IBM Center for
The Business of Government

Connecting Research to Practice

2019-2020
CALL FOR RESEARCH
REPORT PROPOSALS

Dear Colleagues:

Over the past 21 years, the IBM Center for The Business of Government has awarded more than 400 scholars with stipends to produce research reports on improving the effectiveness of government, resulting in more than 375 published reports and books. For more than two decades, the Center has supported leading researchers to identify trends, new ideas and best practices—crafting approaches that support government leaders in addressing mission delivery and management challenges with strategies and actions that promote efficiency and effectiveness. Center reports assist public sector executives and managers in addressing real-world problems with practical ideas and original thinking to improve government performance.

With this Research Announcement, the Center is pleased to solicit proposals that result in reports with innovative findings and actionable recommendations for government leaders and public managers in the following subject areas:

- **INSIGHT** – Using data, evidence and analytics to create insights that influence decision making, actions and results

- **AGILITY** – Adopting new ways for government to operate using agile principles, putting user experiences and program results at the forefront

- **EFFECTIVENESS** – Applying enterprise approaches to achieve better outcomes, operational efficiency and a leaner government

- **RISK** – Mitigating risk, managing cybersecurity and building resiliency to meet the mission of government

- **PEOPLE** – Cultivating people; reforming processes for hiring, skill development, and retention; and leveraging data and technologies to build the workforce of the future

- **ENGAGEMENT** – Fostering a citizen-driven government through real-time interactive feedback, data visualization, social media, and other tools to engage, co-create and co-produce services and programs

- **DIGITAL** – Optimizing new technologies to focus on the user experience and incentivize innovators to modernize how government does business

These seven themes draw on significant insights shared by government, academic, and nonprofit leaders to identify key drivers for transforming government, and reinforced by the Center's 2018 book *Government For The Future: Reflection and Vision for Tomorrow's Leaders*. Through research into these areas, the Center will continue to help communicate what leading experts know about effective practices and lessons learned to government leaders and stakeholders.

Governments in the U.S. and across the world will continue to focus on controlling costs while improving the performance of their operations. A key challenge facing government executives will be to transform their organizations in an environment of constrained resources. Driving meaningful and sustained change in government requires innovative, effective and efficient decision making and implementation for positive, significant and lasting results.

We again look forward to receiving proposals that address these imperatives, and continuing to work with the world's leading public management researchers. Our next deadlines are April 1, 2019, November 1, 2019, and April 1, 2020.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding the IBM Center for The Business of Government.

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Research Priorities

INSIGHT
Using data, evidence and analytics to create insights that influence decision making, actions, performance, and results

Agencies must make sense out of data and determine how to best use it to inform decisions that affect them—and affect others. The language around performance information in government decision making has evolved over the last quarter century. Today, there are constant references to "evidence-based" decisions, "strategic analytics" and "data-driven" reviews of progress. In addition, policies have been established to make data more "open"—both within and outside government—while evolving technologies have reduced the cost of collecting and reporting such data.

The movement toward data transparency has enabled a more sophisticated and nuanced approach to converting data into insights that goes beyond the statutory and policy requirements consistent with such laws as the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act, and the Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act. The growing supply of useful information has prompted agencies to strengthen analytic capabilities to achieve evidence-based insights. It also opens the door to using AI to assist in making complex decisions in areas such as benefits determination and public safety.

To achieve the goal of using data to make better decisions and gain useful insights, research can help leaders and stakeholders understand promising practices. Areas for study include:

technologies are revolutionizing how the world works. The Center's research priorities reflect the challenges and issues that we judge to be the most critical facing government leaders and public managers as they attempt to execute their organizational missions successfully. The Center has as its focus practical, actionable recommendations that build from a strong research base, and assist public sector leaders and managers in addressing mission and management challenges more effectively. The Center seeks proposals to prepare reports that address the following seven public management topics.

- Are there ways to incentivize the use of enterprise approaches to ensure that the perspectives of diverse policy makers and stakeholders jointly inform decision making? For example, performance, finance, IT, policy and program staff may view an issue through different lens—how can they best work together?

- How has the use of different tools and approaches for strategic foresight, risk management, results orientation and institutional resilience improved performance management and decision making?

- How can a performance or analytic framework in one policy arena be adapted to apply in other arenas?

- Are there examples of where data, evidence, and/or evaluations have influenced policy, budget, or regulatory decisions?

- Where have data and analytics improved decision making and results? How can big data, visualization, dashboards, and similar data-focused strategies help drive such improvements?

- Where has advanced technology, such as AI, supported analyses and decision making? What other contextual factors (such as ease of use, security, fairness, etc.) should be considered to ensure that government uses advanced technology effectively?

- What types of data or analyses are needed to support policy or program decisions that are managed fairly to improve efficiency, outcomes and accountability; and to engage delivery partners and others in selecting goals and solving problems?

- Where have private sector and government agencies shared data to gain useful insights, as well as examples of such sharing between federal agencies themselves and between the federal government and other levels of government?

AGILITY

Adopting new ways for government to operate using agile principles, putting user experiences and program results at the forefront

As the world moves at a faster pace, agencies need to keep up. Yet, government is often seen as calcified in its approach. Citizens now expect services and results delivered in ways that mirror their experiences with the private sector.

One solution is for government to revise and streamline processes by rolling back low-value activities and requirements, and creating alternative approaches to holding agencies accountable. This could be done, for example, in a phased approach based on "earned autonomy" for managers or agencies that follow defined criteria. Government can also revisit its support systems—such as procurement, human resources and project management—and make them more flexible to accommodate new requirements "on the fly" in response to user needs. Government might also create new expectations among leaders for how work will get done—by focusing on principles such as user experience, program results, transparency and collaboration.

One approach to doing this is by adapting "agile" methods from the software development field. This approach is increasingly relevant to the world of program management, and this could be the angle taken to institutionalize professional program management skills across the government. Another

approach is to adopt "timeliness" as a key metric for program performance. Reducing time needed to deliver a service can often lead to more efficient and less costly results without compromising quality.

To achieve the goal of a government that has agility and is "fast"—both in its responsiveness to users and in its ability to learn from experience to achieve better results—research can help leaders and stakeholders understand promising practices. Areas for study include:

- What objectives, indicators, strategies and behavioral incentives can be used to devolve authority to lower levels in a way that motivates improvement while managing risks wisely?

- How can timeliness metrics in service delivery be used to provide more efficient and less costly services without compromising quality?

- Are there case examples of streamlining processes and procedures that have resulted in improved outcomes, enhanced user experience or cost reduction, while maintaining quality?

- Are there case examples illustrating how agile methods dramatically improved performance or results?

- Are there case examples of leaders using incentives effectively to shift from a compliance mindset to a results/outcomes mindset that focuses on the user, which could incorporate design thinking or similar approaches?

- What policies and other barriers inhibit the use of real-time analytic tools to improve program outcomes?

EFFECTIVENESS
Applying enterprise approaches to achieve better outcomes, operational efficiency and a leaner government

Driving meaningful and sustainable change in government requires more than new policies or the procurement of new technology. It requires focus on effective implementation to achieve positive, significant and lasting results. By taking an outcomes-focused, collaborative, enterprise-wide perspective on government, decision-makers can uncover a more thoroughly integrated operational picture, recognizing opportunities and risks that were not evident within the context of a single agency or operational area. Efficient and timely procurement, management and disposal of resources, paired with a focus on cost-effectiveness, enables a lean government with effective operations and service delivery. Advanced analytical capabilities can further enhance decision making

and enable strategic, return-on-investment (ROI)-driven investments—including those in modern technology and infrastructure that are essential to enabling an efficient, modern enterprise.

To achieve the goal of operationally effective government, research can help leaders and stakeholders understand promising practices. Areas for study include:

- What operational and organizational models best enable government to advance mission performance, improve cost-effectiveness and raise service quality?

- Are there case studies of specific tools and strategies that improve government effectiveness, such as streamlining, shared services, collaborative networks, benchmarking and category management?

- What organizational and individual incentives successfully drive operational improvements? Are there models for doing this well?

- Are there tools, strategies and incentives to reduce fraud, errors and other quality management concerns?

RISK
Mitigating risk, managing cybersecurity and building resiliency to meet the mission of government

We live in a dynamic and uncertain world where the past does not serve as a complete guide to the future. In addition, the systems that provide the functions essential for a thriving society are increasingly intricate and interconnected. As technology pervades our everyday lives, once-simple devices have become smarter and more interconnected to the world around us. The interconnectedness of devices introduces technologies that connect cyber systems to physical systems, thereby removing the barrier between the cyber and physical worlds. This means that potential disruptions to a system are not fully understood and can have large and unanticipated cascading effects. Establishing the capability and capacity to identify, understand and address risks and potential threats is key for government executives of today.

To achieve the goal of effectively managing risks and mitigating threats, research can help leaders and stakeholders understand promising practices. Areas for study include:

- How can government best mitigate risks associated with technologies that connect cyber systems to physical systems?

- How can government best enable strong and actionable response and resiliency strategies, while still enabling compliance?

- What are case studies of leaders who have strengthened security across the enterprise?

- How are technology and analytics advancing the state of the art in managing cybersecurity given a complex threat landscape?

- Are there examples where new AI, data management and analytic strategies allow government to focus on high-risk cyber issues?

- What are best approaches for overall risk management in the 21st century?

- What evidence exists about the efficacy of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) efforts for government?

- In what areas should ERM be applied to enable but not impede organizational missions?

- How can blockchain or similar technologies improve operational risk management?

PEOPLE

Cultivating people; reforming processes for hiring, skill development, and retention; and leveraging data and technologies to build the workforce of the future

Change is constant today. This reality has prompted government leaders to establish new ways to organize, recruit, develop, manage and engage 21st-century employees. Advances in technology, workforce demographics and innovative theories of management are combining to fundamentally change the landscape in which agencies operate. Many agencies also face public management issues that necessitate cross-agency collaboration, resulting in the rise of "mixed" teams where hierarchy and direct authority are fluid. Today's government leaders need to be nimble enough to manage newly conceived ways of achieving missions.

Building and managing a workforce that can move at the speed of change is a critical challenge. The federal hiring process can be an impediment, and the federal government relies heavily on grantees, contractors and other delivery

partners to accomplish its objectives. Successful federal agencies are built on a workplace culture that starts with a passion for achieving a mission and embodies a commitment to excellence and continual improvement. The pace of technology, digital disruption and the shifting demography call for new ways of leading.

To achieve the goal of effectively building and managing a government workforce of the future, research can help leaders and stakeholders understand promising practices from public and private sectors. Areas for study include:

- How can agencies better align or reform existing hiring processes to make them more effective and efficient?

- What can federal agencies do to adopt a hiring process that is applicant-friendly and flexible, while also yielding high quality?

- Are there proven private sector hiring practices that government can adopt effectively?

- Are there case studies illustrating how the federal government can better use digital and social networking platforms to attract and engage the right talent?

- What are promising approaches for reskilling today's public sector workforce to meet the technology and transformational demands of tomorrow?

- How can government leaders use data and people analytics to transform the nature of government work to make it more effective, efficient, engaging and user friendly?

- Who are the most successful government leaders in a digital age, including those who have fostered risk-taking and experimentation to achieve mission outcomes?

- What case studies can suggest the best way to manage networked delivery, or to manage a blended workforce (e.g., those from different agencies or sectors)?

- Are there case examples illustrating how federal leaders can build a viable leadership pipeline?

ENGAGEMENT
Fostering a citizen-driven government through real-time interactive feedback, data visualization, social media and other tools to engage, co-create and co-produce services and programs

Citizens and all members of the public increasingly look for new opportunities to engage with governments on how to approach problems, develop policies and programs, receive services and create collaborative online and in-person relationships. Digital services, AI solutions and open approaches to technology and data can expand channels that bring citizens and governments closer together. This fosters a "citizen-driven" government based on real-time, multi-party communications to develop and deliver programs and services, as well as personalized transactions in receiving services. Ultimately, these channels can also promote direct interactions among people to grow economic and social opportunities locally and nationally, facilitated (rather than impeded) by government.

To achieve the goal of an engaged government, research can help leaders and stakeholders understand its benefits and pathways to achieve them. Areas for study include:

- Are there case studies and lessons learned that illustrate the most successful ways in an open and digital age to establish roles and responsibilities for individuals, businesses and governments to achieve mission outcomes?

- What metrics and data flows enable the establishment of clear, objective and mutually agreed-on outcomes; build understanding of progress toward those objectives; and stimulate ongoing action to achieve results?

- How can government sustain, improve and scale the organizational and technological channels started by digital services teams, innovation offices, challenge programs and similar engagement structures?

- What connections should be fostered with all members of the public, such as engaging citizens through social media, obtaining crucial feedback on performance, promoting volunteer participation, and working with citizens without direct access to the internet?

- What are the objectives of a "culture of engagement" for the public sector, and what are the key attributes that should be assessed to gauge progress on those objectives?

DIGITAL
Optimizing new technologies to focus on the user experience and incentivize innovators to modernize how government does business

Governments have followed the private sector in adapting new technologies over time. Today's challenges involve more than putting information up on the web and creating secure transactions for citizens and businesses—governments can now leverage the promise of open networks in the "cloud," where individuals work together over the internet in a secure group to communicate and develop new ideas and applications; can collect and distribute vast amounts of data through video, sound and the "internet of things;" and can develop AI technologies that allow real-time access to these vast information stores and global computing platforms for better decision making.

To take full advantage of the revolutionary changes that are made possible through the speed and scale of digital technologies, government must build secure and scalable infrastructures that leverage progress in cloud computing and open networks, data, the internet of things, AI, blockchain, and other new pathways; develop applications that leverage open data and analytics to meet the evolving needs and expectations of agencies and the public; and establish governance, funding, staffing and service frameworks that adapt to a world where enterprises access technology "as a service." Given these efforts, digital success will depend on connecting agile experimentation, with prototyping and scaling approaches that promote mission effectiveness and mission support efficiency.

Research can show government leaders how best to pursue these models and channels for modernization. Areas for study include:

- How can government executives leverage new and innovative digital technologies and platforms such as cloud, mobility, AI, blockchain, and the internet of things?

- What new platform and infrastructure models enable agencies to best support scalable needs for systems that often serve millions of Americans?

- How can agencies work with evolving networks of experts who develop innovative new applications?

- Are there case studies of how government innovators are working with AI technologies to improve their program performance?

- What is the role of the public sector CIO in the 21st century, relative to new positions that agencies continue to establish such as Chief Technology, Digital, Innovation, Evaluation, and Data Officers? How can these and other public sector CXOs, including Performance Improvement Officers, Chief Financial Officers and Chief Acquisition Officers best work together?

- How can agencies best incentivize innovation that leads to sustained, beneficial change across the public sector?

Guidelines

PURPOSE

The IBM Center for The Business of Government aims to tap into the best minds in academe and the nonprofit sector who can use rigorous public management research and analytic techniques to help government leaders and public managers improve the effectiveness of government. We are looking for very practical findings and actionable recommendations—not just theory or concepts—to assist executives and managers in more effectively responding to mission and management challenges.

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals working in universities, nonprofit organizations or journalism.

DESCRIPTION OF STIPENDS

Individuals receiving a stipend should produce a 10,000-to-12,000-word report. The manuscript should be submitted no later than six months after the start of the project. Recipients will select the start and end dates. The report should be written for government leaders and public managers, providing very practical knowledge and insight.

SIZE OF THE STIPENDS

$20,000 for each report ($5,000 at award; $10,000 at submission of an accepted draft; and $5,000 upon publication).

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

Interested individuals can read the research announcement and apply online at: http://www.businessofgovernment.org/content/research-stipends

- Applicants will complete a series of fields that include the proposal title, proposal summary (700-character limit), the research report proposal (9,000-character 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 (9,000-character limit per author).

- Though it is not a requirement, we encourage all applicants to submit applications and supporting documents online. Attachments are permitted, but should adhere to the constraints outlined in the guidelines.

DEADLINES

Applications should be received by April 1, 2019, November 1, 2019, and April 1, 2020. Applicants will be informed of a decision approximately eight to ten weeks after the deadline.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals are reviewed in terms of the following criteria:

- Will the proposed topic be of high value and timely to government leaders and public managers?

- Does the applicant demonstrate outstanding command and knowledge of the topic?

- Will the report provide practical insight and actionable recommendations around 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?

Frequently Asked Questions

APPLICATION

Can I apply online?
Yes, online applications are preferred. To apply online, please visit: http://www.businessofgovernment.org/content/research-stipends to learn more.

Can the proposal or resume be more than 9,000 characters (about three pages)?
No. Your proposal and resume each should be 9,000 characters or less.

Does the Center only fund reports that are addressed to federal executives and managers?
No. While most of the Center's reports have been targeted to 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 are clearly generalizable to a very 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.

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 will consider proposals touching on other government management challenges, these are the areas of most interest to us.

STIPENDS

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 them practical insights and actionable recommendations to help them improve the operation and management of government.

How quickly must the report be completed?
Recipients will be asked to select the start and end dates of the project. Recipients are asked to submit a completed manuscript no later than six months after the selected start date. The project should be started no later than three months after the stipend is awarded.

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 IBM Center will 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 leaders and managers.

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, for providing support for the project.
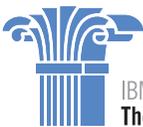
IBM Center for
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ABOUT THE IBM CENTER FOR THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT

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.

The Center is one of the ways that IBM seeks to advance knowledge on how to improve public sector effectiveness. The IBM Center focuses on the future of the operation and management of the public sector.

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.

For More Information

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