

*Connecting Research to Practice*



# IBM Center Research Announcement 2021



IBM Center for  
The Business  
of Government

# Dear Colleagues:



The IBM Center for The Business of Government connects research to practice, supporting work by scholars that benefits government through analysis of real-world experience that leads to practical, actionable recommendations. Center reports are intended to spark the imagination—crafting new ways to think about government by identifying trends, new ideas, and best practices in public management and innovation. Center reports help government executives respond more effectively to mission and management priorities. Center awards have gone to more than 400 leading researchers in public management, who have produced reports on improving the effectiveness of government. Our work assists public sector executives, managers, staff, and stakeholders in addressing real-world problems and improving government performance and effectiveness.

With this research announcement, the Center is pleased to solicit proposals that result in reports marked by practical, actionable recommendations for government leaders and public managers in the following eight research areas:

- **Restoring Trust in Government:** Defining Strategies and Tools to Actively Engage the Public
- **Addressing Equity:** Assessing Inclusion and Diversity in Government Services, Operations, and Management
- **Developing Actionable Insights:** Using Data and Evidence to Inform Decision Making and Achieve Results
- **Attaining Effective Outcomes:** Supporting Program Performance and Performance Management Strategies
- **Driving Agility:** Enhancing Mission Support and Delivery
- **Accelerating Digital:** Modernizing IT by Leveraging Innovation and Emerging Technologies
- **Fostering Resilient Institutions:** Managing Risk and Building Resiliency
- **Reimagining the Government Workplace:** Addressing the Importance of a Mission-Focused Workforce for the Future

The IBM Center shaped this agenda by collaborating with government, academic, and nonprofit leaders to identify key areas of need for expert perspectives on how the public sector can transform. Importantly, the areas address both individual trends influencing government, and topics that can be addressed with even greater impact if assessed in a way that integrates across trends—such as driving an agile approach to digital innovation that improves outcomes. This integrative approach is especially true for how different trends relate to equity across government programs and foster trust in government institutions, information, and services—two new areas that government leaders and stakeholders have highlighted as important topics for Center research.

Through research into these eight topics, the Center will continue to communicate what leading experts know about effective practices and lessons learned for government leaders and stakeholders. Such communications can promote public understanding of the benefits that a well-functioning government delivers, which can help to drive trust in government.

Center supported research can also help governments in the U.S. and across the world continue to focus on controlling costs while improving the performance of their operations, meeting the key challenge facing public sector executives to transform their organizations in an environment of constrained resources—a goal brought into clear focus from the response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, driving meaningful and sustained change in government requires a focus on innovative, effective, equitable, and efficient decision making and implementation to achieve positive, significant, and lasting outcomes.

We encourage applicants for Center awards to review our research areas closely in selecting a topic, or a cross-cutting set of topics, on which to prepare your proposal. We look forward to receiving proposals that address these topics and continuing to work with the world's leading public management researchers. Our next deadlines are June 30 and December 1. Please visit [businessofgovernment.org](https://businessofgovernment.org) periodically to confirm latest deadlines.

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# Restoring Trust in Government

## *Defining Strategies and Tools to Actively Engage the Public*

Governments around the world face a crisis of confidence in governance and institutions. In the U.S., the Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship concluded in mid-2020: “Overall distrust of the federal government has become a persistent marker of American politics . . . Yet the data also show that Americans do not accept this state of affairs . . . Eighty-four percent of Americans think that the level of confidence we have in government can be improved.” However, the recent crisis involving the storming of the U.S. Capitol makes clear that this will be both a critical priority as well as a difficult one to achieve.

Various hypotheses have been posed as to the root of the rising tide of mistrust and its relationship with democracy, government, and other institutions. Potential solutions include encouraging national service, greater civic education, more public engagement. They also include strengthening government institutions and processes such as inspectors general offices, open government, better customer experience, and tighter ethics rules. But more needs to be known about the causes of mistrust and which actions are more effective in strengthening trust.

Restoring trust is not one-sided. A number of engagement advocates promote the use of real-time information/learning, interactive dialogue, and personal engagement by members of the public. They also note that a precursor to effective dialogue and engagement is a more grounded understanding of civic fundamentals, reinforcing the importance of an active citizenry to healthy democracy.

## Areas for Research Include:

- Why does trust in government and other civic institutions matter to the success of government?
- What does “trust” look like to the public? What are the root causes of distrust? Does it differ among various demographic, racial, social, cultural, and economic groups? Does it differ by level of government? Are there external factors?
- How can trust be measured in ways that are meaningful to the public and policymakers, and actionable by government leaders?
- What alternative public-facing strategies (e.g., public engagement, public education) and government-facing strategies (e.g., ethics, plain language, transparency) can help build trust? How can these strategies be tested and scaled?
- How are emerging technologies and open data being used to expand channels to bring the public and governments closer together? How can governments provide real-time feedback and improve customer experience?
- Are there examples of successful strategies and tools to promote meaningful dialogue and create an informed citizenry? Are there potential models in other countries?
- What is the role of social media in restoring trust? How are federal agencies using social media to engage their key clients and delivery partners (states, localities, nonprofits, contractors) in advising on problem-solving, priority-setting, and program implementation?
- What risks do social media bring to drive wedges in the fabric of trust in government, and how might those risks be mitigated?
- What can be done to reduce legislative, procedural, and behavioral barriers to promote greater and more meaningful engagement?
- Do government regulations and constraints on government operations and personnel adversely affect how public servants perceive their roles? Does this result in further mistrust by government employees and the general public?
- What can be done to improve trust within government—between political appointees and career civil servants, between senior managers and frontline employees, and between agencies and levels of government?



## Addressing Equity

### *Assessing Inclusion and Diversity in Government Services, Operations, and Management*

Effective implementation of government programs carries a pressing and growing imperative to address racial, ethnic, and gender issues. An important area for research and to benefit government involves addressing issues of social equity across the public sector. Research can help define equity in a measurable way across all elements of governance and the full range of government programs and services, including healthcare, education, environment, housing, social services, workforce, justice, and transportation. In addition, research on effective government action can help bridge the longstanding digital divide, which is only growing in impact given new technologies like artificial intelligence and 5G.

Government leaders and stakeholders will benefit from evidence-based studies of innovative, actionable, and practical practices and recommendations that reflect transformative, culture-shifting approaches and public interest technologies. Such research, as well as stories that bring evidence to life, will be enriched through development by a diverse community of researchers from the academic and nonprofit sectors.

In addition, pathways to achieve a federal government workforce that embraces significant contributions by leaders from diverse communities will provide great benefit. At the most senior executive levels, a balanced inclusive and diverse leadership team remains a challenge. Research is needed into strengthening a pipeline, identifying candidates with needed skill sets across government from the leadership pipeline and across diverse communities, as well as exploration of innovative, actionable, and practical industry practices and recommendations.

Another element where research can inform practice around supporting goals of equity involves how government uses data, which can be key to understanding challenges in social equity and recommending response strategies. Addressing data

in three areas will lead to important findings for government: 1) understanding the baseline conditions for how services and operations impact diverse communities; 2) developing metrics to assess progress in improving those conditions from the baseline toward an evidence-based set of outcomes; and 3) defining the appropriate set of information resources to address that progress.

### **Areas for Research Include:**

1. What objective, evidence-based frameworks can help define the current state and future goals for understanding social equity in government, addressing race, ethnicity, gender, and other key elements of inclusion and diversity?
2. What are effective practices and data-driven benchmarks and metrics to advance equity and support for underserved communities in service delivery?
3. How can data drive progress in improving equity across the range of government programs, including healthcare, education, environment, housing, social services, workforce, justice, and transportation?
4. How can government affect diversity and inclusion across the workforce, and especially at the executive ranks?
5. How can government use technology responsibly to advance engagement and opportunity for communities of color, for example through addressing disparities in broadband or device availability?
6. What actions can leaders take to attract diverse perspectives in the development of technology solutions, especially growing the number of developers and researchers working on responsible use of artificial intelligence, cloud, and open source innovation?
7. What are lessons learned from the responses to equity issues that emerged during the pandemic, and how can those lessons learned help governments address equity in responding to future challenges and informing social determinants of health?
8. Are there cases or principles that provide models for government-university-industry partnerships, internships, or research to strengthen equity in the people and ideas that contribute to government?



## Developing Actionable Insights

### *Using Data and Evidence to Inform Decision Making and Achieve Results*

In recent years, the federal government has developed a data strategy and institutional infrastructure to leverage its wealth of statistical and administrative data. Congress, via a series of laws, has promoted a greater supply of information and invested in strengthened analytic capabilities in agencies. Executive branch agencies have designated chief data officers and chief evaluation officers, and developed administrative routines to better leverage information in existing and new decision-making processes. Innovative analytics strategies have reduced the cost of collecting and reporting such data and achieving evidence-based insights. Emerging technologies also open new vistas, such as using artificial intelligence (AI) to assist in making complex decisions in diverse areas including benefits determination, public safety, financial management, acquisition, and intelligence.

The recent pandemic has demonstrated the criticality of being able to use data and evidence at all levels of government, along with the private sector and the public, to address a national emergency. Now, governments face the challenge of how to best leverage new authorities and routines in making better decisions and gaining useful insights. The U.S. and other national governments can also reach beyond existing routines to engage state, local, nonprofit, and contractor delivery partners in delivering public services. In parallel, all levels of government are challenged with encouraging the use of data and evidence by both the public and private sectors to inform decisions—whether for weather, traffic, or safety.

In addition, governments must have the capacity to ensure that data used to derive insights, inform decisions, and improve delivery is of the appropriate quality. Managing and improving data quality requires continuous assessment to determine that data provenance reflects an objective and unbiased source, and that the data is complete and accurate. Government must emphasize the importance of deriving value from data, showing how data will assist in solving major issues facing society, driving economic growth, and measuring programs to determine their impact.

## Areas for Research Include:

- How are agencies developing data and evidence strategies, and how are agency leaders using their results to make better-informed decisions? What behavioral and institutional changes need to be addressed, including through research on behavioral science, to effectively implement changes based on data findings?
- How is the U.S. federal government using (or revising) the federal performance framework to improve planning, resource allocations, and program operations?
- How have new institutional roles for U.S. federal agencies created by statute since 2010 been used to improve decision making (this would include positions such as agency chief operating officers, performance improvement officers, chief data officers, chief evaluation officers, and performance improvement officers)? Are different organizational models used by agencies to implement these roles? What has been the role of cross-agency councils?
- How are all levels of government using strategic foresight and risk analyses in their strategic planning efforts, and does their use influence choices made by decision makers?
- Considering the role played by state and local governments, what impediments are faced in trying to uncover actionable data that has intergovernmental implications?
- How can reporting requirements be enforced to manage how data is collected, analyzed, visualized, and shared between government agencies on the federal, state, and local levels?
- How can agencies create a more expansive open data community to solve larger societal issues through innovation, as demonstrated by the medical research community during the development of COVID-19 vaccines?
- To what extent does a lack of comprehensive data negatively impact individuals denied access to critical government resources, specifically as it relates to recovery efforts around COVID-19?
- Are there models of government data and evidence sharing with the private sector and the public that result in co-production of public goods or services? Can these models be extended to other program or policy domains?
- Are there models of management accountability frameworks in use in states, localities, nonprofits, or other countries that reflect trust in and empowerment of their workforce, rather than relying on compliance-oriented administrative processes?



## Attaining Effective Outcomes

### *Supporting Program Performance and Performance Management Strategies*

Recent government improvement initiatives seek to achieve effective outcomes against a set of strategic imperatives and core mission functions. Whether through the provision of services, benefits, or care, outcomes-based approaches rise in priority across government agencies charged with converting policy and programs to outcomes. At the foundation of all government efforts to deliver better outcomes are the people, processes, technology, and policies that serve as both inputs and leading indicators of success. Given this foundation, customer centric design is integral to any strategy that focuses on outcomes. Also integral to citizen centric design are the personas and respective equities that can be assessed to drive measurable outcomes.

Effective agencies no longer solely focus on the busy work of throughput, but rather on whether throughput assures an organization's desired outcomes, policy provides the latitude and boundaries necessary for achieving success, human capital serves mission results, and technology exists as a force multiplier in amplifying and accelerating progress. To this end, performance management is a vital and necessary element for attaining intended outcomes. Performance management links individual goals to program priorities and program priorities to agency strategy.

The most successful civilian and federal organizations achieve desired outcomes via outcome-driven process redesign, optimal technology platforms, effective talent and performance management, and efficient and orderly governance. These organizations also deploy a robust strategic communications strategy to effectively socialize meaningful visions, plans, and outcomes for key stakeholders—from Congress at the front end of policy and oversight, to tactical delivery teams who serve end customers and beneficiaries.

## **Areas for Research Include:**

- What recent industry benchmarks, measures, and tools (analytic, cognitive, or social) best demonstrate effectiveness?
- What readily available innovation exists to propel effectiveness in delivering targeted outcomes and optimizing return on investments?
- What are barriers to achieving government and shared services efficiencies, economies of scale, and benefits of specialization? What approaches exist to overcome these barriers?
- What role does customer-centric design play in an organization's ability to achieve effective outcomes?
- How is achieving success bolstered by the development of personas that describe who benefits from government outcomes, by understanding the equity impacts from outcomes, and by establishing outcome metrics?
- How do transformational events, such as the government's rapid shift to telework in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, impact the timing, planning, delivery, and measures of effective outcomes?



## Driving Agility

### *Enhancing Mission Support and Delivery*

The U.S. and nations around the world are living through massive disruptive economic, technological, demographic, and geographic change that continues to accelerate. Against this backdrop, governments are leading response and recovery efforts to numerous crises, both immediate from the COVID-19 pandemic and long-term such as environmental sustainability.

Governments are crafting new policies and regulations and implementing projects and programs designed to produce positive outcomes. To support timely execution of such strategies, a set of principles for operating government in an agile fashion has been developed by the National Academy of Public Administration's Agile Government Center. These principles draw upon successful experience using agile in software development and digital services over the last two decades, and go beyond technology in a way that can be used at the project, program, and whole of government level to achieve meaningful outcomes for the public.

However, there are challenges to implementing agile strategies in government, which include fit with traditional bureaucracy, need for new forms of leadership and support structures oriented around outcomes, and complex cultural and regulatory frameworks. Public administration researchers have begun to engage with emerging agile practices in various ways, including through the development of theory on why agility increases the potential for effective results, the study of how incrementalism works in achieving results, and how agile links with top-down-driven strategic change. Agile offers new pathways for research, including hypothesis-driven modeling, agile policy implementation, collaborative regulatory development, and new management modes.

## **Areas for Research Include:**

- How does an agile approach differ from traditional management practices?
- What programs and settings are most appropriate to use agile approaches?
- How can agile principles be used to improve policy development, regulation, and management by encouraging broader consultation, diversity of opinion, and responding to ideas from stakeholders?
- Can application of agile techniques improve trust in government by demonstrating increased effectiveness and responsiveness?
- How can innovative technology and data analysis be used to implement agile practices in policy development, regulation, and management?
- What implementation actions should be undertaken by federal, state and local governments?
- What kind of leadership is necessary to successfully implement agile principles across levels of government?
- How can agile be used to inform broader research questions in government?
- What are examples and case studies of agile in action in the U.S. and around the world?



# Accelerating Digital

## *Modernizing IT by Leveraging Innovation and Emerging Technologies*

The convergence of multiple crises including a global pandemic, economic upheaval, civil unrest due in large part to social inequity, and environmental instability due to climate change are accelerating change in ways that require new strategies, techniques, and tools to address. These challenges and opportunities are prompting governments to embrace innovative business models and technologies for operating effectively and efficiently.

Digital platforms and tools offer an opportunity to reimagine mission delivery and citizen services. New methods such as design thinking and DevSecOps (an approach to develop systems and applications in an iterative, interactive, and secure manner) focus collaborative development teams on ensuring that changes reflect the customer viewpoints. Digital strategies can enable changes in process or technology that contribute to mission delivery, customer service, and a measurable mission outcome. Agencies are also leveraging AI and data analytics while harnessing the computing power of hybrid cloud services and quantum computing to improve government decision making and services, and ultimately to empower citizens.

Emerging and existing technologies have rapidly evolved to support digital transformation, and the pace of change is likely to increase. This global phenomenon has occurred in the private sector for some time, but has grown more slowly in the public sector. The response to COVID-19, with the shift to remote work and digital engagement, has accelerated the adoption of digitized workflows in government, which will not return to “business as usual” but is still seeking the “next normal.”

In addition, the application of digital tools assists in creating intelligent workflows that improve customer experience and service delivery. Taking this approach allows government officials and support staff to engage in higher level cognitive analysis, rather than performing repetitive tasks. Government must also protect privacy, ensure security, and eliminate bias in the use of digital technology to curate data.

### **Areas for Research Include:**

- How can agencies best take advantage of the benefits of emerging technologies that include artificial intelligence, robotics process automation, the Internet of Things, and new quantum applications?”
- How can government use design thinking, data analytics, and technology to improve mission delivery and outcomes, with a focus on 1) disparity in healthcare for underserved populations related to the recent COVID response, 2) impact of green energy and sustainable practices on air quality and ultimately climate change, and 3) the pandemic’s impact on the economy with emphasis on hardest hit sectors (i.e., transportation, hospitality, restaurants, and small business)?
- How can leaders engender trust in government data through demonstrating transparency of algorithms, revalidation of data quality, and addressing bias in data derived through AI and other cognitive technologies?
- How can government use digital approaches to create situational awareness of anomalous activity in cyberspace, to identify zero-day attacks, assess the IT supply chain to prevent attacks, and ensure the long-term stability of the cyber ecosystem?
- What are the best practices and frameworks for infrastructure modernization and application modernization that can help address lack of investment in new technologies in government?
- How can agencies leverage funding and acquisition flexibilities to support digital transformation?



# Fostering Resilient Institutions

## *Managing Risk and Building Resiliency*

Like all large enterprises, government faces the risk that bad or unintended outcomes will happen as it manages programs. The nation's safety, security, and resiliency are threatened by a vast array of risks and hazards, including pandemics, malicious cyber activity, terrorism, accidents, transnational crime, fraud, natural disasters, and climate change. High impact and hard to predict events like COVID-19 reveal vulnerabilities and weaknesses in systems and across sectors. The pandemic highlighted serious weaknesses in the global supply chain, hampering government responses to life-threatening situations. When governments respond by creating assistance programs to offset financial hardship resulting from economic impacts, these programs can increase exposure to fraud, waste, and abuse.

Crises of the past few years have led government agencies to develop a robust and rigorous risk management discipline that increases resiliency and informs mission delivery. Such a discipline positions agencies to move out ahead of new and emerging threats, building resilient organizations that turn risk into opportunity. As the pandemic ultimately recedes, the volatile risk landscape of today will remain.

Along with these external threats, government leaders face similar as well as unique risks associated with fulfilling program missions. For example, the use of technologies such as social media, the Internet of Things, mobility, artificial intelligence, "intelligent automation," and cloud computing by government agencies has great benefit for government, but has also increased potential cyber risks. Cyberattacks against government are becoming more common and severe—a trend made more pronounced as agencies have increased reliance on digital networks for distance work in the response and recovery efforts around COVID-19. Engaging leaders in protecting cyber, IT, and information assets is critical to effective security and resiliency.

Government leaders can view risk as "uncertainty that matters." Managing this uncertainty requires building government's capacity to anticipate and become more resilient in preparing for the future. Government leaders can leverage foresight,

understand the spectrum of risks, and develop actions to understand and mitigate known and uncertain risks in making sound management decisions.

Risk management need not be viewed as a compliance exercise but rather as essential to agency missions. In the U.S. to confront this dynamic risk environment, federal agencies have been called on by the Office of Management and Budget to effectively identify and manage risks using an enterprise risk management (ERM) approach. As part of pursuing ERM, many government agencies have appointed chief risk officers (CRO) to lead these efforts. CROs can successfully manage enterprise risk by mitigating threats while anticipating and assessing risk profiles.

Government leaders can take a holistic view of managing risk and promoting resiliency, prioritizing known threats while preparing for the unknown. A robust risk management discipline, enhanced by advances in technology, offers government leaders data and information that can help them make better decisions, enhance operational effectiveness, and deliver on diverse and complex missions.

### **Areas for Research Include:**

- How can government agencies strengthen the role of chief risk officers? Are there critical success factors and lessons learned from case studies that can help CROs more effectively lead the management of enterprise risk?
- How should governments manage risk across agencies, to provide policy guidance and promote enterprise risk management as a mission enabler?
- What have recent events demonstrated about the importance of risk management and resiliency, and how can that knowledge inform the operations and management of federal government agencies?
- How can agencies use risk management tools, such as scenario planning and strategic foresight, to complement their enterprise risk management strategy, more effectively anticipate risks, and develop resiliency strategies to avoid or mitigate future risks?
- How best can government agencies integrate cybersecurity into their enterprise risk management approach, monitoring how technology and analytics can help in managing cyber risks?
- How can government agencies most effectively pursue strong and actionable response and resiliency strategies that bolster a robust supply chain and core operations, based on lessons learned from shocks to the system due to COVID-19?
- How can emerging technologies such as AI and blockchain improve operational risk management, and how can agencies mitigate the risks associated with using these technologies?



# Reimagining the Government Workplace

## *Addressing the Important of a Mission-Focused Workforce for the Future*

The government workforce faces difficult challenges. Significant portions of the workforce—including those in defense and intelligence agencies, the foreign affairs community, environmentally-focused offices, and regulatory teams—have faced shifts in policy and strategic objectives. COVID-19 has also changed the way agencies do their work, introducing new work arrangements, reduced hours, and an immediate shift to remote work. These changes disrupted former leadership practices that relied on “open doors,” “walking around,” and other personal contact-based approaches. Fewer candidates for government service are looking for long-term public sector careers, requiring hiring practices to adjust to increased employee mobility; “Interchange Canada” represents a major national initiative to address the realities of the 21st century workforce.

The new workplace reality merits changes to traditional hiring methodologies, training practices, and career models. Government, learning from large commercial organizations, must:

- Hire the right people, at the right time, with the right skill sets
- Continuously develop the professional skills needed to both meet today’s requirements and future challenges
- Provide an agile employee career path that promotes growth through both instructional learning (training) and experiential learning (assignments)

Technology allows for even faster adoption of new practices. As with every workplace, the government workforce has attracted talent drawn from industry, the nonprofit sector, and academia. The changing composition of those working in government requires a shift in organizational culture to address increasingly diverse perspectives. Changing organizational behaviors results from changing the incentives that drive those behaviors.

Driving the effectiveness of the current and future government workforce requires creating a workplace in which public servants can succeed, both personally and professionally.

### **Areas for Research Include:**

- How can government better identify and attract candidates for employment, establishing a more proactive talent identification/acquisition model?
- How can government leaders determine the current and future skill sets required for their agencies?
- How can emerging technologies, such as AI and virtual reality, fuel a shift in workplace practices that will increase employee engagement and support a more productive workforce?
- What data will enable the effectiveness of hiring and talent development programs at the agency level? At the governmentwide level?
- How can government optimize a workplace that increasingly relies on government and contractor employees working together, often in distributed teams made more prevalent in the aftermath of COVID-19?
- How can leaders adjust career paths to adopt flexible training models that accelerate the time to proficiency for their employees, provide for rewarding educational experiences, and increase employee retention?
- What incentives—extrinsic and intrinsic—drive today’s workforce, and how can government more effectively use those incentives to fuel success?

# Guidelines

The IBM Center for The Business of Government taps into the best minds in academe and the nonprofit sector, who use rigorous public management research and analytic techniques to produce research and recommendations that help public sector executives and managers improve government effectiveness. The Center seeks practical findings and actionable recommendations—not just theory or concepts—in order to assist executives and managers more effectively respond to mission and management challenges.



## DESCRIPTION OF STIPENDS

Individuals receiving a stipend should produce a 10,000- to 12,000-word report. The manuscript should be submitted six months after the start of the project. Recipients will select start and end dates for their work. The report should be written for government leaders and public managers, providing practical knowledge and insight.



## ELIGIBILITY

Individuals working in universities, nonprofit organizations, or journalism.



## SIZE OF STIPENDS

\$20,000 for each report



## DEADLINES

There are two funding cycles, with deadlines in the spring and fall each year.

Applicants will be informed of a decision approximately **10 weeks** after the deadlines. Applications must be received online (by midnight EST) or postmarked by the due date.



## SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Interested individuals should read our latest research announcement, and apply online.

Applicants will complete a series of fields that include the proposal title, proposal summary (100 word limit), the research report proposal (1,500 word limit) to include the (i) purpose, ii) methodology, and (iii) results of the proposed report, a category for the proposal, and a resume for each author.

Though not a requirement, the Center encourages applicants to submit information online. Attachments are permitted, but should adhere to the constraints outlined in the guidelines.



## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Government leaders and public managers want answers to the “So what?” question. They want to know “Why should I care?” and “What do I do next?” Consequently, proposals are reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Will the proposed report be of high value and timely to government leaders and public managers?
- Will the report provide practical insight and understanding of the topic?
- Does the applicant demonstrate the potential to produce a final report that will be clear, understandable, and highly communicative to government leaders and public managers?
- Does the applicant demonstrate outstanding command and knowledge of the topic?



# Frequently Asked Questions

## APPLICATIONS

### **Can I apply online?**

Yes, online applications are preferred.

### **Does the Center only fund reports for U.S. federal executives and managers?**

No. While a majority of the Center's reports focus on executives and managers in the U.S. federal government, we are also interested in reports that discuss new approaches to improving the effectiveness of government at state, local, and international levels. The most competitive proposals tend to be those that have a very strong "story" that can be generalized to a broad audience.

### **Do you need to itemize a budget in the proposal or describe how the \$20,000 stipend will be used?**

No. The researcher can use the stipend however he/she deems appropriate.

### **Can I submit more than one proposal at a time?**

No. Researchers are asked to submit only one proposal per review cycle. Multiple proposal submissions may lead to disqualification.

### **Does the Center accept proposals for topics outside the scope of this announcement?**

Yes, however, most projects that receive stipends will be closely related to the themes outlined in this announcement. While we consider proposals touching on other government management challenges, these themes are of greatest interest.

### **Can independent researchers or consultants apply?**

Independent researchers or consultants must have an affiliation with a nonprofit organization, an academic institution, or journalistic institution. A letter from one of those organizations describing the affiliation must be included in the proposal.

### **Can graduate students apply?**

If the proposed report is part of a graduate student's doctoral dissertation, he or she may apply. However, the proposal should include a letter of endorsement from the individual's dissertation advisor.

## STIPENDS

### **How long is the report?**

Reports should be 30 to 40 pages in length.

### **Does the Center provide stipends larger than \$20,000?**

No.

### **Does the Center pay for overhead expenses?**

No. We do not pay overhead, indirect, or operating costs.

### **Can the recipient's institution receive the stipend?**

Yes. Individuals receiving a stipend have the option of requesting that the stipend be paid directly to their institution. As noted above, however, no overhead costs will be included in the stipend.

## REPORTS

### **Who is the audience for completed reports?**

Reports should be written for government leaders and public managers, with a goal of providing practical insights and actionable recommendations to help improve the operation and management of government.

### **How quickly must the report be completed?**

Recipients will select the start and end dates of the project. Recipients will submit a completed manuscript six months after the selected start date. The project should start no later than three months after stipend award.

### **How will the report be reviewed?**

Upon receipt of the manuscript, the IBM Center reviews the draft for consistency with the recipient's original proposal. The Center may offer editorial suggestions to better address how government leaders and public managers will read and act upon the report's contents.

### **How will the report be published?**

The IBM Center will publish the report and distribute it to government executives, managers, and stakeholders.

### **Can recipients publish the report in other publications?**

Recipients retain all rights to the research and can publish findings anywhere they wish. The IBM Center must be cited, however, as providing support for the project.

## ABOUT THE IBM CENTER FOR THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT

Through research stipends and events, the IBM Center for The Business of Government stimulates research and facilitates discussion of new approaches to improving the effectiveness of government at the federal, state, local, and international levels.

## ABOUT IBM GLOBAL BUSINESS SERVICES

With consultants and professional staff in more than 160 countries globally, IBM Global Business Services is the world's largest consulting services organization. IBM Global Business Services provides clients with business process and industry expertise, a deep understanding of technology solutions that address specific industry issues, and the ability to design, build, and run those solutions in a way that delivers bottom-line value. To learn more visit [ibm.com](http://ibm.com).

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