration from application submissions through monitoring and audits. To remain current and effective, my team and I regularly participated in NGMA's Annual Grants Training, webinars, and other professional development opportunities to stay up-to-date on evolving guidance and best practices. In addition, I earned certifications in nonprofit management and education finance from Georgetown University, which build upon my practical experience and further equip me to contribute meaningfully to NGMA's mission. Alongside my federal and local government service, I have also worked with nonprofits such as the Latin American Youth Center and Escuela Bolivia, where I taught students and helped implement programs designed to strengthen communities. These experiences have given me a broad perspective on how effective grants management supports both educational initiatives and nonprofit missions in driving impact.

As a current Director on the NGMA Board, I serve as the member-at-large on the executive committee and have contributed for the past three years through the program committee (current chair), governance committee, education committee and awards task force. In these roles, I have helped shape program content, strengthen governance practices, and expand opportunities for member engagement, ensuring NGMA remains responsive to the evolving needs of the grants management profession. My combined experience in education and nonprofit sectors, along with demonstrated board leadership, underscores how I meet the NGMA Board profile requirements.

Board Experience

My first exposure to board service has been through the NGMA Board of Directors, where I have proudly served for the past three years. This experience has been invaluable in helping me grow as a leader and deepen my understanding of nonprofit governance. I am seeking re-election so that I can continue contributing and see the results of the hard work and planning our Board has undertaken come to fruition. As co-chair of the program committee, I have helped review and shape sessions for the Annual Grants Training (AGT), gaining firsthand insight into the "all hands on deck" approach NGMA takes to deliver a high-quality professional development experience. My service on the governance committee has further expanded my knowledge of board operations, including organizational policies, board handbooks, and the intricacies of managing a nonprofit association.

Serving as a Board member-at-large has also provided me with a lens into NGMA's executive leadership, where I have developed strategic thinking and decision-making skills. This role has taught me how to adapt to changing landscapes while supporting NGMA's mission and future direction.

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NGMA Experience/Volunteering

Over the past three years, I have actively participated in NGMA at the national level through my service on the Board of Directors. I have contributed to several Board committees (detailed in the section above) and provided support to the NGMA Education Committee. In my current role as Program Committee co-chair, I assisted in the review of sessions for the upcoming 2026 Annual Grants Training (AGT).

At the 2025 AGT, I co-facilitated a federal government roundtable session, engaging participants in meaningful discussions and guiding the conversation to ensure a collaborative and informative experience. As a member-at-large, I also collaborated with NGMA partner REI Systems to review and provide feedback on their annual grants management survey. These opportunities have allowed me to grow as a leader, deepen my understanding of NGMA's mission, and contribute to advancing the profession through both governance and programmatic support.

Goal of NGMA's Strategic Framework That Most Resonates with Me

As an NGMA Board member who helped craft NGMA's Strategic Framework, I find it difficult to select just one goal because they are all truly important. However, the goal that resonates most with me is Strategic Goal #3: "NGMA will assist its members in navigating significant changes in the federal compliance landscape to reduce confusion and improve the overall administration of funds."

This goal reflects the reality that our members face today and emphasizes our need to provide timely information on new or upcoming changes to federal grant-related statutes, regulations, programs, and guidance. NGMA will need work with federal partners to streamline communications to the grants community on compliance changes and updates. As I previously noted, one of the greatest challenges in the next three years will be adapting to shifting federal priorities and mandates. Having seen firsthand, as a federal employee, how programs and initiatives are cut or modified, I believe NGMA's role in guiding members through these changes is critical. I look forward to the opportunity to continue serving on the Board to help advance this important work.

Top Two Challenges Over the Next 3-5 Years for the Profession

One of the top challenges for the grants management profession in the next three to five years will be navigating the changing federal landscape and shifting priorities of the current administration. As a current federal employee, I have seen firsthand how many programs and initiatives have been cut, modified, or redirected. These shifts directly impact funding streams and require grants managers to remain adaptable, responsive, and proactive in ensuring organizations can continue to deliver services and meet community needs.

A second major challenge will be confronting funding cuts and staffing shortages, paired with the need to adopt new technology. Many organizations are already being asked to do more with less. To stay compliant and competitive, grants managers will need to use AI and other tools to simplify processes, strengthen oversight, and boost efficiency. Just as important, grant professionals will need to learn how to use AI safely and effectively to utilize technology responsibly while keeping up with the evolving grants landscape. NGMA will serve a critical role in the years ahead in guiding grant recipients through changing laws and mandates, while also sharing job opportunities and training to support our members. I want to continue being part of this work, helping NGMA provide the leadership, resources, and community that professionals need to thrive in a rapidly evolving environment.