



Governing Across The Divide

Four Best Practices for Intergovernmental Leaders



December 2017

ABOUT THE ACADEMY

The National Academy of Public Administration is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan organization established in 1967 and chartered by Congress in 1984. It provides expert advice to government leaders in building more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations. To carry out this mission, the Academy draws on the knowledge and experience of its over 850 Fellows—including former cabinet officers, Members of Congress, governors, mayors, and state legislators, as well as prominent scholars, business executives, and public administrators. The Academy helps public institutions address their most critical governance and management challenges through in-depth studies and analyses, advisory services and technical assistance, congressional testimony, forums and conferences, and online stakeholder engagement. Learn more about the Academy and its work at www.NAPAwash.org.

Executive Summary

Leaders at all levels of government face tremendous challenges today. Their jobs are beset by a wide array of divides: income, geography, education, gender, race, culture ... the list goes on. Leaders must navigate a world of ongoing fiscal imbalances, rising citizen expectations, and growing political polarization brought on by these divisions. And they must deliver services in a digitally-connected, customer-centric world.

To learn how government leaders are bridging these divides to improve service delivery, the National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) convened 15 panels of cross-sector government experts at four locations around the United States this fall.

The Academy structured the panels and discussions to highlight the solutions and leadership skillsets driving the best and the brightest. The insights gleaned from the 15 panels, 73 speakers, and nearly 400 expert attendees uncovered four main practices employed by successful government leaders today:

- 1.** An enterprise-wide innovation capacity integrated into the strategic fabric of the organization;
- 2.** The optimization and rethinking of the systematic interaction of the various stakeholders in today's networked government;

- 3.** The prioritization of factual, useful information in execution and communication; and

- 4.** An emphasis on patient and persistent engagement of constituents, citizens, and the workforce.

Our most successful government leaders have an innovative problem-solving mindset—and also understand that government alone is not the solution to every problem. Networked, collaborative, and co-produced solutions across the public, private, nonprofit, and academic sectors will be needed to ensure equitable and effective delivery of government services. These co-produced solutions require flexibility to negotiate and execute, which is why many of the most innovative solutions are first developed on the local level in cities and states. As Julian Castro said in Austin, “cities are places where things get done.”

Change begins with risk-taking leaders engaging with citizens and risk-taking citizens engaging with their state and community governments. Most leaders who successfully advance innovative policies take the time to deliberately engage citizens face-to-face over long periods of time. They communicate the implications of complex policy choices. And, through transparency, they build trust and legitimacy. The insights gained from these initial conversations now position the Academy to explore particular solution sets to govern effectively across the divides.

The Divide

America has undergone a lot of change in a short period of time. Citizens' expectations of government have changed. Technology allows us to do things that previous generations could have barely imagined. The nation's culture and demographic makeup have shifted and will continue to do so. And, amidst all this change, governing itself has evolved.

The government leaders tasked with navigating this new landscape must confront and bridge a variety of divides, including race, education, income, geography, gender, and culture. In some cases, the divides have made it more difficult to address such issues as long-term fiscal imbalances, human capital development, governmental inefficiencies, and income inequality. Leaders of the public service workforce need to be increasingly adaptable, flexible, and resilient; and comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty, and interdependence. Changes in governance suggest that leaders need different patterns of thinking, organization, and action. As government struggles to keep up with changes driven and reinforced by technology, the rules of public service are being rewritten by citizens and governments to improve service delivery in today's consumer-driven networked economy.

This fall the Academy convened 15 panels of cross-sector experts at four locations around the United States to confront this changing landscape and expose the best practices for governing across, and in spite of, divides.

The Consensus

The divides are vast. They span city and state lines, levels of government, and sectors. The

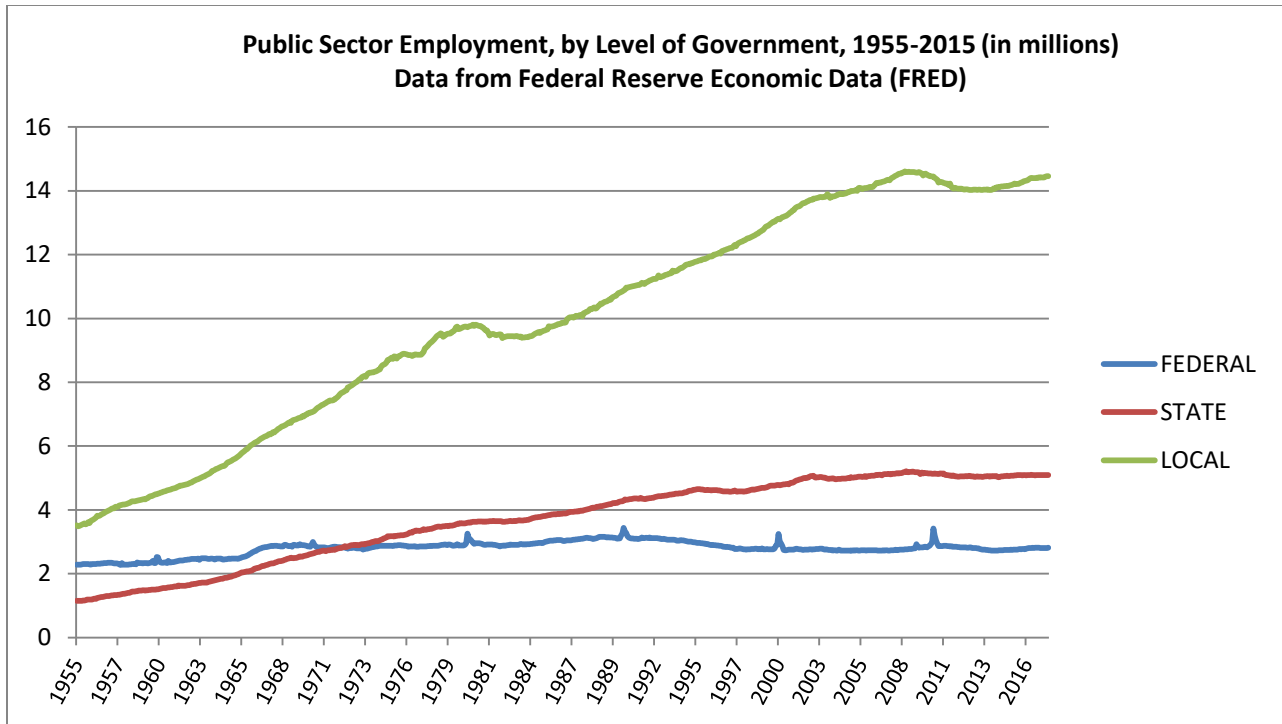
ability of government alone to solve these challenges vanished decades ago.

The Takeaway

There is an overwhelming need to bridge these gaps through effective governance, and a variety of promising governing practices are being employed by enterprising and engaged leaders from the public, private, nonprofit, and academic sectors across the United States. These problems can be solved by collaboration and through co-produced solutions between both public and private sector stakeholders. A leader's toolkit may include multi-vector collaborations like rural-urban partnerships that bridge and heal divides, and the devolution of responsibility to regional levels where government leaders are closer to their constituents.

Effective, collaborative, and co-produced solutions to the problems facing our communities and our country begin with motivated leaders. The insights and advice uncovered and aggregated by the 15 Governing Across the Divide panels and 73 speakers will help leaders improve the quality of government to better serve our citizens and restore a sense of civic community.

These four symposia specifically looked at the changing role of states, innovations in local government service delivery, the future of public service and citizenship, and governance of resilient critical infrastructure. Through these conversations, four trends emerged that describe today's challenging governing environment, and from those trends emerged four promising practices for leaders.



The Trends

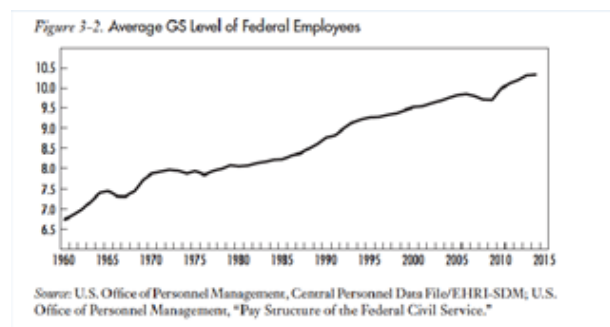
1. The extent to which citizens are cognizant of government’s touch points and impact on their daily lives, or the “line of sight” between the federal government and its citizens, continues to narrow. Further, the devolvement of responsibility to state and local governments is accelerating as their workforces have grown over the past two decades.

At the same time, the nation’s trust in the federal government continues to decline.

In fact, recent data indicates that “only 20% of Americans today say they can trust the government in Washington to do what is right ‘just about always’ (4%) or ‘most of the time’ (16%).” However, citizens’ trust in their state and local governments is much higher. Nearly 71% of citizens trust their local government. Trust is highest, then, where the rubber meets the road and leaders must account for their decisions and actions face-to-face.

2. The intergovernmental system has become increasingly siloed and structurally constrictive.

One example of this is the inter-sectoral nature of the workforce. The size of the federal civil service workforce has not fundamentally changed since the Kennedy administration, but these civil servants are now augmented by 5-6 million contractors. As the lower federal grades have been replaced by contractors, the workforce that remains has become a corps of managers, technical experts, and leaders who must leverage the public, private, nonprofit, and academic sectors to make government work.



3. The demographics of the nation as a whole are steadily shifting—a shift especially pronounced in the nation’s megaregions. Specific drivers of these demographic changes include:

- population growth, driving increased housing density and the need for affordable, livable housing;
- infrastructure that is not synchronized with the outward expansion of cities into mega-regions and the corresponding population growth; and
- increasing consolidation of mega-regions into knowledge economies that leaves

many smaller communities unprepared for the education needs and career programs of the future.

4. With the increasing prevalence of social media and 24/7 news coverage, the substance of the nation’s public discourse continues to thin as political polarization mounts. Not only is discourse increasingly raucous, as it was during the nation’s inception, but groups on all sides have retreated to their partisan sandboxes, making it difficult to find common ground. Partisanship and declining turnout for elections, coupled with less substantive public discourse, can hamstring efforts to bridge divides before they begin.

The Outlook

Government cannot fix these problems. Instead, it’s up to the people, and, in our view, their leaders to take positive action to adapt government to function in this new environment. From our discussions, we gleaned four promising practices employed by today’s successful government leaders:

- An enterprise-wide innovation capacity that is integrated into the strategic fabric of the organization;
- The optimization and rethinking of the systematic interaction of the various stakeholders in today’s networked government;
- The prioritization of factual, useful information in execution and communication; and
- An emphasis on patient and persistent engagement with constituents, citizens, and the workforce.

These four practices are certainly interconnected and complementary, and they rose to the top of every leader’s comments and presentations. The insights gained from these initial conversations now position the Academy to explore particular solution sets to govern effectively across the divide. But more importantly, the identification and adoption of these four practices by all leaders will help them manage the sector-spanning intergovernmental system and make government work for all. We explore each of these promising practices in greater detail in the following chapters.

Enterprise-Wide Innovation

Innovation can take many forms, from advances in technology to new strategic approaches for governing to changes in the way government delivers services. We looked to answer one question: “How are leaders across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors driving innovation in government?”

In Austin, Texas, the Academy specifically focused on innovations in local government service delivery, but across all four symposia, a specific conception of innovation emerged. The effect of innovative capacity was evident throughout, particularly from practitioners on the local level where the equitable delivery of government services was most personal and apparent in real-time.

What emerged was an emphasis on sustainable and strategic enterprise-wide innovation capacity that is woven into the leadership and organizational fabric of government. In other words, this innovative capacity was the organizational ability and capability of government leaders and organizations to effectively use all available technologies and delivery mechanisms to service their constituents. At first glance, this seems quite obvious. But looking deeper, it gets at the core of governments’ functions and their future.

Although the federal government has deployed many innovative technologies at scale, the pivot toward building innovative capacity is most evident in cities that, as Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis put it, are the “laboratories of democracy.” Local innovations often drive domestic policy consensus in states, which in turn can change policy on the national level, because

once a number of states adopt a practice, the federal government often follows suit and creates a national program.

“Local government is the place to be,” Sheryl Scully, City Manager of San Antonio.

Managers of cities and counties face extraordinary challenges from demographics, fiscal constraints, extreme weather events, citizen expectations, and more that force them to be some of our most creative and effective problem solvers. Three reasons stood out: 1) Innovation requires flexibility, which is easier to practice on the local level; 2) Innovative solutions and reinvention require political will and resolve, which may be easier to achieve at the grassroots level; and 3) Because local municipalities are more likely to interact with their citizens face-to-face, they may have a deeper understanding of their problems.

Our discussions also identified two primary barriers to developing an enterprise-wide innovative capacity.

The Financial Barrier

“Cities are problem solvers, but are being asked to do more and more with less and less—they are the gap-fillers, but they are under assault,” said Julian Castro. The fiscal health of cities sets the foundation for local innovation, but signs of

emerging fiscal stress as revenues start to contract have stalled municipal leaders' confidence. According to Christiana McFarland, the Research Director for the National League of Cities, average general fund revenue growth began to slow in 2016 and is expected, on average, to slow further to 0.9% in 2017. Since this is an average, it means that some cities are experiencing reduced tax revenue.

Because cities must balance their budgets on an annual basis, there is an increasing trend toward fees, higher property taxes, and a fiscally conservative stance. This results in decreased service levels until innovations are implemented, which increases the need to manage citizens' expectations.

In fact, in the 2016 Innovation and Emerging Highlights survey from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), 84% of respondents said that lack of funding hinders innovation and 20% were already at their debt capacity, unable to borrow further.

The Workforce Barrier

"Members [of a public service workforce] need to be adaptable, flexible, and resilient, and comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty, and interdependence," said Tina Nabatchi, Associate Professor at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University. Innovation is driven by an adaptable and collaborative workforce that is fluent with data and agile methodologies, but there was consensus that our systems are not set up to attract the people that government needs in governance roles. Moreover, panelists agreed that government is not effectively developing leaders or honing the talents of the workforce that encourage innovation.

Teresa Gerton, Academy President and CEO, highlighted the need for an "intentional investment in success and leadership across a lifetime" and said that, all too often, "good leaders are a happy accident." Gerton pointed to the military's sequential anticipation of training requirements and said that "we don't have anything like that in public service."

KEY INSIGHTS

On Government Innovation

- 1.** Celebrate success in government. Much of the innovation that our world runs on today started in government, and was expanded in collaboration with the private sector. Start-ups won't solve the problems of the future on their own, and neither will government, but government often provides the initial spark. Celebrating those sparks is essential to attract innovative talent to the government workforce.
- 2.** Citizen customers are the “True North Star.” On the federal level, the White House and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are driving customer-focused government through the United States Digital Service (USDS), whose approximately 200 people are considering how to rapidly deploy and leverage proven private-sector technology to meet public needs without all the paper. This concentration of experts looking at optimizing government processes “has internal benefits in terms of our productivity but, perhaps more importantly, tries to reduce the gap between what a citizen experiences when they interact with a private sector company like Amazon, and what they experience when they go to renew their passport.” For more on enabling cross-sector teams like USDS, see the case study in the Systematic Interaction chapter titled, *Simplification of Intergovernmental Processes with Dedicated Cross-Cutting Teams*.
- 3.** Innovative solutions require long-term political will. In California, this was described as, “We wanted to make (healthcare policy) work. The will to make it work is essential.”
- 4.** Technology is a force multiplier at the city level. The democratization of technology is transformational, changing how the public workforce delivers services. But innovative government is not about technology. It's about transparency and better service. E-government is just government. A smart city uses technology to improve the quality of life and service delivery for all of its citizens equitably. This realization demands new ways of relating—between people, and among cities, industries, social services, citizens, media, nonprofits, and partnerships.
- 5.** The public sector needs innovative financing frameworks. When exploring public-private solutions, it's vital to structure investment opportunities to provide a reasonable expectation of timely repayment.

Snapshots

On Government Innovation

The Next Generation of Civil Servants

Dave Sulek, Vice President at Booz Allen Hamilton, and Randall Reid, Director of Performance Initiatives at ICMA, both provided a list of qualities and perspectives for the next generation of public servants:

- Equity-focused budget development;
- Cross-agency thinking to develop integrative solutions;
- Understanding of data analytics and integrative decision making;
- Versatility and interdisciplinary skills; and
- Network thinking.

“The next generation doesn’t see institutions. They see networks. And I think what uniform you wear may not matter in solving these problems in the future,” said Sulek. He continued to emphasize that government cannot solve problems by itself and that the need for networks will continue to grow.

Innovative Policing in Austin

At our Austin symposium, Austin’s Assistant Police Chief Troy Gay highlighted the city’s focus on innovation in trust and legitimacy in his own department. The city and the police department adopted a community policing approach. Gay reported that the department was saying the right things, but the community policing approach had not been woven into daily police practices, thus limiting its impact. They developed a new blueprint for the department that made community policing the basic organizing principle. This has led to changes in recruit training and response processes.

One of the challenges Gay confronted was how to measure effectiveness in community policing. The department invested in generating and analyzing

community statistics in order to increase accountability and motivate an engaged problem-solving process.

The next step in Austin’s use of community statistics is gathering input from communities to add context to the hard data. The department will gather grassroots input from neighborhoods to reflect their local concerns. “We don’t want to just be driven by the vocal few,” said Gay. “Instead, we need to get past the stereotypes and unenforceable expectations and move toward evidence-based strategy planning and practice that is informed by genuine collaboration with the community.” They believe this will change the police force, the community, and the city of Austin for the better.

Innovation in San Antonio

Innovation is one of San Antonio’s four core values (the other three are teamwork, integrity, and professionalism). The city created an Office of Innovation that has matured with time. Since its creation, the office, which started small and used its successes to build credibility and trust before scaling up, has saved San Antonio taxpayers approximately \$20.3 million.

One project involved automating the garbage disposal process. The three-year process led to a 24% increase in recycling and the city predicts a 60% increase from the original level by 2025.

In FY 2012, San Antonio’s Office of Innovation led a project to improve the city’s hiring process. They improved the HR recruitment process through the application of LEAN methodology to maximize customer value, the implementation of alternative recruitment methods, and full implementation of existing technology. They reported the project resulted in identifying and hiring the best candidate 75% faster, at nearly half the cost. Sculley also used this office to lead efforts to

increase community connections through technology, tackle economic segregation, and embed automation for traffic management.

Sculley identified three key responsibilities of the city manager that can drive success:

- Talent management;
- Financial management; and
- Infrastructure maintenance and improvement.

She cautioned that innovation must be combined with sustainment efforts to secure long-term improvements.

The Takeaway

True innovative capacity spans an entire organization. It does not necessarily include technology, but a properly trained and equipped workforce is the foundation for innovative capacity. Start small, focus on sustainment, and live by a citizen-centric ethos.

Systematic Interaction

Government in the twenty-first century has grown increasingly more complex and interconnected, dramatically increasing the number of coordination points within government. These points of interaction span various sectors and involve numerous actors. The skillset to navigate those interactions continues to grow in importance. In the complex intergovernmental and multi-sector system faced by government leaders today, a clear set of rules and processes—an effective system of governance—is essential to enable effective government.

Twenty-first century governance stretches leaders attempting to operate in the intergovernmental space. The optimization of governance at even one level of government can be extremely difficult when senior leaders are consumed by urgent tasks

like communications, budget, legislation, and policy. There was consensus throughout the symposia that it was important to focus senior leaders on defining and achieving outcomes, rather than fighting daily bureaucratic fires.

“A lot of it, from our perspective, comes back to ‘What problems are leaders focused on?’ because that really does orient the organization’s behaviors.” – Dustin Brown, Deputy Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management at OMB.

The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman, former Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator and New Jersey Governor, emphasized analyzing the systematic interactions from the bottom up, because, “it is at the local level that you’ve got to deliver.” For example, at the local level, constituents have their leader’s phone number and expect leaders to have answers when they call. But because these problems cannot be solved by one level of government or even government as a whole, “we need leaders and we need rules that facilitate co-production across agencies...because all of our solution sets have to be co-produced,” said Teresa Gerton, Academy President and CEO.

setting overarching goals and ensuring government structure has the resources (fiscal, manpower, knowledge) to deliver those goals. The importance of collaboration between federal, state, and local governments was underscored by other panelists like Dustin Brown, Mark Pisano, Chad Mayes, and Christine Todd Whitman (panelist titles in Appendix Two), who highlighted the importance of leaders who drive horizontal, vertical, and diagonal collaboration in today’s interactive governmental system. Brown noted the prevalence of horizontal problems across vertical organizations, and said, “[the federal government] has very few people whose job it is to rationalize that [siloe]d system. We have 84 homeless programs, dozens of job training programs, and no one is really accountable every day for waking up and thinking about how these programs could better work together to solve the problem.”

There was agreement that the senior executive at each level of government, whether elected or appointed, needs to own the responsibility for

Key Insights

On Systematic Interaction

- 1.** There is a need for co-produced solutions with collaborative frameworks. The establishment of cross-agency and intergovernmental structures and/or processes is necessary to create effective programs and deliver meaningful solutions. Solutions must be interagency, intergovernmental, and inter-sectoral.
- 2.** Looking across government silos enables the development of truly innovative solutions, better measurement and reporting of results, and the broad sharing of those results.
 - There needs to be a framework that enables cross-silo and cross-sector interaction.
 - Benefit systems that are portable across levels of government can promote cross-sector movement of personnel to build broad expertise.
 - For a closer look at cross-cutting teams, see the case study titled, *Simplification of Intergovernmental Processes with Dedicated Cross-Cutting Teams*.
- 3.** Governance processes and technology need to be simplified in order to develop more flexible, sustainable, and trustworthy partnerships with the private sector.
- 4.** Bold, boundary-spanning leaders are critical to understanding both how to make the current system work and also how to make needed adjustments to ensure a more efficient and resilient system(s) in the future.
- 5.** The intergovernmental system should be funded differently to incentivize and simplify collaboration. In particular, it is important to go beyond block grants to improve the interaction of all levels of government
- 6.** Organizational alignment is key to program integration.
 - On the federal level, OMB is building out a performance and management framework that incentivizes use of proven techniques. “I think that if we do that well, we have a chance of improving the governance systems that our institutions rely on to make decisions and solve problems,” said Dustin Brown.
 - At the state level, there needs to be a framework for developing solutions in partnership with the federal government. It is inefficient and often too time-consuming to develop 50 unique solutions. A standardization framework could provide a measure of uniformity, while preserving the foundational tenets of federalism.

Snapshots

On Systematic Interaction

Leveraging Universities and Start-Ups to Catch the Tech and Data Revolution in Syracuse

The City of Syracuse partnered with the University of Chicago—specifically, a group called, *Data Science for Social Good*—to develop an algorithm that predicted where water mains would break. Additionally, the city’s Office of Innovation adopted a technology in 2016 called Street Quality Identification Device (SQUID), which was developed by ARGO Labs, a start-up based in New York City to provide more proactive and efficient road maintenance. Syracuse was the first municipality to leverage this technology and map the repair needs of their transportation infrastructure.

One of the primary benefits of this technology for Syracuse Mayor Stephanie Miner is that it allows the projection of funding needs so that when funding for roads becomes available, the city has a map of data indicating needs based on priority. It also generates project performance data that allows local leaders to better justify decision-making to their constituents and legislators.

Given funding constraints, leaders are likely to find that leveraging the resources of the academic and private sectors will become increasingly important. In this case, Syracuse leveraged the academic and private sectors to better navigate their constrained fiscal and decision-making environment, and drive co-produced solutions across sectors.

Simplification of Intergovernmental Processes with Dedicated Cross-Cutting Teams

Interagency teams and task forces that only meet every quarter often lack the frequency and impetus to drive real cross-cutting solutions that

government needs. Over the past several years, Dustin Brown, Deputy Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management at OMB, has focused on assembling the framework for a team dedicated to cross-cutting solutions. Brown worked with Congress to establish a \$15 million fund for cross-agency goals. Controlled by the OMB Director, the fund provides resources to agencies for cross-cutting opportunities that cannot be funded by a single agency’s budget. In other words, this team focuses on optimizing the various coordination points in government processes.

The team’s first project, which has received bipartisan support, is an overhaul of the infrastructure permitting process. Three primary governance challenges created a process that frustrated project proponents, agencies, and state and local governments alike with poor visibility of the process. Some of the key aspects of the process that had an impact on progress were:

- 30 different agencies had infrastructure permitting responsibilities, creating a complex network of coordination points;
- The timelines varied dramatically for different projects like bridges, roads, and dams; and
- No single party had ever been responsible for the entire process (end-to-end ownership).

Congress and OMB have now built an enabling statutory framework that received bipartisan praise from a diverse set of interest groups, including the Chamber of Commerce, Business Roundtable, and the National Resources Defense Council. The new ten-person team, funded by Congress, continues to ramp up, working with all internal stakeholders in the infrastructure permitting process to ensure transparency. The

team's full-time job is to unlock barriers at the interaction points that exist between agencies involved in the infrastructure permitting process. The team is not only breaking down barriers in Washington D.C., but also in the field through the

process's escalation path, rapidly resolving interagency disputes and issues. The initiative has already produced a \$300 million financing benefit to a single project by accelerating the timeline through better upfront coordination.

The Takeaway

To develop and sustain cross-cutting co-produced solutions, leaders should focus on demonstrating incremental benefits and the impact of optimizing government's many interaction points.

Effective Information

As the intergovernmental system has grown increasingly complex, the number of government inputs and outputs has increased dramatically. As a result of this exponential increase in the amount and variety of data available to leaders and citizens, the data is often difficult to use for decision-making purposes. In this new world, having the skillset to navigate, map, communicate, and utilize data has never been more important to a functioning and effective government.

The effective use and communication of data is an irreplaceable component in a leader's toolbox. It is the basis of cost-effective innovation, targeted citizen engagement, and identification of intergovernmental impact. Many people respond to data's increasing importance by hiring data scientists. But Dave Sulek, Vice President at Booz Allen Hamilton, underscored that identifying useful data is the first step because, "there is an unbelievable absence of useful data out there today. There is an avalanche of not very useful data."

Where useful data does exist, it often exists in agency siloes and is outdated. For example, Medicaid data has a three-year lag, which makes it nearly impossible to make evidence-based programmatic decisions.

But data and analytics are not the only facets of information. The other increasingly important facet is the distribution of factual information to the public. The development of "fake news" and more targeted misinformation is damaging not only to citizens, but also to policymakers who must address the potentially misinformed concerns of their constituencies.

Will Hampton, Director of Communication for the City of Round Rock, Texas, emphasized getting the message and medium right, for maximum impact of information. But more importantly, he said, the message and medium must be consistent to build and then maintain credibility.

"Government is not a vending machine, but rather a communal barn raising."

– Will Hampton

Key Insights

On Effective Information

- 1.** Let the public into the decision-making process by “thinking out loud” via consistent information sharing. Empower citizens by making them part of government’s decision-making processes.
- 2.** Government’s messaging should be tactful but direct. Government messaging often communicates crucial information; it needs to be matched by the right tone and clarity of language.
- 3.** Build a shared perspective inside and outside of government organizations. Clear reporting on relevant performance metrics and program data is essential to build a shared perspective. Use clear reporting of performance and programmatic data to expand on thinking out loud via consistent information sharing with the public.
- 4.** Use speedy information-delivery to build trust. Information that is timely, accurate, and focused on system performance builds trust and speeds response when failures occur. Be citizen-centric and keep the public up to speed, even when you make mistakes, to continue the shared narrative.
- 5.** The efficient use of data requires new technology. Currently, there is a drive in government to look beyond analytics to automation, machine learning, and targeted uses of artificial intelligence in civilian agencies. The best leaders continue to experiment with new technologies to drive efficiencies and promote data-driven government information-sharing.
- 6.** The workforce is the foundation of data-driven government. The future workforce needs to be adept at data analysis and manipulation. This will not happen by itself. Leaders must recruit, train, and incentivize the workforce of the future.
- 7.** Cross-cutting teams need cross-cutting data. The data needs to be united across agencies, and even across levels of government to enable true co-produced solutions. This requires collaboration and a clearly-defined shared narrative.

“We’re looking for people who can be facile with data because we think that it’s the future.”

– Dave Sulek

Snapshots

On Effective Information

Covered California

Covered California is the state's marketplace for brand-name health insurance under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It was established by a Republican Governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and a Democratic legislature as an independent, self-funded part of the state government and the only place in the state to get federal premium assistance to help buy health insurance.

Led by a five-member independent board, Covered California operates like a business and obtains its funding through investments. Covered California has specifically invested up to a third of their approximately \$330 million dollar budget in marketing and outreach. Executive Director Peter Lee suggested that these intentional investments in marketing and outreach about insurance plans and enrollment have had a three to one return on investment in lowering premiums across the market.

Because healthcare spending is highly concentrated, marketing and outreach are vital to ensure balanced participation in the market. In fact, the top 1% of spenders account for 20% of healthcare spending. In other words, to balance

their premiums, Covered California must enroll 15-20 healthy people for each person in the top 1%.

Covered California led a program driven by strong, focused stakeholder engagement intended to quickly and consistently distribute targeted information about healthcare coverage to all stakeholders. Their engagement efforts were built on a foundation of reliably communicating helpful information to insurance providers, enrollment navigators, community leaders, and citizens.

Part of these information-delivery efforts included dispelling notions that health insurance was just a way for healthy payers to subsidize sick payers. Instead, they communicated the message that health insurance was part risk mitigation and part payment plan for healthcare, because everyone goes to the doctor, not just sick people. One aspect of these efforts involved increasing transparency for what went into healthcare payments and everything those dollars did for California's citizens. These efforts resulted in an extensive network of trusted people in each community and broad-based participation in the state's healthcare market.

The Takeaway

The strategic, targeted long-term dispersion of factual, useful information to citizens about government programs and processes is a vital aspect of success. As data becomes increasingly prevalent and useful, government leaders should continue to look for ways to better communicate success and highlight government impact.

Public Engagement

Citizens today expect more engaged, transparent, and accessible services from the public sector. As the federal government struggles to meet those expectations, trust and citizen satisfaction continue to decline. The struggle to meet expectations, coupled with declining citizen involvement and participation in government, has accelerated the narrowing line of sight between government and its citizens.

As many traditional in-person interactions between government and its citizens have declined, effective immediate and long-term engagement becomes increasingly important. A major takeaway of the Governing Across the Divide series was that citizens must be engaged and participating in civic community life, alongside government leaders. Leading through engagement is not easy. This engagement requires the courage to meet constituents both in-person and virtually, in order to drive government design oriented around citizen experience. What emerged in our conversations this fall was an emphasis on the importance of patient and persistent engagement with constituents, citizens, and the workforce.

Citizens

Governor Whitman reminded the symposium in Syracuse that citizenship entails both rights and responsibilities, with the most important responsibility being participation in the political process through voting. By failing to vote, citizens abdicate their sacred obligation and begin to unravel the fabric of our civil society. Whitman discussed the importance of civics education and the urgent need for bold political leadership that seeks practical solutions with positive results.

In today's environment of bitterly divided and less substantive discourse amidst increasing political polarization, Whitman emphasized that true participation in "the public square" is more than polite engagement in the civic life of our communities. The younger generation's desire to make a difference is a real bright spot and will need to be reinforced with robust participation in electoral and governmental processes.

Leaders

Although an engaged citizenry is the backbone of the nation, it's often the responsibility of government leaders to incentivize and drive that engagement. Despite the new and highly-touted digital tools available to leaders today to drive engagement, the consensus was that these tools, while beneficial, are no substitute for direct, face-to-face involvement between leaders and their citizens to build the trust and consensus necessary for effective governing. States and communities who are successfully advancing innovative policies take the time to deliberately engage citizens face-to-face over long periods of time to communicate complicated policy implications and build trust and legitimacy through transparency.

Key Insights

On Public Engagement

- 1.** Face-to-face democracy is hard, but when done right, can build the platform for productive debate. It takes time and requires risk-taking leaders who are willing to engage and take responsibility.
- 2.** Building consensus and coalitions requires great persistence, especially given today's complex policy environment. Successful leaders agreed it was important to demonstrate to citizens why it was in their best interest to participate. The leaders we convened highlighted the power of meaningful dialogue with constituents and opponents.
 - Engagement that connects citizens and communities creates understanding and a shared set of priorities that clarify options and support hard choices.
- 3.** Voting is the most important responsibility of citizens.
 - Rebuilding civic engagement facilitates the feeling that one's vote and voice makes a difference.
- 4.** The flow of factual information drives effective engagement. Because disparate impacts are often the biggest obstacle to compromise on policy issues, and misinformation can prevent citizens from having a clear understanding of those impacts, it is ever more crucial to facilitate two-way flow of factual information that leads to understanding.
 - The average voter often doesn't see how politics will make a difference in their everyday lives.
 - A two-way flow of understanding and information is necessary to communicate how politics will make a difference in a citizen's everyday life.
 - Deliberate, factual information can rebuild trust and motivate effective engagement.

“Where does change begin? With risk-taking leaders who engage. With risk-taking citizens who engage.”

– Chris Meek

Snapshots

On Public Engagement

The Hagerty Huddle and Engagement in Evanston, Illinois

Steve Hagerty is the Mayor of Evanston, Illinois and the founder of Hagerty Consulting. He was recently elected with a simple pitch:

“Hello, I’m Steve Hagerty, and here are my thoughts on government. I think people need to be informed by government, people need to be heard, people need to know there is an open and honest process, and people need government to make a decision.”

During the campaign, he was urged to bring more people to government. Hagerty took a contrarian view. “I always thought that instead we needed to figure out how to bring government to the people. It can’t be on government’s timetable that people come to government.”

At the start of his tenure, he started the “Hagerty Huddle.” The engagement effort goes to the people through venues like community centers and churches. The effort occurs around town under a “civic” banner; so they’ve had Civic Bites, Civic Beers, and Civic Custard.

“A lot of times, people just want to be heard...There is value in responding to people, even if you disagree, respectfully and with consideration.”

Implementing State-Wide Policies in California

California’s approximately 40 million residents, its economy, and its geography are incredibly diverse. State-wide solutions require consideration of regional impacts because of the

state’s size (geographic and population), diversity, and vast economy. This means that the implementation of large state programs require an immense level of collaboration and dialogue throughout the process.

Three program areas were discussed at the Sacramento symposium that exposed similar threads of engagement: infrastructure, environmental policy, and the Affordable Care Act.

Three core tactics emerged from these leaders’ stories:

- 1.** Public opinion may actually support political will and responsibility for high-profile environmental projects. So, get out and engage citizens about differential impacts of the projects, the impacts on small business, and the reason for differential resource allocation.

- *“The most important thing to people isn’t that they are with you or you’re with them, when it comes to their values. It’s that you’re getting things done. You’re doing something.”* – Xavier Becerra, Attorney General of California

- 2.** Start rewarding the collaborators. California provided start-up funding to seed outreach efforts for Covered California, incentivizing engagement.

- 3.** Commit to the long haul. Command and control through mandates rarely sticks. It is much more effective to build consensus through dialogue for long-term fixes. Employ strong and aggressive stakeholder outreach to kick-start the engagement process. Over time, California developed a network of thousands of community

collaborators who assisted with Covered California enrollment and the customer journey to advance their goal of universal coverage.

Taking the Initiative to Engage in Problem-Solving

Chris Meek, Senior Director of Global Relationship Management at S&P Global, organized a one-day program to bring banks and citizens together during the throes of the 2008 financial crisis. What started as an idea over happy hour soon blossomed into a program adopted by the Governor of Connecticut.

The initial convening brought together five to six banks and the community, enabling 36 families to

modify their loans and maintain their homes. Meek thought the one-shot initiative was over, but soon heard from over 200 more families that were looking forward to the next event. Over the next 12-14 months, the one-off event developed into 11 programs across the state of Connecticut. Soon the state was involved, and within months, the Governor announced he was launching a similar state-sponsored program.

“We need more engagement by individuals and households,” said Meek. “I was looking to use my expertise to find a solution to help those that couldn’t.”

The Takeaway

The initiative to engage is the vital first step for leaders. It must be coupled with long-term commitment to the goal and must seek and reward collaboration. Coalition-building does not happen overnight. Leaders must find opportunities to initiate engagement that empowers citizens to take responsibility for their outcomes and their personal path for reaching those outcomes.

Conclusion

We set out in our Governing Across the Divide series to bring together people from disparate perspectives and backgrounds, with different experiences and varied policy expertise, to talk about the complex governance challenges facing our country.

Our organizing principle was that real problem solving requires diversity of thought, and it's much harder to disregard the arguments of people with whom you disagree when they're sitting beside you at a table. What emerged through these four sessions was a strong consensus on the fundamental governing practices that drive good outcomes in the most innovative governments and agencies across the country. The value of those four practices (creating enterprise-wide innovation capacity; optimizing the interactions between various activities and layers within government; transparently providing factual, useful information; and engaging leaders and citizens purposefully and persistently) held at the federal, state, and local levels, and provides a template that can be adopted by any government leader seeking to drive innovation and improved outcomes in their programs and for their constituents.

We concluded the series with renewed hope that our government leaders, especially those at the

state and local levels where government is much closer to its citizens, are committed to improving quality of life for those they serve through the innovative use of every tool available to them. But as Julian Castro challenged us in Austin, much remains to be done.

We must continually be identifying new gaps in governance, looking across our government silos and finding new and innovative solutions. We must look neighborhood by neighborhood, and develop solutions that consider the unique characteristics of those neighborhoods. We must measure results better, and then share those results transparently and consistently with our constituents to build their confidence and earn their trust. And, we must share the good news about government successes to motivate the next generation of public servants.

With these lessons in hand, the Academy looks forward to continuing these conversations in 2018, and hopes you will join us as we seek to "make government work, and work for all."

Appendix One

Symposium Panelists and Speakers

University of Southern California

William Pound, Executive Director, National Conference of State Legislatures

Sandra Archibald, Dean, Univ. of Washington Evans School

Jack Knott, Dean and C. Erwin and Ione L. Piper Chair and Professor, USC Price School of Public Policy

Xavier Becerra, Attorney General, State of California

Greg Devereaux, Former CEO, San Bernardino County

Chad Mayes, Assemblymember AD 42, CA State Assembly

Matthew Rodriguez, Secretary, CA Environmental Protection Agency

Lois Takahashi, Director, USC Price School in Sacramento

Diana Dooley, Secretary, CA Health and Human Services Agency

Kenneth W. Kizer, Director, Institute for Population Health Improvement, UC Davis

Peter Lee, Executive Director, Covered California

Neeraj Sood, Director of Research, Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics, USC

Donald Moulds, Executive Vice President, Commonwealth Fund

Robert Hertzberg, Senator SD 18, CA State Senate

Chris Hoene, Executive Director, CA Budget and Policy Center

Mark Pisano, Public Admin. Professor, USC Price School of Public Policy

Thomas Reilly, Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education

William Resh, Assistant Professor, USC Price School of Public Policy

University of Texas in Austin

Angela Evans, Dean, LBJ School of Public Affairs, UT-Austin

Howard Balanoff, Professor and Director of the William P. Hobby Center for Public Service, Texas State University

Michael Lind, Policy Director, New America Economic Growth Program

Sheryl Sculley, City Manager, City of San Antonio

Troy Gay, Assistant Chief of Police, City of Austin

Christiana McFarland, Research Director, National League of Cities

Randall Reid, Southeast Regional Director and Director of Performance Initiatives, International City/County Management Association

Dustin Haisler, Chief Innovation Officer, e-Republic

Julian Castro, former Mayor of San Antonio, former Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

William Spelman, LBJ School of Public Affairs, UT-Austin

Larry Gonzalez, Chair of Sunset Commission and Member, Texas House of Representatives

Jeff Travillion, Travis County Commissioner, Precinct #1

Alex Briseno, Professor of Public Service in Residence, Saint Mary's University

Sherri Greenberg, Clinical Professor, LBJ School of Public Affairs, UT-Austin

Will Hampton, Director of Communications, Round Rock, Texas

Alan Bojorquez, Attorney at Law and Principal, The Bojorquez Law Firm

Syracuse University

Christine Todd Whitman, Former EPA Administrator (2001-2003) and former New Jersey Governor

Andrew Wender Cohen, Dr. Walter Montgomery and Marian Gruber Professor of History, Syracuse University

Andrew Maxwell, Former Director of Policy and Innovation, City of Syracuse

Tina Nabatchi, Associate Professor, Public Administration and International Affairs

David Sulek, Vice President, Booz Allen Hamilton

Dustin Brown, Deputy Assistant Director for Management, U.S. Office of Management and Budget

Sean O’Keefe, University Professor, Phanstiel Chair in Strategic Management and Leadership

David Van Slyke, Dean and Louis A. Bantle Chair in Business-Government Policy, Maxwell School, Syracuse University

Elizabeth Cohen, Associate Professor, Political Science, Syracuse University

Stephen Hagerty, Mayor, City of Evanston, Illinois

Chris Meek, Senior Director of Global Relationship Management, S&P Global

Jamie Winders, Chair and Professor, Geography, Syracuse University

Max Stier, President and CEO, The Partnership for Public Service

George Mason University

Robert L. Dudley, Associate Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

Tonya T. Neaves, Director, Centers on the Public Service, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

William P. Shields, Jr., Executive Director, American Society of Public Administration

Mortimer Downey, Former Deputy Secretary, Department of Transportation

Andrew D. Williams, Chief Operating Officer, The Berkley Group

Terry L. Clower, Professor and Director, Center for Regional Analysis, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

Thomas Downs, Board Member, Network Rail Consulting

Stefanie Haeffele, Senior Fellow, F.A. Hayek Program, Mercatus Center, George Mason University

James F. Bennett, Chief, Office of Renewable Energy Programs, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Department of the Interior

Jeffrey Baumgartner, Senior Advisor, Infrastructure Security and Energy Restoration, Department of Energy

David J. Nash, Senior Vice President, MELE Associates

Jessie Hill Roberson, Vice Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board

Mark J. Rozell, Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

Richard D. Kauzlarich, Co-Director, Center for Energy Science and Policy, George Mason University

Daniel J. Fiorino, Director, Center for Environmental Policy, School of Public Affairs, American University

Stanley J. Czerwinski, Former Chief Operating Officer, National Governors Association

Christopher Kloss, Chief, Municipal Branch, Water Permits Division, Environmental Protection Agency

Adam Krantz, Chief Executive Officer, National Association of Clean Water Agencies

Jeffrey D. Stern, State Coordinator, Department of Emergency Management, Virginia

Robert L. Deitz, Former Special Councilor to the Director, Central Intelligence Agency

Jason Karp, Chief Counsel, First Responder Network Authority

Randolph J. May, President, The Free State Foundation

Appendix Two

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