

Departing VLCT Risk Management Services Director Leaves Legacy of Increased Services and Stable Pricing



The Vermont League of Cities and Towns Director of Risk Management Services, Joe Damiata, will depart VLCT on January 3rd to take a new position at Government Entities Mutual after more than seven years leading VLCT's shared risk pools.

"Joe is leaving the trusts in excellent shape," VLCT Executive Director Ted Brady said. "Under his quietly inspired and insightful leadership, the reputational, financial, and operational health of the trusts have improved. Membership grew, net position grew, and pricing was stable."

Municipal leaders across Vermont have been hearing the name Joe Damiata since June of 2007, when Damiata joined VLCT as the manager of the loss control team. Since then, he has risen through the ranks and deployed his understanding of municipal risk management best practices as an underwriting manager, interim risk management services director, and permanent risk management services director.

As director, Joe has had daily oversight of the VLCT Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund, which currently has 357 member municipalities, and the VLCT Employment Resource and Benefits Trust, which has 212 member municipalities. His practical plans for deepening loss control services to members included developing grant and scholarship programs and offering dedicated law enforcement support as well as employment law/HR guidance. These services aim to improve municipal performance and reduce claims to the pool, reducing rate pressure.

"In my 17 and a half years working at VLCT, nothing has been more rewarding than assisting Vermont municipal officials with protecting their communities to make them better places to live, learn, work, and play in. VLCT's risk pools are unique in that they provide a full risk management package, customized to meet members' needs, with staff that know the challenges and risks our

members face. I owe a lot to VLCT, its board of directors, members, and the staff for helping me grow and be better at what I do so our Vermont communities are well protected. Both VLCT risk pools are very strong financially, and they will continue serving you long after I leave."

During his tenure at VLCT, Damiata also made a mark on national intermunicipal risk management services as a member of both the National League of Cities Risk Information Sharing Consortium Board of Directors and the National League of Cities Mutual Insurance Company Board of Directors. He frequently brought national best practices back to VLCT's trusts, and other states' insurance pools picked up on a few of the innovative approaches that he introduced in Vermont. Damiata led VLCT's trusts through extraordinary times, including shepherding the unemployment trust through a pandemic that threatened the financial viability of our unemployment insurance program, guiding our claims team and members through several catastrophic flooding events, and adapting to technological advancements in the insurance industry that kept VLCT PACIF and VERB competitive and efficient.

Brady said one of Damiata's secrets to success seems rooted in his habit of taking a lunchtime wellness walk with colleagues when working in Montpelier. "Whoever wanted to join was welcome, and although the talk was generally about the walkers rather than work, Joe often came back with some bits of wisdom, or an idea to solve a member problem, or occasionally having noticed a less than ideal road work setup. Once a loss control rep, always a loss control rep."

When Damiata wasn't tending to a member question or walking around Montpelier, he could be found hiking in the Green and White Mountains, where he is rapidly closing in on all of the 4,000 footers in both states.

Damiata will start as Managing Director at Government Entities Mutual, a reinsurance company for public entity trusts like VLCT PACIF but not affiliated with state municipal associations, on January 6th. The company is headquartered in Bedford, New Hampshire, though Damiata and his family will remain in Vermont for the foreseeable future.

Brady says VLCT will name an acting director before Damiata's departure. In the new year, VLCT will conduct a public search for a new director.

"We have an incredible Vermont-based underwriting and claims team here at VLCT ready to make this a seamless transition," said Brady. "And your PACIF, VERB, and VLCT Boards, made up of member municipalities, will continue providing the oversight and support that make our trusts an

unparalleled value to member municipalities."