



## Supporting Effective Governance In a Time of Change

*State, Local, and Intergovernmental at the  
National Academy of Public Administration*

June 2026

Center for  
Intergovernmental  
Partnerships

Extreme Weather  
Resilience Hub

Agile Government  
Center

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# FOREWORD

The most consequential challenges facing governments today do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Extreme weather, fiscal disruptions, workforce constraints, and rapid technological change are reshaping how policy is made—and whether it succeeds—at the points where federal authority, state systems, and local implementation meet.

Over the past year, the National Academy of Public Administration has strengthened its state, local, and intergovernmental work to help governments operate more effectively in this environment. Through the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships (CIP) and the Extreme Weather Resilience Hub, the Academy focused on the connective tissue of governance: how authority, incentives, financing, data, and capacity align in practice—and where misalignment undermines results. Through the Agile Government Center, the Academy has provided training and technical assistance that challenge traditional thinking and approaches and help leaders become more responsive.

This work produced tangible impact. States and localities gained new tools to manage disaster-related fiscal risk, benchmark and modernize workforce systems, assess readiness for emerging technologies, and navigate complex intergovernmental constraints. Through applied research, comparative analysis, and practitioner-focused convening, the Academy helped governments move from diagnosis to implementation.

Demand for this kind of support is growing. Leaders are looking for rigorous analysis grounded in real operating conditions—and for frameworks they can use before decisions are locked in. The initiatives highlighted in this report reflect the Academy's role as a trusted, independent partner that helps governments learn from one another and act with greater confidence amid uncertainty.

This report highlights the Academy's state, local, tribal, territorial, and intergovernmental work from January 2025 to the present. Taken together, these efforts demonstrate how strengthening the systems that connect governments can deliver more resilient institutions and better outcomes for the communities they serve.

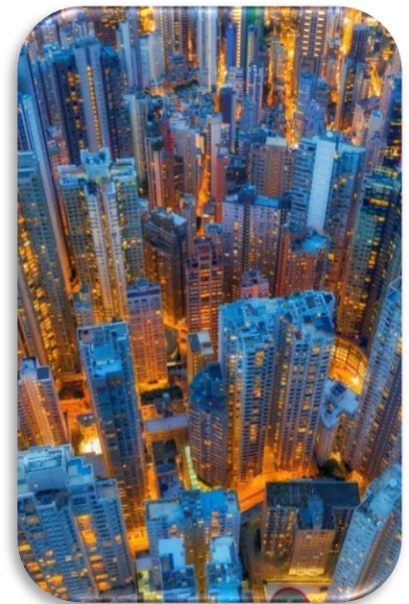
**James-Christian Blockwood**  
President and CEO  
National Academy of Public Administration

# STATE, LOCAL, AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORK MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER

The period since January 2025 has brought significant shifts in how governments at all levels respond to complex challenges, from extreme weather and fiscal volatility to rapid technological change and evolving public expectations. These pressures have underscored a central reality: **our democracy depends on the strength of the systems that connect federal, state, and local action.**

At the Academy, we've seen a growing demand for practical, cross-sector solutions that bridge federal, state, and local boundaries. This Research and Government Solutions team, created in 2025, is proud to be at the forefront of this work. The [Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships](#) (CIP) convenes leaders, supports innovation, and advances research that helps governments work better together. The [Extreme Weather Resilience Hub](#) (the Hub) expands this capacity by transforming institutions to enable local communities to adapt to extreme weather. These centers of excellence demonstrate our commitment to elevating the role of state and local governments in shaping a more resilient and responsive public sector.

- *The impact is clear. The Academy's state, local, and intergovernmental work strengthened governments' practical capacity to act in conditions of uncertainty and rapid change. Through centers of excellence, targeted research, and practitioner-focused tools, the Academy helped governments move beyond diagnosis to implementation. This work provides concrete frameworks, comparable data, and shared learning that state and local leaders can use to make better decisions, manage risk, and collaborate more effectively across jurisdictions.*



# THE ACADEMY'S STATE, LOCAL, AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPACT



## 4 New Reports

Completed projects on the fiscal impact of disasters, AI as an economic development tool, and public sector HR systems



## 3 New Initiatives

Met a growing demand for practical, cross-sector solutions in extreme weather, government champions, and agile learning.



## 6 Thought Leadership Projects

Support Fellows' examinations of federalism, practitioner-oriented research, trust in government, preemption, citizen-engaged government, and transforming institutions.



## 14 Events and Meetings

Convened leaders and practitioners to discuss opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration in elections, resilience, fiscal federalism, and other topics.



## 3 Road Shows

Brought research and insights directly to practitioner audiences in Michigan, Illinois, and Virginia.



## 18 Blog Posts

Translated complex research and convening insights into timely, accessible analysis for practitioners, Fellows, and partners.

# CENTER FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS



*Nancy Y. Augustine, PhD, is the Macomber-Weil Director, Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships*

In the 21st century, no significant public problem is the sole province of any one government agency or even of any one level of government. Effective problem solving requires federal, state, and local governments to work together, often with partners in the private and nonprofit sectors. Building collaborative capabilities to develop and implement effective policies and programs across levels of government and sectors of society is a significant challenge to all concerned.

As a center of excellence, the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships guides the Academy's state, local, and intergovernmental work by pursuing three primary objectives:



**Create and communicate knowledge about the importance of intergovernmental partnerships through research.** Explore collaboration up, down, and across levels of government.



**Develop opportunities for dialogue through meetings and events.** Bring together leaders from different levels and units of government, sectors, and communities to discuss strategies to address shared challenges.



**Build relationships through collaboration.** Engage and seek opportunities to work with other organizations focused on federal, state, and local policy issues.

By focusing on collaboration as a governance challenge rather than a procedural one, the Academy supports solutions that are grounded in institutional realities and responsive to the needs of state and local governments. As part of the Academy's broader research and engagement efforts, the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships strengthens governments' capacity to navigate complexity, adapt to change, and deliver results in an increasingly interdependent public sector.

# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



*Amanda Mullan is the Cooley-Fanning Director of Strategic Initiatives*

In 2025, the Academy launched two new strategic initiatives, demonstrating its ability to stay current, anticipate emerging challenges, and respond to the issues shaping public administration today. By launching new Centers, programs, and practitioner-focused platforms, the Academy addresses urgent topics, such as extreme weather resilience, agile governance, and technological change. The initiatives are grounded in practice and designed for real-world use. They reflect the Academy’s ongoing commitment to evolving with the field, aligning expertise with need, and ensuring that governments at all levels are equipped to navigate complexity, uncertainty, and change.

## ***The Academy Launches “Leading Agile Transformation” Course***

In October 2025, the Academy's Agile Learning Program launched its first course, "Leading Agile Transformation," in partnership with the Professional Development Academy. This course is a virtual 6-week program based on the Agile Government Center’s 5 years of thought leadership and design, equipping leaders at all levels of government with Agile management principles and preparing them to govern through the pillars of the end-user, the network, and the team.



The Academy is building on this initial launch by engaging state, city, and county governments and planning a second iteration in [September 2026](#). If interested in learning more or registering to take the course, reach out to Amanda Mullan, Cooley-Fanning Director of Strategic Initiatives.

## ***The Extreme Weather Resilience Hub Supports Local Adaptation***

In May 2025, the Academy launched the [Extreme Weather Resilience Hub](#) (the Hub). This is a bold initiative to transform how local governments adapt to extreme weather events and ensure their economies thrive in an ever-changing environment. With support from Fellows Jane and Mark Pisano, the Hub aims to reimagine governance and financing structures to help communities develop resilience in the face of extreme weather. It is part of a broader effort exploring how to transform public institutions, originally spearheaded by Fellows Mark Pisano, John Kirlin, and Rich Callahan.

The Hub builds on several years of CIP research examining how modern governance and financing systems shape governments' ability to manage complex, place-based risks. Through work on [intergovernmental governance](#), [disaster-related housing and infrastructure challenges](#), and [climate adaptation finance](#), the CIP identified structural limitations in existing institutions that hinder long-term resilience. The Hub translates these insights into a focused platform for rethinking and testing new governance and financing approaches for extreme weather adaptation. The Hub's work reflects specialization in investigating governance and financing structures for adaptation and resilience by:

- Examining new governance models designed to handle extreme weather threats.
- Creating frameworks for local and regional resilience planning.
- Piloting real-world solutions in extreme weather-vulnerable communities.
- Collaborating across government, academia, nonprofits, and the private sector.
- Driving initiatives that help communities with disaster preparedness.

Events hosted by the Hub have focused on place-based solutions to extreme weather, insurance and risk, federal shifts in data collection, and on how local communities can best prepare in the absence of reliable information. The Hub staff have met with over 60 organizations and individuals since launching in May 2025, and we have established partnerships with several organizations to explore proposal opportunities, host convenings, and other activities. Organizations include the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the Environmental Policy Innovation Center, the Impact Project, and the Climate Modeling Alliance (CliMA). For more information about the Hub, contact Amanda Mullan, the Cooley-Fanning Director of Strategic Initiatives.



*Academy President and CEO James-Christian Blockwood with Academy Fellows and Hub Sponsors Jane and Mark Pisano*

# RESEARCH PROJECTS

- *Recent work has created durable public-sector resources for learning and action. Three new reports provide state and local leaders with new, trusted resources to compare human resources systems across states; practical guidance for navigating disaster-related fiscal disruptions; and tools to assess readiness for artificial intelligence. Together, these projects address practical challenges at the intersection of federal policy, state systems, and local implementation. These are areas where intergovernmental alignment is essential to effective governance.*

## *Catalog of Intergovernmental Reports, 2022 – 2024*

- ✓ [Building Organizational Capacity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fire and Rescue Service](#) for Montgomery County, Maryland (September 2022)
- ✓ [State Regulatory Compliance Processes: Lessons Learned From COVID-19](#), sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts (December 2022)
- ✓ [Modernizing Public Benefits Delivery: How Innovation Can Deliver Results for Eligible Households and Taxpayers](#) (June 2023)
- ✓ [Modern Intergovernmental Governance Toolkit](#) sponsored by Jane and Mark Pisano (July 2023)
- ✓ [Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities \(CUPF\) Fee Structure Implementation Assessment](#), for Montgomery County, Maryland (January 2024)
- ✓ [Disaster Resilience: Addressing Modern Housing and Infrastructure Resiliency Challenges](#), sponsored by Hagerty Consulting (January 2024)
- ✓ [Modern Climate Adaptation Governance and Financing Strategies](#), enabled by the Haynes Foundation (August 2024)
- ✓ [Establishing EPA's Indian Country Program Assessment Framework: Assessment and Planning Design](#), for the Environmental Protection Agency (September 2024)
- ✓ [A Field Guide for Financing Integrated Data Systems and Evaluation in the Public Sector](#) for the Data Funders' Collaborative (April 2024)
- ✓ [Reducing Homelessness in the United States: An Intergovernmental Challenge](#), by a Fellows Working Group (September 2024)

## *Strategies for States to Weather Disaster-Related Income Tax Extensions (June 2025)*

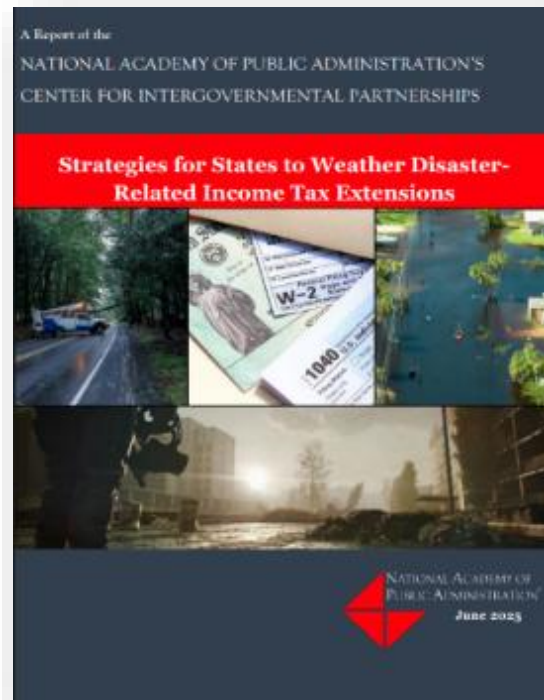
For [this report](#), the Academy examined how federally initiated, disaster-related income tax filing extensions affect state fiscal health. As disasters become more frequent and IRS extension policies expand without clear, consistent guidance, states face an increasing risk of delayed revenue. This reality complicates budget planning and undermines fiscal stability. The project was sponsored by the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO).

Key findings from the study include:

- **IRS extensions can last up to one year** and are often issued without direct communication with states, creating uncertainty for budget officers.
- **Most states have different budget cycles but conform to federal tax deadlines**, making them vulnerable to disruptions in revenue collection and forecasting.
- **Delayed filings interfere with revenue estimation**, a foundational step in the budget cycle. They can lead to cash flow challenges and budget shortfalls—especially in states that rely heavily on income tax.
- **California’s 2023 experience** illustrated a near-worst-case scenario, with cascading effects on budget development and fiscal stability due to delayed revenue data.
- **Communication gaps between the IRS and states** exacerbate uncertainty and hinder timely responses.

The report recommends:

- Strengthening education and communication among NASBO, states, and the IRS.
- Developing contingency plans and legislative options to mitigate disruptions.
- Exploring decoupling state deadlines from federal extensions when necessary or possibly permanently.

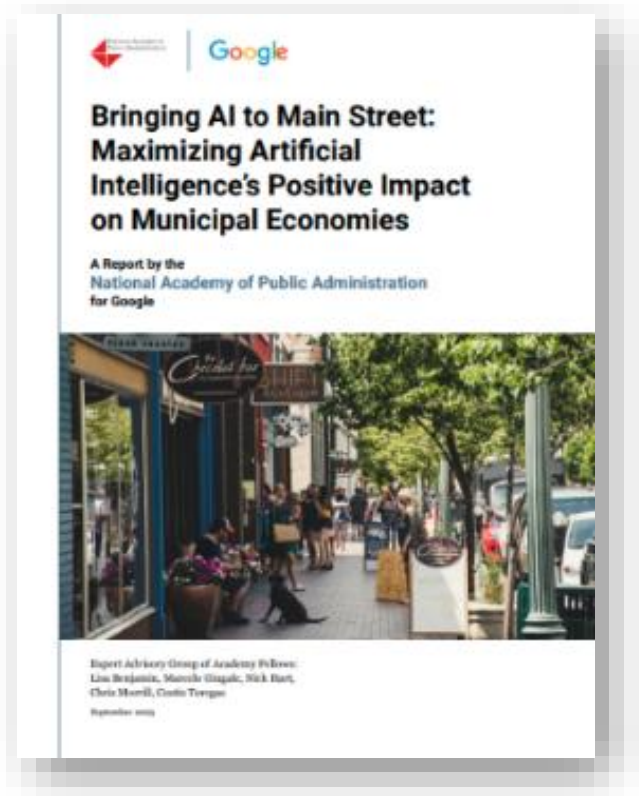


## *Bringing AI to Main Street (September 2025)*

The Academy developed a resource guide to help local governments understand and prepare for the economic and governance impacts of artificial intelligence. The project, *Bringing AI to Main Street*, focused on equipping municipal leaders with the tools and insights needed to responsibly adopt AI technologies. It culminated in a white paper, toolkit, and a series of convenings that connected its resources to local community leaders. Google sponsored the project.

Key findings from the project include:

- **Readiness Gaps Are Widespread:** Many local governments are eager to explore AI but lack the infrastructure, staffing, or strategic planning to do so effectively. A new Municipal Economy Readiness Framework helps communities assess their preparedness and identify next steps.
- **AI Can Drive Local Growth, If Done Right:** AI has the potential to boost productivity, streamline services, and support small business innovation. But without planning, it risks reinforcing existing gaps.
- **Community-Based Organizations Are Critical:** The project highlights the importance of supporting nonprofits and local institutions as AI adopters and advocates. These organizations often serve as trusted intermediaries, helping to ensure that AI benefits are equitably distributed across communities.
- **Local Leaders Need Practical Tools:** The toolkit includes a self-assessment checklist, case examples, and guidance on vendor evaluation, public engagement, and responsible AI policy development.
- **Ethics and Equity Must Be Central:** The report calls for safeguards against bias and exclusion, including transparent procurement, regular audits, and inclusive stakeholder engagement.



## *State Human Resources and Benchmarking (February 2026)*



The Academy partnered with the Niskanen Center to conduct [a state benchmarking study of human resources systems](#). The study created the first comprehensive, comparable repository of state HR system data across 44 participating states, providing a foundation for peer learning, reform, and future research. The Niskanen Center sponsored the project.

Key observations include:

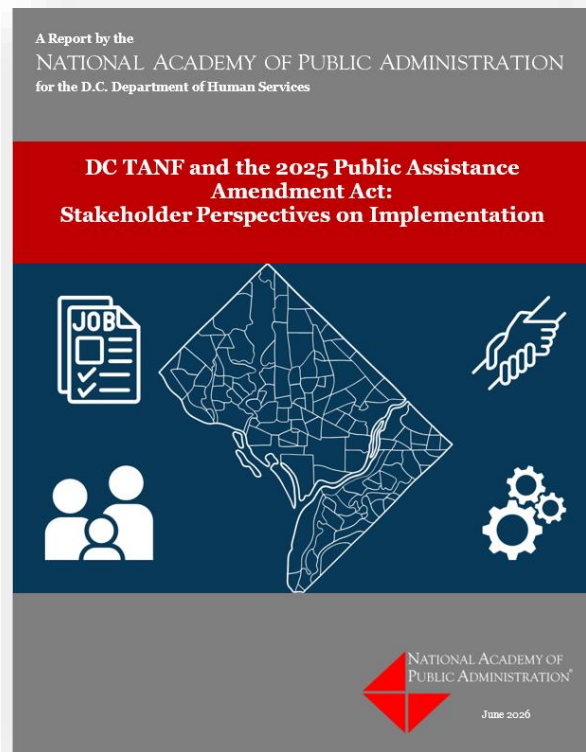
- **No one-size-fits-all model:** State HR systems vary widely based on legal frameworks, labor markets, union environments, political context, geography, and administrative capacity; states balance flexibility, fairness, and efficiency in different ways.
- **Governance and authority differ significantly:** States vary in where HR authority sits and how centralized systems are structured, with most operating hybrid models that trade off consistency and risk management against agency-level responsiveness.
- **Hiring is a shared pressure point:** Lengthy and complex hiring processes constrain states' ability to compete for talent, prompting widespread experimentation with faster, more flexible approaches that still meet statutory and equity requirements.
- **Reform is accelerating, but unevenly:** States are expanding skills-based hiring, workforce pipelines, compensation modernization, and digital performance systems, though implementation challenges and fiscal constraints remain significant.

## ***DC TANF and the 2025 Public Assistance Amendment Act (June 2026)***

The Academy facilitated a structured TANF Policy Working Group to help the the District of Columbia Department of Human Services (DHS) [navigate major program changes under the DC Public Assistance Amendment Act of 2025](#). The engagement included data-informed analysis, stakeholder listening sessions, and facilitated deliberation among government, providers, advocates, Councilmembers, and customers. The final report features actionable, community-grounded input to guide DHS’s implementation of the new rules while protecting families, improving transparency, and centering practical steps to support residents’ pathways to economic independence.

Main takeaways include:

- **Intergovernmental and cross-actor alignment is critical:** Effective TANF reform depends on coordination among agency leadership, frontline staff, providers, policy makers, and community stakeholders. Misalignment across these groups slows implementation and undermines outcomes.
- **Stakeholder engagement improves both legitimacy and design quality:** Structured listening sessions surfaced insights into practical barriers to help refine implementation.
- **Transparency and clarity are central to trust in public assistance programs:** Clear communication of rules, expectations, and pathways across multiple organizations through multiple channels is essential to ensuring both participant understanding and consistent administration.
- **Implementation planning must be iterative and adaptive:** Major policy changes require ongoing adjustment as agencies encounter real-world conditions, particularly when balancing compliance requirements with participant needs and service delivery capacity.



## *Work in Progress*

### *What Works: Performance Management in Practice*

Fellow [Shelley Metzenbaum](#) is sponsoring a year-long initiative to strengthen performance management, evidence use, grants modernization, and intergovernmental collaboration across state and local government. The project's first phase focuses on designing a practitioner-oriented, AI-enabled Performance Management Resource Center. This work lays the foundation for a sustained, practice-driven platform that can evolve alongside governments' performance and evidence needs.

Shelley was the Founding President of the Volcker Alliance and held many leadership positions in academia and the federal government.



### *State Preemption and Health Outcomes*

Work continues on the Academy's two-year collaboration with the University of Kansas to explore [how preemptive public policies can contribute to economic insecurity and health inequities in the Kansas City area](#). Fellow [Chris Koliba](#) (Edwin O. Stene

Distinguished Professor of Public Administration, Policy & Governance at the University of Kansas School of Public Affairs and Administration) has led a team using large language models to analyze the narratives that lead to state-level decision making. One article has been published in an academic journal, and several more are forthcoming. The Academy team has focused on the administrative aspects of state preemption. A grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation makes this work possible.



# EVENTS AND MEETINGS

- *Events and convenings in 2025–2026 translated research and emerging challenges into shared understanding and practical action across the intergovernmental system. By bringing together federal, state, local, academic, and private-sector leaders, these forums created trusted spaces to surface emerging risks, test ideas, align perspectives, and learn from peers before decisions were locked in. These convenings reinforced the Academy’s role as a neutral convener that connects insight to implementation and builds the connective tissue governments need to respond effectively to complex, cross-boundary challenges.*

## ***Government Champions 250: Honoring the Next Generation (May 2026)***

The Academy joined the Local Gov 250 Coalition to recognize 250 exemplary public servants from across the country. This honor highlights government workers across the country, from mayors’ offices to public works departments, parks and recreation, public health, libraries, and much more. Each has earned recognition by going above and beyond, showing excellence in public service, and inspiring those around them.

To select the Champions, the Local Gov 250 Coalition and the Academy reviewed hundreds of submissions from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The full list of honorees is available at [Government Champions 250](#). Local Gov 250 is a national effort to honor and elevate the role of local government as the United States approaches its 250th anniversary. Through storytelling, recognition, and innovation, the initiative highlights how cities, counties, regional councils, and Tribal governments have shaped – and continue to shape – American democracy from the ground up.



*Academy President and CEO James-Christian Blockwood opened the 250 Champions of Public Service Celebration on May 12, 2026.*



The Academy hosted the 250 Champions of Public Service Celebration on May 12 in Philadelphia, during [ICMA's Local Government Reimagined Conference](#). During the event, Champions were invited to the stage to introduce themselves. They each received a certificate and a medallion specially made for the evening.

*Fellows Engagement Specialist Jillian McGuffey welcomed Champions to the stage for recognition and oversaw all aspects of event planning and logistics.*



A program the next day featured some of the honorees in a discussion about the future of government. Fellow and National League of Cities CEO and Executive Director Clarence Anthony kicked off the program, reflecting on the honor of being recognized as a Champion of Public Service. He sees local government as being at the heart of America's democratic "experiment," arguing that transformative change has always begun in communities, not in Washington.

The recognition and the event were part of the year-long Celebrating the American Public Servant, the Academy's signature national initiative honoring the people who make our democracy work every day. For more information, visit <https://napawash.org/caps>.



*Mesa (AZ) Fire Chief Mary Cameli, Acting Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Services and Fellow Stacy Rodgers, Professor and Director of the Arizona State University School of Public Affairs and Fellow Shannon Portillo, Transportation and Long-Range Planner, Village of Hoffman Estates (IL) Phil Green, and City Administrator at City of Issaquah (WA) Wally Bobkiewicz spoke at "The Future of Local Government: Perspectives from Public Service Champions."*

## ***Extreme Weather Resilience Hub***

### **Launch Event (May 2025)**

The Academy formally launched the Extreme Weather Resilience Hub in Los Angeles, California, establishing a new platform focused on governance and financing challenges related to extreme weather adaptation. The launch marked the transition from concept development to active convening, partnership building, and pilot identification.



*Academy Fellows and guests gathered at the home of Hub Sponsors Jane and Mark Pisano to launch the Extreme Weather Resilience Hub in May 2025.*

### **Weathering the Shift: Place-based Approaches for Resilience and Recovery (September 2025)**

In September, the Hub hosted a high-profile event featuring Alice Hill (Council on Foreign Relations), Dr. Louis Uccellini (Fellow and former National Weather Service Director), Eric Leckey (Fellow and former Federal Emergency Management Agency SES), and experts from AECOM, Hagerty Consulting, and Throwe Environmental. Speakers discussed upcoming federal changes and opportunities to focus on place-based solutions and systemic reforms that build local capacity to adapt to extreme weather events proactively.

### **Weathering the Storm: Insurance, Risk, and Community Resilience (October 2025)**

A targeted Leadership Connect session engaged senior government leaders on governance and insurance considerations for extreme weather resilience. This session explored how extreme weather risk is reshaping insurance markets, the state and local policy responses needed to address these challenges, and the importance of collaboration across government, industry, and communities to ensure insurance remains a viable, accessible resource and a driver of resilience. The dialogue supported the Hub's ongoing work on place-based and executive-level resilience solutions.

## **Weathering Data Gaps: Adapting to Extreme Weather with Imperfect Information (March 2026)**

This hybrid event focused on the changing federal data landscape and its effects on state and local decision-making. The discussion highlighted the challenges posed by data gaps and explored practical strategies for adapting resilience planning and governance in the face of uncertainty. Speakers from The Impact Project, Climate Central, and the Federation of American Scientists participated.



*Amanda Mullan welcomed speakers at the March 2026 Hub event.*

## ***Election Administration***

### **The Future of Democracy: Lessons Learned from the 2024 U.S. Election (February 2025)**



*Academy Fellow and Election Assistance Commission Commissioner Thomas Hicks at the February 2025 event.*

In recognition of Global Election Day, the Academy joined the London School of Economics' Electoral Psychology Observatory, the Brennan Center for Justice, and Fellow and (now former) Election Assistance Commission Commissioner Thomas Hicks, on February 6, 2025, to host a half-day event focused on the steps needed to strengthen, promote, and protect democracy in every election.

Speakers discussed the elements that contribute to safe, secure, efficient, transparent, and trusted elections. The half-day event emphasized the role of intergovernmental collaboration. Each state and its localities face immense challenges with limited resources, and their efforts span far more days of the year and coordinate with more government agencies than many realize election administration requires.

### **Election Security (February 2026)**

Election administration experts spoke on the importance and challenges of election security ahead of the midterm elections and in the years to come. Security, especially cybersecurity, is a pressing topic for under-resourced states and localities facing an extremely rapidly evolving threat environment, given the onset of AI and the myriad challenges it poses. Some election administration processes could benefit from

incorporating technology to reduce the burden on election administration staff. Still, AI can act as a threat multiplier, making it easier for bad actors to influence local elections or to attack them directly.

Panelists noted all these challenges and discussed the importance of cross-departmental coordination and the role that all local leaders can play in ensuring elections are safe and secure. They noted that elections are, more than ever before, a whole-of-government effort. Election administration cannot be a siloed, under-resourced, and under-trained aspect of state and local government.

### **AI and Election Administration (June 2026)**



The Brennan Center for Justice and the Academy co-hosted a discussion featuring elections and artificial intelligence experts from across the nation. This activity is the second in a broader series that discusses the future of election administration and democratic governance in a rapidly evolving environment.

Artificial intelligence is already reshaping the election landscape – creating new risks for voters, election officials, and institutions. AI-generated disinformation and automated systems have the potential to disenfranchise voters and amplify threats to electoral integrity. At the same time, AI tools may also help election administrators improve efficiency, responsiveness, and accessibility, particularly for under-resourced jurisdictions facing growing operational demands. As election officials and policy makers navigate this landscape, it is critical to establish safeguards that minimize the dangers of AI while encouraging responsible and transparent innovation. Ensuring accountability and public trust is essential as we learn how to responsibly deploy these tools in election administration.

### **Trust in Local Government (May 2026)**

On May 7, the Local Government Working Group convened a group to discuss the challenges local governments face regarding resident trust. Breakout groups explored tools practitioners need to better measure resident trust, how to affect resident trust and community engagement, and how to encourage participation to build trust. This symposium was cosponsored by ICMA, GFOA, NLC, NACo, NRPA, APWA, PSHRA, and IEDC.

## ***Tribes in an Intergovernmental System (March and June 2026)***

The Intergovernmental Systems Standing Panel has co-sponsored two events with the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) and the Tribal Relations Working Group (Section in Intergovernmental Administration and Management (SIAM), American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)). In March, American Indian law and policy scholar Phillip "Sam" Deloria spoke on "How Tribes Entered the Modern Intergovernmental System. The June event featured Shawn Duran, the Chief Operating Officer of Taos Pueblo, who spoke on "The Taos Pueblo: Ancient Traditions, Modern Governance."

Recordings of both events are available at <https://saige.org/>.



## ***Fiscal Federalism Quarterly***

The Fiscal Federalism series, sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts, brings together leaders from state and local associations and other organizations to discuss current activities, present new work, and make connections. This long-running series continues to serve as a vital space for candid, cross-sector dialogue on the mechanics of intergovernmental finance and administration.

## ***Public Health Working Group Webinars***

The Public Health Working Group was formed in late 2024 to expand the Academy's activities in this important area of intergovernmental collaboration. The group hosted three webinars, starting in 2025:

- Intergovernmental Collaboration in Public Health Crises (February 2025) focused on intergovernmental collaboration in managing natural hazards, extreme events, and public health crises.
- Workforce Capacity and System Responsiveness (April 2025) examined workforce capacity challenges that limit public health and emergency response systems during crises.
- Intersection of public health, natural disasters, and trust in government (April 2026) featured panelists discussing how to implement lessons learned from previous events.

# OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION

- *The Academy used outreach and communication to translate its work into formats that resonate with state and local practitioners. Through road shows and blog posts, this work extended the Academy's reach, reinforced its relevance to real-time governance challenges, and supported sustained engagement across the intergovernmental community.*

## **Road Shows**

Through targeted road shows, Academy staff brought research and insights directly to practitioner audiences. These engagements increased visibility and positioned the Academy for future collaboration by meeting leaders where they already convene.

- *Bringing AI to Main Street* was presented at Google DC (September 2025), the National Association of Counties (October 2025), the International City/County Management Association (October 2025), the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (November 2025), the Council of State Governments (December 2025), Google Chicago (December 2025), and Community Innovation Partnerships (December 2025).
- *The Extreme Weather Resilience Hub* was presented to an audience of primarily local government practitioners at the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (July 2025) and the Miami Resilience 365 Conference (March 2026).
- *The Agile Government Center* was presented at a Virginia Municipal League meeting (October 2025).



*Officials and researchers gathered at Google's Chicago headquarters to hear the Academy's presentation of [Bringing AI to Main Street](#) in December 2025.*

## ***Blog Posts***

The Academy extends the reach and relevance of its state, local, and intergovernmental work beyond formal reports and events through a sustained series of [Academy Insights](#) blog posts. These pieces translate complex research and convening insights into timely, accessible analysis for practitioners, Fellows, and partners. Collectively, the blog series reinforced the Academy's role as a trusted interpreter of change, connecting research, practice, and real-world decision making across the intergovernmental system.

### **Resilience and Adaptation: The Case for Action**

Framing the governance, fiscal, and institutional stakes of extreme weather and adaptation.

- [Public Sector Leadership: Helping Communities Adapt to a New Era](#) (March 26, 2025)
- [Launching the Extreme Weather Resilience Hub: Public Administration for a New Era](#) (May 23, 2025)
- [Advancing Community Resilience: The Hub's Vision for Modern Adaptation Governance](#) (January 16, 2026)
- [Extreme Weather: Understanding the Importance of Resilience, Adaptation, and Public Administration](#) (February 08, 2026)
- [Extreme Weather Resilience Hub at DC Climate Week](#) (May 19, 2026)

### **Resilience in Practice: Place-based Solutions, Data Gaps, and Local Model**

Translating resilience concepts into real-world constraints, tradeoffs, and local approaches.

- [Weathering the Shift: Place-Based Solutions for Extreme Weather Events](#) (September 04, 2025)
- [Weathering the Shift: Place-Based Solutions for Extreme Weather Resilience](#) (October 09, 2025)
- [A New Model for Resilience and Adaptation in Maryland](#) (March 03, 2026)
- [Weathering Data Gaps: Adapting to Extreme Weather with Imperfect Information](#) (March 27, 2026)
- [Examining California's Climate Resilience Districts](#) (April 17, 2026)

### **Technology, Capacity, and Readiness in Local Government**

- [Bringing AI to Main Street: Boosting Local Economies with AI](#) (September 16, 2025)
- [Bringing AI to Main Street - From Cautious Optimism to Readiness](#) (October 29, 2025)
- [Delivering Through Disruption: State and Local Governments Continue to Lead Amid a Shifting Federal Landscape](#) (November 26, 2025)

### **Civic Capacity, Trust, and Institutions**

Reflections on institutional trust, public service, and the exercise of local power.

- [From City Votes to State Vetoes: How Preemption Shaped Kansas City's Minimum Wage](#) (December 23, 2025)
- [Building Resilience Together: 2025 Year-End Reflections from the Extreme Weather Resilience Hub](#) (December 19, 2025)
- [Announcing the 250 Champions](#) (March 17, 2026)
- [Transforming Governance Institutions in the United States: How Siloed Programs and Outdated Designs Undermine Outcomes—and What to Do About It](#) (April 17, 2026)
- [Academy, Local Gov 250 Honor 250 Champions in Philadelphia](#) (May 13, 2026)

# STANDING PANELS AND WORKING GROUPS

The Academy's Standing Panels and Working Groups convene thought leaders around specific areas critical to the effectiveness of public administration. Non-Fellows are welcome to participate in all Standing Panels and Working Groups.

- *Together, the Standing Panels and Working Groups translate the Academy's convening power into sustained influence on the field of public administration. Fellows, practitioners, and partners connect around shared questions. Their maintained engagement over time shapes research agendas, surfaces emerging governance challenges, and generates ideas that inform Academy projects, proposals, and public dialogue. Their work strengthens the bridge between theory and practice, ensuring that the Academy's thought leadership is grounded in real-world experience and responsive to the evolving needs of governments at all levels.*



## ***Local Government Working Group: A New Fellows Initiative***



*Fellow Wally Bobkiewicz chairs the Local Government Working Group.*

The Academy's Local Government Working Group (LGWG), launched in early 2025, has quickly become a focus for Fellows and partners committed to strengthening local governance. The group has convened quarterly to shape a shared research agenda and mobilize Fellows around pressing local issues.

A series of collaborative sessions with local government managers, academics, and association leaders identified several themes. A research committee within LGWG is focusing on trust in government. A group focused on preemptions has hosted several discussions. A roundtable on citizen-engaged government is planned for Summer 2026.

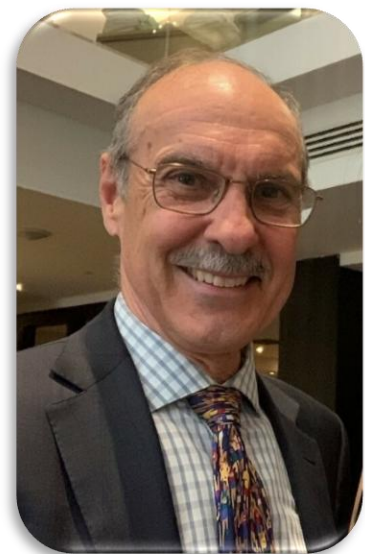
Quarterly meetings focus on refining the research agenda and exploring new opportunities for collaboration with associations and funders. For more information about the LGWG, contact Wally Bobkiewicz at [wallyb@issaquahwa.gov](mailto:wallyb@issaquahwa.gov).

## ***Intergovernmental Systems Standing Panel: Transition, Collaboration, and Impact***

The Intergovernmental Systems Standing Panel (ISP) has had a dynamic year, marked by impactful convenings, cross-panel collaboration, and preparations for a leadership transition.

After more than a decade of visionary leadership, Shelley Metzenbaum and Mark Pisano concluded their tenures as co-chairs at the end of 2025. Their contributions shaped the Panel into a vibrant forum for addressing complex intergovernmental challenges—from performance management and homelessness to data sharing and climate resilience.

*Fellow Mike Pagano is a co-chair of the Intergovernmental Systems Standing Panel.*





*Fellow Kurt Thurmaier is a co-chair of the Intergovernmental Systems Standing Panel.*

The ISP's new co-chairs, Kurt Thurmaier and Mike Pagano, have launched a project, "US Federalism Reimagined." The project's purpose is to produce a vision and action plan in light of recent major disruptions to the US intergovernmental system (e.g., grant termination, impounding funding, reducing Medicaid, federalizing state troops), which requires a reexamination of the roles, responsibilities, and collaboration among the partners of the federal system, including federal, state, local, tribal, and regional governments. The primary audience is elected and appointed state and local policy and management leaders, as well as elected and appointed federal officials. The secondary audience includes Association partners (CSG, GFOA, NASBO, ICMA, NACo, NCSL, NGA, NLC); federal actors (OMB/GAO/CBO program leads); researchers; Fellows; others contributing to intergovernmental practice; and the general public.

Five working groups are assessing the impact of federal realignments in 2025 (and beyond) on federal/state/local/regional/Tribal governance and propose practical policy options that enhance intergovernmental effectiveness and cooperation. For more information about the ISP or the working groups, contact Kurt Thurmaier at [kthur@niu.edu](mailto:kthur@niu.edu) or Mike Pagano at [mapagano@uic.edu](mailto:mapagano@uic.edu).

## ***Additional Projects and Committees***

Under the auspices of the LGWG and ISP, Fellows and participants have launched several projects and committees to provide thought leadership on current topics.

### **Research (LGWG):**

- David Swindell, [daswinde@iu.edu](mailto:daswinde@iu.edu)

Develop and disseminate an academic research agenda that addresses the needs of practitioners, as identified by local government associations. The current focus is trust in government.

### **State Preemption (LGWG):**

- Bev Cigler, [cigler@psu.edu](mailto:cigler@psu.edu)

Share research publications and information on preemption tracking activities.

### **Citizen-engaged Government (LGWG):**

- Wendy Chen, [Wendy.Chen@ttu.edu](mailto:Wendy.Chen@ttu.edu)

Organize an online roundtable discussion that brings together stakeholder groups to share and reflect on good practices in citizen assemblies.

### **Transforming Institutions (ISP)**

- John Kirlin, [jkirlin@comcast.net](mailto:jkirlin@comcast.net)

Host discussions and develop a paper outlining new governance and financing institutions to address today's challenges.

# LOOKING AHEAD



*Brenna Isman is the Senior  
Director of Research and  
Government Solutions*

Over the past 16 months, the Academy’s state, local, and intergovernmental work has expanded in both scope and impact. We have established new centers of excellence, launched major initiatives, deepened partnerships, and translated research into practical tools that governments are using to navigate increasingly complex challenges. This growth reflects the strength of a team that has worked across projects to build shared expertise, align around a clear mission, and consistently deliver work grounded in real-world implementation. The result is a stronger, more connected platform for intergovernmental work. The priorities and strategies outlined below focus our next phase of work on where intergovernmental systems most directly shape public outcomes, and where the Academy is best positioned to connect rigorous analysis with practical application. Taken together, these efforts reinforce the importance of this work to the Academy’s broader mission and its role in supporting governments that are responsive, effective, and capable of delivering results for the communities they serve.

- **Priority:** *Strengthen governments’ ability to deliver measurable improvements in community outcomes by applying intergovernmental frameworks to complex, cross-cutting challenges that require coordinated action across levels of government and sectors.*

***How to Make it Happen:*** To advance this priority, the Academy will focus on generating practical value for governments and the people they serve by:

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<b>Translating intergovernmental research into practical use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create and communicate knowledge by turning research into clear, usable frameworks, tools, and guidance that improve implementation and outcomes.</li><li>• Focus on making intergovernmental concepts actionable for real-world decision making.</li></ul>
<b>Applying intergovernmental frameworks to real challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use research to analyze and improve how governments coordinate up, down, and across sectors in high-stakes policy areas.</li><li>• Identify where coordination breaks down and demonstrate how better intergovernmental design improves results.</li></ul>
<b>Convening decision makers to shape solutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop opportunities for dialogue that bring together leaders across governments, sectors, and communities to address shared challenges and test solutions.</li><li>• Structure convenings to inform decisions and advance implementation, not just exchange ideas.</li></ul>
<b>Building partnerships that enable coordinated action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen relationships across the intergovernmental ecosystem by working with organizations focused on federal, state, local, and Tribal policy issues.</li><li>• Use these partnerships to support joint problem-solving, shared learning, and aligned action across jurisdictions</li></ul>
<b>Embedding intergovernmental thinking in practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate intergovernmental perspectives into policy design, management decisions, and implementation processes.</li><li>• Ensure that coordination across levels of government is treated as a core driver of outcomes, not a secondary consideration.</li></ul>

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# CONCLUSION

The Academy's work in state, local, and intergovernmental administration reflects its role as a trusted partner for governments navigating rapid change. Across research, engagement, and outreach, the Academy helped leaders make sense of complex challenges and translate insight into practical action. The work also demonstrates the Academy Team's passion, resilience, and perseverance as they navigated one of the most challenging years in the history of US governance. As pressures on intergovernmental systems continue to grow, the Academy is well-positioned to support governments with work that is grounded, responsive, and focused on real-world implementation.

*For more information, contact*

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# THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND UNDERWRITERS

We are grateful to the following organizations for supporting our work to find and develop more effective ways for different levels and units of government to work together.

## GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT



## PROJECT SUPPORT

Jane G. & Mark A.  
Pisano Fund



The John Randolph Haynes and Dora  
HAYNES  
FOUNDATION



Niskanen  
Center



SHELLEY  
METZENBAUM

We are grateful to Fellows Larry Cooley and Marina Fanning for their support of the Cooley-Fanning Director of Strategic Initiatives. We are also grateful for the sponsorship of the Macomber-Weil Director of the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships, in honor of John Macomber and Frank Weil.

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# STATE, LOCAL, AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL CAPABILITIES

The National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) is a congressionally chartered, independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping governments improve performance, strengthen democratic institutions, and address complex public challenges. Through its state, local, and intergovernmental work, the Academy supports governments as they navigate fiscal volatility, extreme weather, workforce pressures, technological change, and shifting federal-state dynamics by translating evidence into practical, implementable solutions.

## **Intergovernmental Systems and Governance Alignment**

- Analyze how federal, state, and local systems interact in practice, including incentives, authorities, and implementation pathways.
- Identify misalignments across programs, funding streams, and administrative structures that affect outcomes.
- Develop governance frameworks that support coordination, accountability, and effective implementation across jurisdictions.

## **Applied Research and Comparative Analysis**

- Conduct rigorous, evidence-based studies on policy implementation and administrative performance, with emphasis on real-world operating conditions.
- Design and execute benchmarking studies and comparative analyses (e.g., state HR systems, fiscal impacts of federal policy changes).
- Translate findings into usable frameworks, decision tools, and actionable guidance for practitioners.

## **Resilience, Risk, and Fiscal Systems**

- Examine available governance and financing structures to support disaster preparedness, recovery, and long-term resilience.
- Assess fiscal impacts of federal actions on state and local governments, including revenue timing, budget stability, and risk management.
- Support place-based resilience strategies that integrate data, governance, and intergovernmental coordination.

## **Workforce, Capacity, and Organizational Performance**

- Evaluate workforce systems, hiring practices, and talent pipelines across state and local governments.
- Support modernization of HR systems, skills-based hiring, performance management, and organizational design.
- Conduct organizational and technical assessments to improve effectiveness, service delivery, and internal coordination.

## **Technology, Data, and Readiness**

- Assess government readiness for emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and data-driven decision making.
- Develop governance, risk, and capacity frameworks that help governments adopt technology responsibly and effectively.

## **Stakeholder Engagement, Facilitation, and Convening**

- Design and facilitate working groups, listening sessions, roundtables, and executive-level convenings.
- Bring together officials, practitioners, experts, and stakeholders to address shared challenges across levels of government and facilitate the development of strategies to address those challenges.
- Synthesize stakeholder input into clear findings and implementation-focused recommendations.

## **Strategic Communication and Practitioner Outreach**

- Translate complex research and convening insights into accessible formats, including toolkits, briefings, and practitioner-focused publications.
- Support outreach through public forums that extend the reach and impact of Academy work.
- Connect research, practice, and decision making across the intergovernmental community.