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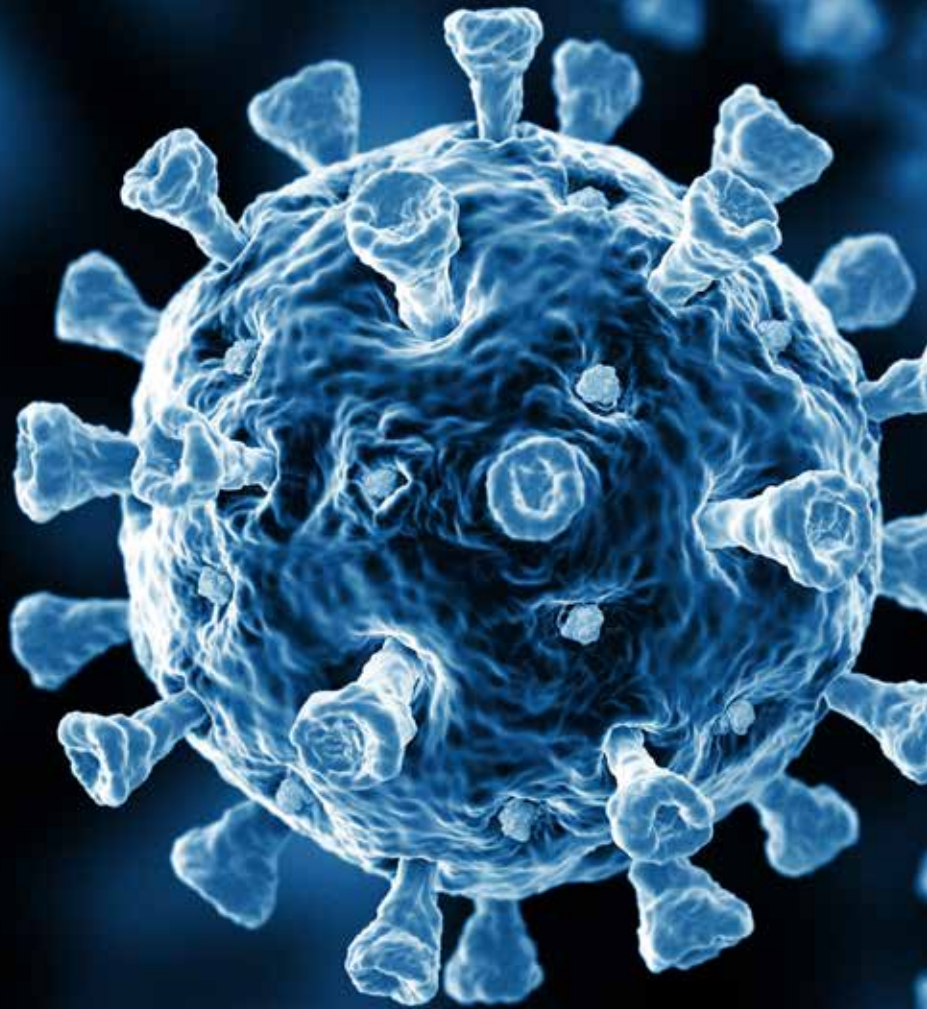
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AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

COVID-19

Public Service During a Pandemic



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Survive the COVID-19
Pandemic?**

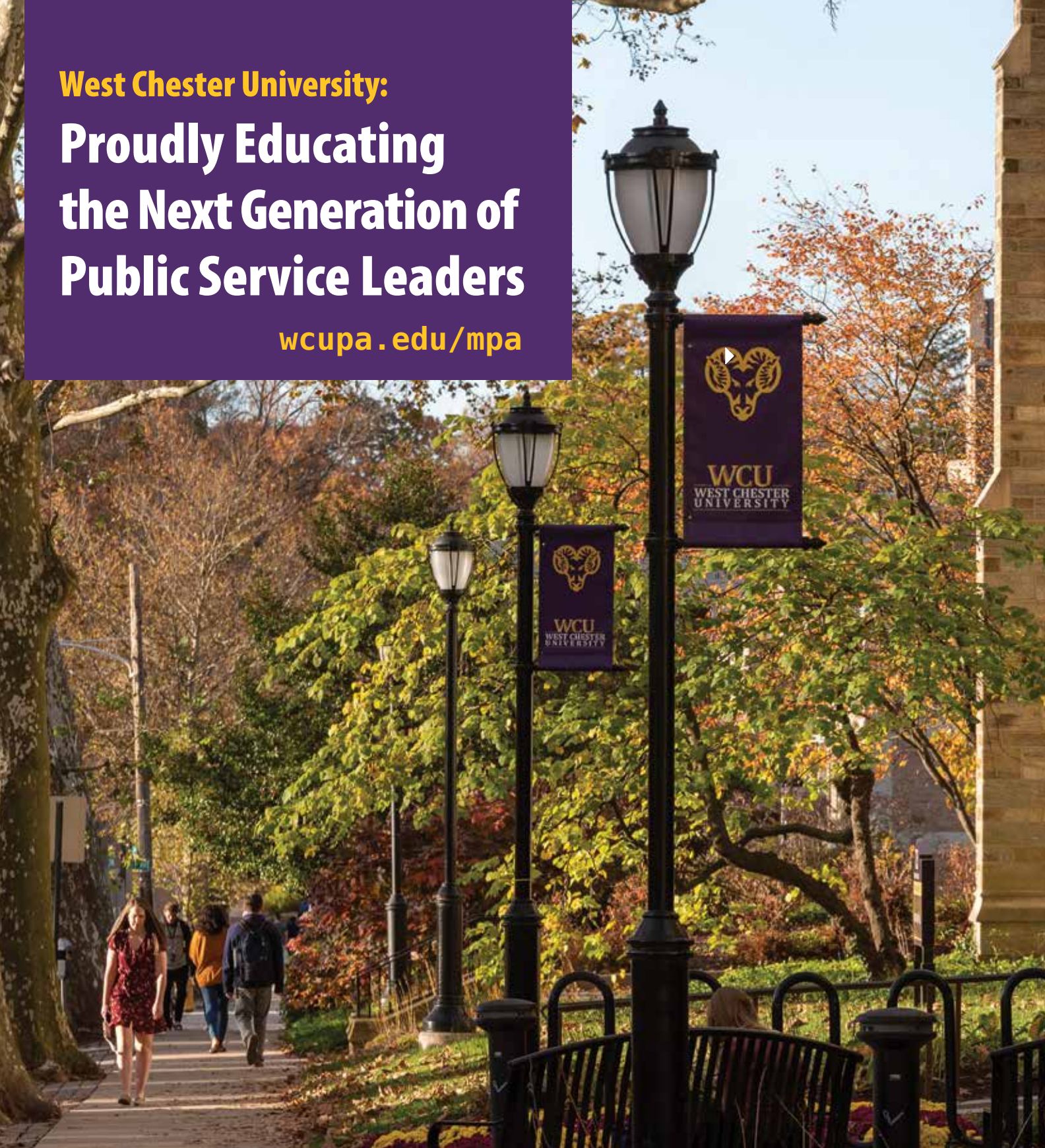
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The Impact of COVID-19 on the Census Effort in California

By ASPA Staff



Planning for the 2020 Census began years before the first Census invitations landed in mailboxes. At the national, state and local level, elected leaders, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic foundations and stakeholders had well-laid plans to achieve a complete and accurate count of every person living in the United States.

The U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) is the federal entity responsible for conducting the count, collecting data and reporting results that determine more than \$800 billion in annual federal funding allocations, congressional representation and states' redistricting. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has impacted nearly every aspect of USCB operations in conducting the 2020 Census and, by extension, California Complete Count, the California Census campaign to motivate and activate the state's hardest-to-count populations.

USCB experienced severe interruptions for in-person outreach and enumeration. Administrative offices were strained as employees tested positive for COVID-19 and facility operational capacity decreased. These required staffing reductions at USCB call centers, which resulted in longer wait times for households to complete their forms by phone. There also were delays of mailed materials and processing paper Census forms at the National Processing Center and data centers.

Within a four-week period, from mid-March to mid-April, USCB revised the start of in-field enumeration three times. The first announcement moved in-person enumeration from March 18 to April 1, and then to April 15. Finally, two days before enumeration was to start on April 15, it announced that in-person operations would be delayed until mid-August.

During this time of uncertainty, on April 1, California Governor Gavin Newsom sent a letter to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and USCB Director Steven Dillingham, warning that the unprecedented

nature of COVID-19 and uncertainty in the months ahead likely would intensify barriers for California's hard-to-count populations. His letter requested operational timelines to be thoroughly assessed and adjusted in a way that preserved data quality, critical to the nation's future. The Commerce Department and USCB responded on May 26, 2020 and shared their adjustments in response to COVID-19.

USCB, in its most significant announcement in mid-April, extended the enumeration period by three months, from July 31 to October 31—though this was later subject to court rulings from litigation contesting the timeline changes. Eventually, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling led to an end date of October 15.

The California Complete Count Census 2020 Office's outreach and education campaign relied on trusted messengers to reach households least likely to respond to the Census for a host of reasons, often related to concerns about privacy, security and relevance. This included 155 contracted outreach partners from local government entities, community-based organizations, Tribal government bodies, education outlets and sectors including business, labor, faith and health care.

Unfortunately, the pandemic eliminated almost entirely the most effective tool at hand to activate the hardest-to count populations: in-person outreach. To limit the spread of the COVID-19, person-to-person activities were paused, including door-to-door canvassing, questionnaire assistance centers (where individuals could complete their forms with culturally appropriate, in-language guidance) and sharing information at large community-based events.

That said, outreach partners reported that several activities positively contributed to educating and activating communities, while maintaining

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U.S. INSPECTORS GENERAL AND THE CARES ACT: Accountability through Independent Audits, Investigations and Evaluations

By Kathryn Newcomer and Charles Johnson

In response to COVID-19, Congress passed the CARES Act, providing more than \$2 trillion for emergency medical research, widespread public health and safety needs, payments for the unemployed and avoiding business closures. Engaging the federal inspectors general (IGs) is the best chance for independent and nonpartisan actors to provide credible reporting that assures genuine accountability and transparency. Situated in federal agencies responding to the pandemic, IGs have working knowledge of the agencies that strengthens their ability to offer critical evidence-based assessments and recommendations to inform ongoing and future planning. Recently, IGs have faced summary dismissals and negative comments by the president, but they remain legislatively independent and strongly supported by members of Congress. That independence is critical to producing trustworthy audits and evaluations of the federal government's coronavirus response.

Congress turned to the IG community to provide oversight for the pandemic response in two ways. First, it created a special inspector general for pandemic relief (SIGPR); second, it authorized the organization of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee. Congress placed SIGPR in the Department of the Treasury to pursue fraud, waste and mismanagement of CARES programs and evaluate program efficiencies and effects. It has the authority that most U.S. IGs hold, and with responsibilities similar to previously created special IGs for TARP, Iraq and Afghanistan. SIGPR was established against the White House's objections, and President Trump sought to limit its legislative authority in a signing statement, indicating that it would not be permitted to "issue reports to Congress without the presidential supervision required by the Take Care Clause, Article II, Section 3" of the U.S. Constitution.

President Trump's nominee for SIGPR, Brian Miller, previously served as IG for the General Services Administration and most recently was a White House attorney. The latter role, and his refusal of a GAO request for information about the



Inspector General Brian Miller

Photo courtesy of The New York Times

administration's actions regarding aid to Ukraine that eventually led to the president's impeachment, elicited significant concerns among some members of Congress about how independently and aggressively he would fulfill his responsibilities. At his nomination hearing, Miller said he understood the importance of IG independence, would follow CARES Act requirements and would not seek the president's permission prior to contacting or consulting with Congress. On June 2, he was confirmed by the Senate, two months after his nomination, in a nearly party-line vote. His office issued a mandated first report on August 3, which focused primarily on jurisdictional issues like what various organizations are authorized to oversee. Miller now must organize a staff, develop a functioning website and set processes in place for audits, investigations and evaluations.

The CARES Act authorized programs in, and funding for, several federal agencies with IGs that conduct independent and transparent audits, investigations and evaluations of agency actions. Congress wanted these actions to be coordinated, so it authorized

the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC) as a committee of the Council of the Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). Similar multi-IG councils have been organized by IGs themselves or by congressional authorization to coordinate activities for major challenges that involve multiple executive agencies, such as the 2008 financial crisis. Currently, PRAC comprises 21 IGs, nine specified in the CARES legislation (Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Justice, Labor, Treasury, Small Business Administration and Tax Administration), eleven whose responsibilities include pandemic-related programs or funding, and the SIGPR. CIGIE's chair is to appoint the PRAC chair from among the first nine. Although each IG remains independent, the legislation states the PRAC "shall conduct and coordinate oversight of covered funds and the Coronavirus response and support Inspectors General in the oversight of covered funds and the Coronavirus response..."

The White House objected to PRAC in a signing statement, complaining executive branch authority was violated by requiring that CIGIE's chair consult with Congress on hiring decisions and "executive decision-making." President Trump stated, "Accordingly, my Administration will treat this provision as hortatory but not mandatory." After CIGIE Chair Michael Horowitz appointed acting IG of Defense Glenn Fine as PRAC's chair, Trump replaced Fine at Defense, making him ineligible to serve. Horowitz now is acting chair of PRAC until a permanent one is selected. In the meantime, PRAC has established a website offering extensive information about its initial operations and presenting findings from audits, investigations and evaluations of the federal government's pandemic response (<https://pandemic.oversight.gov/>).

The independent and transparent work of the SIGPR, PRAC and other federal IGs will provide needed accountability during our turbulent times.

Kathryn Newcomer and Charles Johnson are authors of U.S. Inspectors General: Truth Tellers in Turbulent Times, published by Brookings Institution Press in 2020. They can be reached at newcomer@gwu.edu and cjohnson@tamu.edu.

COVID-19 AND CALIFORNIA CENSUS

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appropriate physical distancing to limit the spread of COVID-19. These included:

- Partnering with essential service providers like workforce development assistance, COVID-19 testing sites and food bank pick up locations to distribute Census information.
- Creating interesting and unique social media activities, such as Facebook Live events, for the populations with whom they work.
- Using targeted digital advertising through the ability to geofence ad delivery.
- Beginning or expanding traditional phone banking or text banking methods to directly contact households.
- Creating postcards and other direct mail campaigns delivered directly to targeted households.

The statewide media strategy also adjusted as COVID-19 created an environment where paid, earned and social media efforts became even more important for outreach, due to the decrease of in-person activities. Tactics and messaging were adjusted to reflect how the Census impacts funding for services made all the more essential during a health crisis, such as emergency services and health care programming. The messaging also acknowledged how the pandemic shone a spotlight on inequities among hardest-to-count communities.

As of September 14, 2020, California had exceeded its self-response rate goal—the metric that USCB set for 2020—contributing to a complete count that will stand for the next 10 years. Final reports for congressional apportionment will be submitted by USCB by December 31, 2020 to the president, with reports to states for redistricting sent by April 2021, barring other administrative, congressional or judicial actions.

For more information about the California Census Office, visit <http://census.ca.gov>.

Thanks to the California Complete Count—Census 2020 Office for its contributions to this article.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, PUBLIC SERVANTS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS: Election Administration and COVID-19

By R. Sam Garrett

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on elections is well documented. Government and private sector research and media reports have catalogued how states and localities have changed their election processes to adjust for polling place social distancing and increased mail voting. They also have showcased the dual challenges of administering elections amid COVID-19 while mitigating ongoing concerns about foreign interference and domestic misinformation.



Two other issues have received less attention. Yet they are important for the public administration profession. First, despite the tremendous challenges that COVID-19 has presented for election officials, there have been opportunities to educate the public about election administration and voters' roles in the process. In the long term, those efforts could strengthen the U.S. democratic process. Second, despite paying some attention to elections in the past 10-15 years, public administration scholars have not done as much as they can to study election administration and create meaningful exchanges with practitioners about the most pressing challenges. COVID-19 presents new opportunities to reconsider that relationship.

Perhaps most important on the first point, COVID-19's emergence at the height of primary season meant that voters had to learn new lessons about process—and quickly. They had to reeducate themselves—with help from election officials and interest groups, in some cases—about how to cast ballots by mail if they chose, where consolidated polling places were located and whether their jurisdiction permitted COVID-19 voting changes at all. To be sure, some voters regarded this process less as beneficial information and more as administrative burden, or even voter suppression. Litigation throughout the 2020 election cycle contested those questions.

Yet COVID-19 also provided voters with new opportunities to learn about the people—often their friends and neighbors, working as volunteers—behind elections. Recent history suggests that humanizing public servants and public services can remedy the gap between the public and its government. As NYU Professor Paul Light observed in the Spring 2019 issue of *PA TIMES*, the 2018-2019 lapse in federal appropriations, which effectively shut down a large part of the federal government, personalized civil servants in ways previously unfamiliar to many Americans. As Light explained, “Americans finally met the *real* public service as the media put a human face on the shutdown.”

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect elections, jurisdictions that relied heavily on older volunteer poll workers—most do—struggled with shortages. In other cases, the nation's capital being one example, after warning of insufficient numbers of poll workers throughout the summer, election jurisdictions reported by early fall that they expected a sufficient number of volunteers. In some cases, they had more than necessary. Several states redoubled their efforts to recruit high school and college students to work the polls. Many of those appeals relied on the same kind of humanizing themes Light observed during the government shutdown. In this sense, part-time poll workers became a combination of “Rosie the Riveter,” answering the call to public service in a time of crisis, and street-level bureaucrat.

That said, preliminary evidence shows a distinction in the public mind between volunteer and professional election workers amid COVID-19. In extreme cases, as *ProPublica* journalist Jessica Huseman chronicled in August 2020, “across the country, election administrators and their staffs are facing unprecedented attacks, much of it from outside their jurisdictions, from both left- and right-wing voters and activists. The polarization of American politics has reached such a fever pitch that the bureaucrats who operate the machinery of democracy—and largely lack the authority to change it—are harassed and threatened” over false allegations that they had improperly changed voter registration data, willfully disenfranchised voters or interfered with the policies they were charged with implementing. Some election administrators reportedly were urged to kill themselves or threatened with physical harm, Huseman reported. “This pressure, along with health concerns, is prompting an unusually large number of election officials to step down,” she wrote.

Mutually beneficial opportunities exist to help election officials reconsider how to administer elections given emerging logistical, health and other challenges, while also providing opportunities for public administration researchers to learn from their practitioner counterparts. Some of that dialogue already is occurring in related disciplines. The point here is not to retread the old, and not necessarily important, ground about where public administration ends and similar disciplines begin. But, it *does* seem clear that there are ample opportunities to bring together the sometimes artificially separated inquiries about participatory democracy and the administrative processes that facilitate it.

A small but dedicated line of research on election administrators as street-level bureaucrats dates to the early 2000s. More recent research suggests increased exposure to election administration might

encourage more voters to become involved, increase confidence in elections or both. As Sara Rinfret, Christa Barsky and Samuel Scott note in a 2018 *Public Administration Quarterly* article, literature emphasizing political science and sociology has found that positive election day experiences and familiarity with poll workers can increase confidence in elections and increase turnout.

These works provide an important foundation, but COVID-19’s impact on elections suggests unique challenges that might take years to resolve. Most local election officials—the bulk of the U.S. professional elections workforce—report in governmental and scholarly survey data that much of their training is received on the job. A few academic programs housed in, or drawing on, public administration departments offer training programs for professional election administrators. Yet they are an exception to the norm. These areas are ripe for more research. The renewed public knowledge about elections, new volunteers that COVID-19 brought into election administration and the challenges professional election administrators face all are more recent and virtually unexplored topics. Despite public administration’s relative silence on election administration, the discipline is well positioned to contribute to future research and practical policy implications.

R. Sam Garrett is a specialist in American national government at the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; he also serves as an adjunct faculty member at American University and for the University of Georgia Washington Semester Program. He holds a Ph.D., MPA and BA from American University’s School of Public Affairs. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect those of the Library of Congress or any other institution with which he is affiliated. Garrett can be reached at samg@american.edu.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: Public Service in Uncertainty and Crisis

In times of uncertainty and crisis, people recognize the critical role of public service in society. This year has presented unprecedented challenges and I am proud of how our members have risen to the occasion, both professionally and personally. I have witnessed practitioners in the United States and abroad, at all levels of government and in nonprofit organizations, quickly develop innovative programs and policies to respond to issues plaguing their communities. And, I am continually impressed with the academics and scholars in public affairs who are producing timely research, virtual panels and lectures on critical topics; they serve as pillars of support for their students and colleagues.

This issue of *PA TIMES* highlights some of this great work. It also is a reminder of the value of ASPA during times of crisis—how our organization is a connector and communicator for our members. Our staff have done a phenomenal job quickly adapting to the cancellation of the 2020 Annual Conference and repurposing so much content into virtual events. They have created many opportunities for scholars and students to present relevant research and for practitioners to share innovations and responses to the pandemic and the challenges around racial injustice and reclamation. I have been inspired by the number of thoughtful conversations I have witnessed firsthand through our national and international network. These are the conversations that will help us understand the obstacles we still must overcome and the history and context we continue to face.

I also want to recognize all of the work our Chapter and Section leadership is performing. Almost every Chapter and Section has stepped up to the challenge presented by the cancellation of in-person events and worked to connect members virtually. I have attended sessions on pandemic response, social injustice, voting, local and national elections, policing, crisis management and so much more. We also had a good number of Chapters honor Public Service Recognition Week, if not always during the week initially scheduled, through virtual events. I am encouraged by the grit and determination our members have shown during a time when so many of us feel discouraged and disheartened.

In 1989, category-5 Hurricane Hugo hit Charleston, South Carolina head on, inflicting \$11 billion in damage and devastating the city. In its aftermath, Mayor Joe Riley observed, “A crisis catches you where you are.” He reiterated this point in 2015 following the horrific massacre of nine innocent members of the Mother Emmanuel AME church. I think of his observation frequently—how the track you are on generally accelerates when a crisis hits. I am fortunate to have stepped to the helm of ASPA at a time when our organization is in solid shape and heading in the right direction. I am thankful for the years of our dedicated volunteer leadership and the work of our incredible staff in shoring up our finances, building our endowment and standing out front on issues that matter. Now more than ever, our Code of Ethics and the four pillars of public administration remind us of our priorities, values and obligations as public servants. For decades, leaders in our field have been asking questions about the role of public administrators in creating just systems and holding our governments accountable. Our current crises have not caught us off guard but have emphasized and accelerated our work. We must continue to ask these questions and push this conversation forward.

To provide a dedicated and visible space for these conversations, I am so pleased to announce that the 2021 Annual Conference theme will be *Picking Up the Pieces: Pandemics, Protests and the Future of Public Service*. Hopefully, you have received the call for proposals and presentations, read the descriptions of the tracks underpinning our theme and learned that the conference will be conducted entirely online. The health and safety of our members is our top priority, so it was with heavy hearts—and a lot of deliberation and contract negotiation!—that we made the decision for the virtual model. Be assured that the 2021 conference will continue our tradition of high quality panels, presentations, speakers and programming. I am excited to have the chance to try something completely different from we have done in the past and reconnect with all of you!

To be sure, this is not quite the way I had envisioned my presidential year unfolding. But, I could not be

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Managing a City in a Pandemic

There is no playbook for managing a city in a pandemic. From providing services to residents directed to stay home, to coping with sick employees, to closing City Hall to the public, everything can and does happen. This year's coronavirus pandemic has brought great challenges and an everchanging landscape to my role as city manager of Sanford, Florida. Here are some of my experiences.

Sanford is located in central Florida, just north of Orlando, with a population of 60,000 residents and a City workforce of 540 employees. Our fiscal year 2020 budget totals \$190 million. It was March 12 when we issued a press release informing our residents that the City was taking the threat of the coronavirus very seriously and monitoring the rapidly evolving situation. On the afternoon of Sunday, March 15, I emailed the mayor and City commissioners, informing them that I had kept abreast of communications from federal, state, county and municipal officials throughout the weekend and that I would hold a special staff meeting the next day to assess the situation for our organization.

Following the staff meeting, I declared a state of local emergency that enabled me to take action, if I felt it necessary, to address emergency situations as a result of the pandemic and respond to day-to-day exigencies. The declaration authorized me to waive purchasing policies, enact curfews and establish emergency shelters, to name a few.

We issued a press release cancelling all special events scheduled through April 30—a date we later would extend—stopping consideration of future event applications. All programs, activities, leagues and classes were suspended as of March 17 until further notice; all scheduled City facilities rentals were canceled, too.

On March 18, I sent the first of many emails to employees, assuring them we were monitoring communications at every level of government and would adjust our operations, as appropriate. We would work to minimize face-to-face interactions to combat COVID-19, while continuing our governmental operations. The next day, the City created a COVID-19 web page on its website, dedicated to such information as public meetings, programs, events, online access for utilities and permitting services.

Our human resources department provided masks and personal bottles of hand sanitizer to our employees. The human resources director sent regular emails keeping staff informed of the various aspects of the coronavirus. Our IT department provided laptops to connect them remotely to the City server as they worked from home.

We knew there would be an impact on City finances. On March 18, I enacted a ban on purchases of non-essential expenditures; effective that date, only essential, operations-necessary purchases would be allowed. Later, the finance director reported anticipating an 85 percent reduction in sales tax revenues, totaling \$1.182 million. Assuming facilities remained closed, an additional \$433,513 loss was possible. With departments purchasing only the essential items, we would save \$594,000, leaving a fiscal year loss of \$1.022 million. As it turned out, we were able to take this loss from the City's reserves; at this time, we will not have to cut employees' hours.

On March 19, I informed employees that the fire department would decontaminate City Hall and other City facilities. Yet given the growing nature of the pandemic, we closed the building to the public on March 23. That said, it continued to be operational and staff were expected to report absent an approved change to their work schedule.

I began weekly virtual meetings with directors to share information about their departments' status during the crisis and ensure we were working together. An employee committee was established to prepare a manual to guide the reopening of City Hall. It developed a two-phase plan: The first phase would outline procedures for employees, with a focus on a safe workplace in compliance with public health standards; the second pertained to reopening to the public, including physical changes necessary to conduct the people's business.

We reopened City Hall on June 1 after fitting it with plexiglass and placing decals on the floor to remind everyone to maintain social distancing. We began requiring employees and visitors to wear masks, too. As was inevitable, an employee in our utilities customer service office tested positive. She had been in close proximity with her coworkers, so we closed the office to the public for two weeks while the staff stayed home; we reminded customers of alternate options to pay their utility bills. To avoid future cases

elsewhere, some department directors divided their staff into two groups and alternated them between in-person and telework modes.

To assist local restaurants, I issued an emergency declaration temporarily allowing them to place additional outside signage indicating they were open for carryout and/or delivery service; we also provided one public parking space for curbside pick-up. Later, when restaurants were permitted to have in-dining service at 25 percent capacity, I issued an emergency declaration allowing them to use city sidewalks to extend outdoor eating areas.

Finally, the City established two grant programs for local businesses, with a \$15,000 limit per business. The first is designed to assist with equipment purchases, such as plexiglass, to make their premises safer. The second is to assist with rehiring staff who lost their jobs due to closures.

We are adjusting to a new way of operating—Zoom meetings are now very common—against the backdrop of COVID-19 and its significant impacts.

We know that will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future.

Norton Bonaparte has served as city manager of Sanford since September 2011. As the City's chief administrative officer, he is responsible for overseeing all City operations, including a \$174 million budget and more than 540 employees. He previously served as city manager of Topeka, Kansas; Plainfield, New Jersey; Camden, New Jersey; Willingboro, New Jersey; and Glenarden, Maryland. Bonaparte holds the Credentialed Manager designation from the International City/County Management Association, serves as vice chair of the board of directors of the National Academy of Public Administration and is a board member of the Florida Tri-County League of Cities. A former ASPA staff member, he holds a BS from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and an MPA from Cornell University's Graduate School of Business; he is a graduate of Harvard University's Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program. Bonaparte can be reached at Norton.Bonaparte@Sanfordfl.gov.

PUBLIC SERVICE IN UNCERTAINTY

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more fortunate to be at the helm of our organization during a time when our members and staff have risen to the occasion. This year has tested every aspect of our well being. Our public servants have continued to meet each challenge with grace, professionalism and compassion. I hope this issue of *PA TIMES* inspires you as much as it has inspired me. Thank you for all you do to *advance excellence in public service*.

Kendra Stewart is professor of political science and public administration and director of the Joseph P. Riley, Jr., Center for Livable Communities at the College of Charleston. Her research interests include nonprofit management, government public relations, state and local government and food policy. Prior to her current position at the College of Charleston, where she also has served as MPA program director, she was a faculty member and MPA director at Eastern Kentucky University and worked for the State of South Carolina Budget and Control Board. Stewart can be reached at StewartK@cofc.edu.



Human Resources in the Age of COVID-19

I often tell potential recruits that embarking on a career in public service will, if nothing else, ensure you are never bored. This is never more true than during disaster responses, when more of the public than ever turns to government agencies to provide the resources and services it needs to survive. During the COVID-19 pandemic, public sector human resources professionals have been blessed with the gift of abundant work as they balance the competing priorities of advancing their agencies' ability to provide essential services with managing the very real needs and concerns of their employees who themselves have been impacted.

Los Angeles County, the nation's largest local government agency with a resident population greater than most states, had an extremely challenging task from the moment COVID-19 was declared a public health emergency. This challenge was compounded by the fact that the county quickly became the leading region for cases in California, topping 241,000 positive cases and sadly more than 5,700 deaths by the end of August 2020.

I am proud that the LA County workforce quickly and compassionately rose to this disaster, as it had time and time before. Outside those positions with a regular emergency response component—such as our public works, medical care and first responder personnel—thousands of employees took on new roles to support the emergency response through the County's Disaster Service Worker program. More than 1,300 individuals worked remotely as contact tracers. Nearly 1,000 employees served as shelter workers to support Project Roomkey, a statewide effort to provide homeless individuals with safe emergency housing. Hundreds more helped with food distribution to children and seniors, conducted outreach to our unhoused neighbors and served as goodwill ambassadors, providing emergency resource information to the public—all while maintaining their departments' regular services and support programs. A daunting task indeed!

Through a human resources lens, this crisis was unique to other disasters that LA County has weathered, as every single employee not only engaged in supporting community services, but was directly impacted in some form. This meant that crisis support was not needed by one specific population, as would be the case during a wildfire or mudslide. Rather, our entire 111,000-member workforce needed access to emotional wellness,

mental health and family support resources. All of this, of course, was in the middle of a budget crisis unlike anything we have seen in decades.

LA County met this need, in part, by expanding existing partnerships with our largest health care providers. One key example was providing all County employees and their families with access to free, 24-hour crisis intervention and counseling services as a result of a partnership between our existing Employee Assistance Program and Cigna Behavioral Health. This new "Life Assistance Program" greatly expanded the reach of mental health support available to employees, as the existing program was grounded in physical counseling sessions and limited by the capacity of doctors on staff. Through this new partnership, all County employees and their families had immediate access to mental health resources according to their schedules and through whatever virtual platform they had available—phone, computer or smart device.

We also found an invaluable partner in the LA County Department of Mental Health (DMH). Typically focused on community mental health issues, DMH tapped into its existing resources and established relationships to quickly develop customized resources and programming for our workforce. Within the first month of the pandemic, human resources and DMH established an employee wellbeing line that catered to the unique needs of first responders—health workers, emergency responders, social workers and correctional officers—by partnering with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Professionals staffing the line were uniquely trained on the moral distress that many first responders experience in a pandemic, as they work best to support suffering and dying individuals within overburdened systems of care. A collaboration with the DMH-UCLA Preventative Center of Excellence yielded a new series of workshops to coach County executives through establishing a departmental culture supporting employee wellbeing and mental health through the disaster response.

LA County also looked to provide emotional wellness and relaxation to all employees by offering free subscriptions to the Headspace mental health application. Custom online training curriculums allowed each department's human resources unit

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Ethics and Empathy in Pandemic Times



The year 2020 will forever be marked by COVID-19. It has changed the way we live and work, as everyday life suddenly has become challenging in many ways—mentally, emotionally, physically and financially. To make matters worse, we constantly are trying to adjust to an ever-changing “new normal.”

Work looks different for most people. Millions applied for unemployment as they lost their jobs or were furloughed. Others began working from home or, as some have begun to say, “living at work.” Those deemed essential never stopped working, often in low-paying jobs for which the pay and benefits do not match the essential nature of their duties as government dictated. Taken together, these have reignited debates surrounding minimum wage, access to regular income and health care benefits.

Paralleling the pandemic, 2020 has been marked by what Kendi has termed an “anti-racist revolution.” Minority communities already were disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, plus the near-killing of Jacob Blake, have brought racism and police brutality to the foreground in ways different from years past. These societal inequities have compounded the stress and anxieties that the pandemic has brought, but especially for Black people living in America. This combination of social injustices has highlighted the pressing need for empathy.

Merriam-Webster defines empathy as “the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner.” In other words, empathy is what happens when we understand the plight of others, even if we do not experience the same plight ourselves. The pandemic has manifested challenges for people in many ways: lost income; increased care responsibilities; schooling children at home; and mental health issues like anxiety, depression and stress. These have added to such existing worries as health and access to health care. Each challenge—separate or combined—impacts people differently. Empathy is critical to understand these differences and respond to others in a way consistent with their experiences, as opposed to one’s own.

We have an ethical obligation to practice empathy right now. We cannot and should not assume everyone faces the same challenges, or that everyone would respond to them in the same way. Instead, we should seek to be flexible and build empathy into our responses as we find that “new normal.” What does this look like for public administration managers, practitioners, teaching academics and policymakers?

For managers, it might mean meeting employees where they are. Work-life balance is especially tricky these days, particularly for those working from home and with caregiving responsibilities that arose from the pandemic. For employees coming to work, social distancing and mask-wearing may make the job more challenging than usual, especially when dealing with the public, members of which also may be struggling. Now is not the time to implement compliance-driven, work-at-home rules about work. It is time to encourage employees to take a break and care for themselves when they can.

For public-facing practitioners, it means understanding that people may be in a position they did not ask to be in. Those coming to government for assistance are unlikely to *want* to do it; for many, it might be the first time they have. Practitioners may not have the discretion to provide every client with all they need or ask for, but a little understanding and empathy during the interaction can go a long way.

For teaching academics, it means recognizing students may have many roles in addition to “student.” They may be employees, parents or caretakers. Their work-life balance likely is interrupted. Inequities may be highlighted as some students do not have reliable internet access. In maintaining the necessary rigor for students to pass their classes and earn their degrees, it is important to find space for empathy.

For policymakers, it means understanding that the pandemic did not *create* issues of inequality and financial insecurity. Rather, it has shone a spotlight on them. This is the time to understand how existing policies exacerbate inequities across gender, race and class lines and to figure out how to mitigate them.

For everyone, this means extending empathy to yourself, as well.

Author's Note: This commentary is informed by recent conversations about how to extend empathy to students during the pandemic. Some of the above ideas were shaped by those conversations, especially with Jamie Levine Daniel of the O'Neill School at IUPUI, to whom the author extends thanks and appreciation.

Erin Borry is associate professor and director of the MPA program in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her research interests include organizational ethics, equity, rules and red tape. Borry has published in Public Administration Review, Public Administration, Public Integrity and the American Review of Public Administration. She serves on the editorial board of Public Integrity and has served on the boards of ASPA's Section on Ethics and Integrity in Governance and Section for Women in Public Administration. She can be reached at borry@uab.edu.

HR IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

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to provide a curated roster of self-guided stress management courses for their personnel through our online learning platforms. New webpages were developed for the County's intranet sites to deliver COVID-specific information, tools for managing stress and to directions to the resources available to employees.

Despite the variety of available resources, we have found that the duration of this pandemic, as well as the compounding effects of budget cuts, increased service demands and worry about personal and family health, have resulted in many employees simply not having the capacity to seek personal support services. A recent study showed that only 75 percent of LA County first responders were aware of available mental health services; just 65 percent were aware of general wellness resources. COVID-19 has upended all traditional expectations and modes of operations. The challenge is how to once again modify our communication strategies to match this new reality, so that every employee can easily access the care and support needed, through the emergency response and beyond.

A day in the life of a public service human resources professional is never a dull one. For all its evils, COVID-19 has caused LA County and

local governments across the nation to evolve our practices and innovate at an unprecedented pace. By embracing this moment as an opportunity for impactful transformation, we will come out with a more resilient and compassionate workforce, better equipped to meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

Lisa Garrett is director of personnel for the County of Los Angeles and has more than 25 years of public service in the City and County of Los Angeles. She began her career with the City of Los Angeles as council aide for Councilman Gilbert Lindsey. Later, she served as an investigator in the Housing Department, with responsibility for assisting landlords and tenants in compliance with state and local statutes and regulations. She also served as deputy district attorney in the District Attorney's Bureau of Family Operations and in the Child Support Services Department, where she served as assistant division chief in two large divisions, the executive assistant to the director, the chief deputy director and the chief attorney. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of California at Los Angeles and her J.D. from the Southwestern University School of Law. Garrett can be reached at lgarrett@hr.lacounty.gov.

Hamilton

Note: H. George Frederickson passed away earlier this year. This is the final column he wrote for PA TIMES Magazine, which was published in 2016. Significant parts of this article are taken from Public Administration with an Attitude. Passages in quotations are from The Federalist Papers or Papers on Public Credit, Commerce, and Finance.

Rare it is when the theories and practices of public administration are the subject of a Broadway musical; indeed, *Hamilton* is so rare that every bureaucrat should rejoice and sing along. Lin-Manuel Miranda describes Alexander Hamilton as the “bastard son of a whore,” the “founding father, without a father.” All serious students of public administration know he was not only one of the nation’s founding fathers; Hamilton was the father of American public administration. Some argue that Woodrow Wilson is the father, but Vincent Ostrom, in *The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration*, destroyed that argument. It is Ostrom’s claim that Madison and Hamilton together crafted the American theory of democratic administration based on management in the context of the separation of powers and overlapping jurisdictions. This claim is pushed even further in Bertelli and Lynn’s brilliant *Madison’s Managers: Public Administration and the Constitution*. But, here the focus is on Hamilton and his particularly compelling story, the quintessential American story.

He was born in St. Croix in the Caribbean, the illegitimate son of James Hamilton, an itinerant Scot, and Rachel Faucett, of Huguenot decent. Prior to meeting James, Rachel had been jailed for declining to live with her husband. Although still married, she and Hamilton had two sons, James and Alexander. Not long after Alexander was born, his father left. Rachel kept a provisions store in St. Croix to support her children. Alexander was bright, had good early schooling and, at an early age, apprenticed as a clerk to a merchant-trader. At 14, he sailed alone to New York with virtually no money. He worked as a clerk, put himself through Kings College, now Columbia University, and read the law. A hero of the Revolutionary War, he served as one of General Washington’s primary aides. At 32, he was appointed Secretary of the Treasury in Washington’s first cabinet and served throughout the president’s first term. It is generally agreed that Hamilton’s organization of the Treasury Department was fundamentally important to the early stability and effectiveness of American government. He took accounts that were in shambles and put them in order, balanced the books, paid off both the national Revolutionary War debt and states’ war debts and built the foundation for what is now the Federal

Reserve Bank. He died at 47, killed in a duel with then-Vice President Aaron Burr. He is buried in the yard of Trinity Church in lower Manhattan, two blocks from the World Trade Center.

Hamilton’s story is compelling and his service to his country remarkable. Yet it is his words and ideas that have endured. More than any other founder, he shaped the Federalist perspective; that perspective has always shaped American public administration. Here are some of his words and ideas.

On the Powers of Government:

“A government ought to contain...every power requisite to the...accomplishment of the objects committed to its care, and to the complete execution of the trusts for which it is responsible, free from every other control but regard to the public good and to the sense of the people.”

On the Executive Branch:

“Energy in the executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential...to the steady administration of the laws, to the protection of property against...irregular and high-handed combinations, to the security of liberty against the enterprises...of faction.”

“The vigor of government” is “essential to the security of liberty.”

“When the dimensions of a State attain to a certain magnitude, it requires the same energy of government...which [is] requisite in one of much greater extent...The citizens of America have too much discernment to be argued into anarchy. And...experience has...wrought a deep...conviction...that greater energy of government is essential to the welfare...of the community.”

“[T]he true test of a good government is its aptitude and tendency to produce a good administration.”

An energetic executive is necessary “to the protection of property against those irregular and high-handed combinations [factions] which sometimes interrupt the ordinary course of justice; to the security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy.”

On the Legislative Branch:

“The tendency of the legislative authority to absorb every other, has been fully displayed...In governments purely republican, this tendency is almost irresistible.”



“[T]he representatives...in a popular assembly seem sometimes to fancy that they are the people themselves, and betray strong symptoms of impatience and disgust at the least sign of opposition from any other quarter; as if the exercise of rights, by either the executive or judiciary, were a breach of their privilege and an outrage to their dignity. They often appear disposed to exert an imperious control over the other departments; and as they commonly have the people on their side, they always act with such momentum as to make it very difficult for the other members of the government to maintain the balance of the Constitution.”

On the Judicial Branch:

“The independence of the judges is...requisite to guard...the rights of individuals from the effects of those ill humors, which the arts of designing men, or the influence of particular conjectures, sometimes disseminate among the people...and which...have a tendency...to occasion...serious oppressions of the minor party.”

“[T]he interpretation of the laws is the proper and peculiar province of the courts.”

The courts must “do their duty as faithful guardians of the Constitution, where legislative invasions of it had been instituted by the major voice of the community.”

On the Direct Democracy:

“It has been observed that a pure democracy, if it were practicable, would be the most perfect government. Experience has proven that no position in politics is more false than this. The ancient democracies (Greece and Italy), in which the people themselves deliberated, never possessed one feature of good government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity. When they assembled, the field of debate presented an ungovernable mob, not only incapable of deliberation, but prepared for every enormity. In these assemblies the enemies of the people brought forward their plans of ambition systematically. They were opposed by their enemies of another party; and...the people subjected themselves to be led blindly by one tyrant or by another.”

On Federalism and State Rights:

“If a number of political societies enter into a larger political society, the laws which the latter may enact, pursuant to the powers entrusted to it by its

constitution, must necessarily be supreme over those societies, and the individuals of whom they are composed. It would otherwise be a mere treaty, dependent on the good faith of the parties, and not a government, which is only another word for political power and supremacy.”

Hamilton complains of “those practices...of the State governments which have undermined the foundations of property and credit, have planted mutual distrust in the breasts of all classes of citizens, and have occasioned an almost universal prostration of morals.”

On the Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances:

“But a confederacy of the people, without exaggeration, may be said to be entirely the masters of their own fate. Power being almost always the rival of power, the general government will at all times stand ready to check the usurpations of the state governments, and these will have the same disposition towards the general government. The people, by throwing themselves into either scale, will infallibly make use of the other as the instruments of redress.”

“It is a fundamental maxim of free government, that the three great departments of power, legislative, executive and judiciary, shall be essentially distinct and independent, the one of the other.”

“A salutary check upon the legislative body, calculated to guard the community against the effects of faction, precipitancy, or of any impulse unfriendly to the public good, which may happen to influence a majority of that body.”

More than any of the founders with the possible exception of Benjamin Franklin, Hamilton saw clearly what the United States was to become. And, he was the only founder with a well-developed understanding of what was to become American public administration. Hamilton is our founding father.

H. George Frederickson was distinguished professor emeritus in the School of Public Affairs and Administration of the University of Kansas.

MANAGING COVID-19 AND THE POLICIES IT AFFECTS: A Detailed Look

By Karen E. T. Garrett

ASPA's 2020 online programming has placed a heavy emphasis on COVID-19, earning record attendance. In May and June, six webinars—co-hosted in partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University and American University—looked at a variety of angles related to COVID-19, from city management, to university planning, to effects on the social safety net and other public programs. Below are excerpts of two sessions: “Doing the Public Good in a Time of Crisis: Perspectives from the Front Lines” and “COVID-19 and the Social Safety Net.” Members can view the full sessions at www.aspanet.org/webinararchives.



“Doing the Public Good in a Time of Crisis” (May 2020)

Virginia Commonwealth University Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs Dean Susan T. Gooden hosted a webinar with city and county leaders—Norton Bonaparte (Sanford, Florida), Michael Jacobson (King County, Washington) and Carrie Mathes (Orange County, Florida)—to shine a light on how state and local governments were managing the pandemic. Panelists provided firsthand accounts of their efforts.

Michael Jacobson, King County, Washington

Michael Jacobson is the deputy director for performance and strategy in the King County, Washington, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, where he has led the development of key elements of the county's performance management system. His contributions to the field were recognized in 2013 with ASPA's Harry Hatry Distinguished Performance Measurement Practice Award, and in 2019 he was inducted as a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. He has been assigned to support King County's COVID-19 response as the deputy director of the community mitigation and recovery branch of the Health and Area Medical Command since March 1, 2020. Jacobson can be reached at Michael.Jacobson@kingcounty.gov.

Until a few months ago, I served as deputy director of the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget—the equivalent of the Office of Management and Budget—for the County. I am in charge of strategic planning, performance management and operational reviews. COVID-19 shifted my work. Beginning March 1, I was given a one-minute

briefing and told I was being redeployed to the County's Health and Medical Area Command, within which I am in the Community Mitigation Branch; given the urgency, the critical nature of this work is significant.

One element of my pre-COVID work relates to establishing consistency and normal processes so people can do their work effectively. That has not been possible during the pandemic, given the constant change we are facing from the health department and state and federal government. The demand for information is overwhelming and the number of answers is very limited. Additionally, our citizens have so many needs in so many ways. They are losing jobs, losing housing, are worried about the elderly in a facility. I have been coaching staff for how to handle uncertainty: We are not going to know the answers to everything. It is easy to say, “be flexible,” but it is harder to do it. I also have been encouraging people to use their intuition to help solve problems and adapt to not being able to help everyone as they are used to doing.

Community mitigation is a specific function within response and communicating mitigation is one of our objectives. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines mitigation as actions people and communities can take to help slow the virus' transmission in communities. Right now, this means everything from washing your hands to staying isolated. Our group is set up to communicate our current status and available non-pharmacological interventions where appropriate, and then make changes over time. One thing we learned about communicating to our county during a pandemic is that just sending out a press release in English is not

effective. One of our group's key elements has been to address cultural and language issues.

We also are focused on two-way forms of communication. Not only are we sharing information, but we are listening to the community: What are they facing? What do they need? The answers inform how we show up and what we need to do differently vis-à-vis the resources we need to provide. We have hosted webinars, provided technical assistance and hired people from the community with specific language or ethnic backgrounds who can help communicate. We have translated materials to 30 languages for most major messages and have used other images.

The results? We are helping flatten the curve; COVID-19's overall growth has been dampened. Because we were one of the first places where COVID-19 appeared, the CDC deployed experts to us and we worked closely with them to shape some of their guidance based on what we were seeing. We also have provided about \$4 million to local businesses not eligible for federal assistance and have worked to find PPE for child care facilities that were not organized for those efforts.

The bad news is this virus inequitably impacts our community's people of color. Our LatinX and Islander communities, as well as Black communities, are disproportionately impacted for a variety of reasons. These outcomes are not acceptable so we are putting strategies in place to reach the communities more effectively. That said, many improvements in the pipeline for years are coming to fruition because of COVID-19: We have reduced jail populations by 30 percent, added new housing for the homeless and telemedicine is more widely accepted in both health clinics and jails. Teleworking is more common, which is something the disability community has been advocating for years, and online service delivery has improved significantly.

Norton Bonaparte, City of Sanford, Florida

Norton Bonaparte has served as city manager of Sanford since September 2011. As the City's chief administrative officer, he is responsible for overseeing all City operations, including a \$174 million budget and more than 540 employees. He previously served as city manager of Topeka, Kansas; Plainfield, New Jersey; Camden, New Jersey; Willingboro, New Jersey; and Glenarden, Maryland. Bonaparte holds the Credentialed Manager designation from the International City/County Management Association, serves as vice chair of the board of directors of the



COVID-19: Doing the Public Good in a Time of Crisis: Perspectives from the Front Lines



Susan Gooden, Moderator
Dean, L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at VCU



Norton Bonaparte
City Manager, Sanford, Florida



Michael Jacobson
Deputy, Community Mitigation and Recovery Branch



Carrie Mathes
Procurement Manager, Orange County Government, Orange County, FL

National Academy of Public Administration and is a board member of the Florida Tri-County League of Cities. A former ASPA staff member, he holds a BS from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and an MPA from Cornell University's Graduate School of Business; he is a graduate of Harvard University's Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program. Bonaparte can be reached at Norton. Bonaparte@Sanfordfl.gov.

Sanford is a full-service community with 60,000 residents just north of Orlando; we employ 540 people. On March 23, I closed City Hall to the public and we canceled all events. We kept our parks open but closed playgrounds, took down sports facilities and erected signs for social distancing. I started working with staff to encourage telework and had IT equip as many staff as possible with City-owned computers to tie into the City's system. We encouraged telework and staff worked to identify rotation staff to ensure people would come into the buildings while reducing populations in City Hall. We obtained PPE for employees, as well.

I began issuing emergency proclamations to help the City continue its business operations, including a local state of emergency so I could take actions like reducing protocol for purchasing and suspending certain rules in place since the city commission was not meeting. I issued one for restaurants to erect signs advertising their pick-up and delivery services—and more recently one to allow them to use streets and other public spaces for additional eating capacity, while accommodating social distancing. Another proclamation temporarily suspended water service discontinuation for citizens falling behind in paying their water bills, as well as late fees. Another provided for the city commission to hold virtual meetings, after which we developed a mechanism by which it could meet and receive citizen input.

Communication is key. We have regular meetings with our County management and emergency management teams. Our county includes seven

cities, including Sanford. We meet together to make sure we are all on the same page and I have regular meetings with the City for the same purpose. Communicating with employees is equally important. I send an all-employee email every other week to transmit information about the new normal. Communications with the public happen through other traditional means, including press releases and social media.

We are now preparing to reopen. Phase I will get City employees back to their offices and we are looking at City Hall space usage, PPE and plexiglass protection for those interacting with the public. All non-essential travel will be suspended. We also need to develop policies around quarantining for those who have to travel for personal reasons. Phase II will open City Hall to the public, so we will need to set markers for six feet distancing, plexiglass, reopening playgrounds and social distancing, as well as assisting local businesses like restaurants with reopening.

This is unprecedented for all of us and it is not something you learn in school. It is a learning experience and we will all learn how to do things better.

Carrie Mathes, Orange County, Florida

Carrie Mathes has more than 20 years of public procurement experience. She serves as procurement manager for the Orange County Procurement Division and is responsible for more than \$1 billion in annual contract awards. She serves on the Governing Board for NIGP: The Institute for Public Procurement and is past president of state and regional public procurement associations. She holds both master and bachelor degrees in public administration from the University of Central Florida. Mathes can be reached at Carrie.Mathes@ocfl.net.

One of my main perspectives is that we have not only had to become more flexible, but also more agile and adaptable to changing quickly. As leaders, we need to facilitate change with our team members to ensure they are supported and can successfully perform their jobs.

Prior to COVID-19, I managed 34 contracting agents who contracted for the entire county, in excess of \$1 billion annually. I meet regularly with the County on procurement and a variety of related issues. Emergency actions began on March 13; any time these come into effect for response and recovery, procurement staff are mobilized to support resource requests, as well as for municipalities in case they cannot find the resources they need. I support emergency responsibilities and we are required to be at the emergency operations center seven days a week.

Within emergency actions, several hats are worn: state rules, local rules and federal standards to ensure we remain eligible for federal funds and reimbursements. The Federal Emergency Management Agency authorizes exceptions to federal procurement requirements, streamlining the procurement process. Given the extraordinary time, we have a national authorization.

Prior to the pandemic, our County did not have telework policies. I was tasked with developing a program for my division on March 20 and we stood it up within a couple of days. We were happy that we were able to be flexible and develop a quality program. Further, our County's procurement processes were not automated or electronic. We needed to switch to electronic means and still be transparent with the process. At that time, we had more than 50 solicitations in the field, for which we needed to extend the deadlines to allow us time to adjust.

Due to the emergency actions, we needed to work with the global supply chain and disruption that was occurring. The County had been placing orders for PPE, resources for front line workers and a continued flow of goods and services. When the Defense Production Act was invoked, a lot of the products we expected were shifted to FEMA and all of our providers were disrupted. We needed to move to new companies with which we were not contracted; we collaborated with other counties and local businesses to expand our sourcing network.

One of our biggest challenges was that emergency operations staff sent us offers for goods and services. Some had very different options than our normal protocol and the County was not comfortable with the terms. We also received information from the FBI about counterfeit measures. We needed to quickly develop a vetting process for products and vendors to ensure we obtained quality products from quality companies. But, while we were working on this, we also needed to keep our procurement process running, which meant following up on current bids, accommodating public notices and updating administrative work—all while training staff on new technology. In what was a huge accomplishment, we converted our procurement to an all-virtual process on April 9.

COVID-19 and the Social Safety Net (June 2020)

In partnership with American University, Professor Bradley Hardy led a panel of practitioners and academics to discuss the social safety net and COVID-19's impact on those who benefit from it. Hardy was joined by Roger Hartley (Columbia School of Social Work), Tracy Gordon (Urban Institute), Elaine Maag (Urban Institute) and Valerie Wilson (Economic Policy

Institute). They looked closely at health care and tax policies, including Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, TANIF, EITC, CTC and more.

Elaine Maag

Elaine Maag is a principal research associate in the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she studies income support programs for low-income families and children. Before joining Urban, she worked at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Government Accountability Office as a presidential management fellow. She codirected the creation of the Net Income Change Calculator, a tool that allows users to understand the trade-offs between tax and transfer benefits, and changes in earnings or marital status. She holds an MS in public policy analysis from the University of Rochester. Maag can be reached at emaag@brookings.edu.

The social safety net fits into two buckets: health care (Medicaid, the CHIP program and spending programs like SNAP and TANF) and tax programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). EITC subsidizes people who work; you do not get it if you do not work, it phases in at low levels (the maximum credit is \$5,800 for single parent with two kids) and then phases out until you do not get credit. CTC also is earnings based, meaning you cannot have it if you do not have earnings. It, too, phases in. Both are refundable, which is very important for low income families. You can receive CTC in excess of what you owe in taxes.

There are three major benefits. The first is a growing issue: They are politically feasible, easier to enact than a tax cut and easier to administer than a direct spending program. Second, they are easier for families and the IRS. You can report the credits on a tax return, they do not require special meetings or claiming benefits and there is no negative stigma since everyone is filing taxes. Third, they encourage work. You cannot get the credit if you are not working.

The downside is that the most vulnerable who are not working do not get benefits. It also confuses the purpose of the tax system: Is the IRS a collection agency or a benefits system? These also are annual programs, so they serve as a blunt instrument. You get the payment once a year when filing your taxes. The benefit, for a single parent with two kids, may be 45 percent

of what you make annually—and it can be large, but it happens all at once. If you use the credit for a big purchase, the one-time payment is good. But to the extent that people struggle with month-to-month bills, an annual credit does not meet those needs.

Rob Hartley

Robert Hartley is an applied microeconomist working in the fields of labor and public economics. His research addresses the role of social policy on the persistence of poverty and dependence, particularly through childhood exposure or labor market outcomes. He has written about intergenerational patterns in welfare participation as well as food insecurity, specifically focusing on behavioral responses to welfare reform. He joined the Columbia School of Social Work in 2017 as a postdoctoral research scientist with the Center on Poverty and Social Policy and as a fellow with the Columbia Population Research Center; since 2019 he has taught economics and policy analysis as assistant professor of social work. He holds a BS from Georgia Institute of Technology, an MDiv from Emmanuel School of Religion and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Kentucky. He can be reached at r.hartley@columbia.edu.

SNAP and EITC are the biggest poverty-reducing programs we have. Food security is an important measure; it is a complement to income poverty to measure how people are doing. During a time like this, it is helpful to know: Do people have enough food? Are families skipping meals? How are families caring for their children?

When you think about food insecurity, remember that parents will try to shield the children from it. If you see child food insecurity going up, it is because parents are no longer able to do it. According to data from the Hamilton Project, the 20-year trend for children under 13 is that three or four percent are food insecure; the number peaked at 5.7 percent during the Great Recession. Currently, the number is 17.4 percent, a staggering number that should



COVID-19 and the Social Safety Net



Moderator



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Associate Professor
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Valerie Wilson
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alarm us. In a recent COVID-19 impact survey, families were asked how they were doing with food lasting, with data captured based on race/ethnicity. Respondents indicated they did not have enough money to buy more food, but disparities applied. For White families, 25 percent could not make food last, a high number. For Black families, it was 43 percent, and 46 percent for Hispanic families. These numbers are much higher than we are used to seeing.

What are we doing? The Families First Act and CARES Act appropriated food assistance: \$15.8 billion was appropriated for SNAP. On a monthly basis, this looks a lot larger in total spending, but the major provisions—emergency allotments—will last only for a couple months before the benefit is gone. Families will receive a few months of large increases that expire.

A 15 percent increase in the maximum benefit for all families is recommended to put in place and then remain going forward as long as this crisis exists. We did it during the Great Recession, but we did not adjust for inflation and eventually it phased out over time. We need a long-term halt on restrictions within these policies; families are not going to recover quickly.

Valerie Wilson

Valerie Wilson is director of the Economic Policy Institute's Program on Race, Ethnicity and the Economy (PREE), a nationally recognized source for expert reports and policy analyses on the economic condition of America's people of color. Prior to joining EPI, she was an economist and vice president of research at the National Urban League Washington Bureau, where she was responsible for planning and directing the bureau's research agenda. She has written extensively on various issues impacting economic inequality in the United States including employment and training, income and wealth disparities, access to higher education and social insurance. She received her Ph.D. in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

There are two issues at play here: racism and economic inequality. While we are “all in this together” and “everyone has been affected” around the world, as more data becomes available, it is more obvious that the magnitude of impact is not universal.

There are three groups of workers: people who have lost their jobs and face economic insecurity; front line essential workers with job security but who face greater health risks; and those who are able to telework and have both job and health security.

On average, Black workers are less likely to be in the third group. In fact, they face few good options for both health and economic security; they are

disproportionately represented among the first category and make up 17 percent of the second. They are less likely to be insured and have paid sick leave. It also is important to think about what it means beyond the worker. There are implications for the family and the communities. Blacks are more likely to live in densely populated housing structures, where social distance is difficult, and in multigenerational households. They go out every day, risk exposure and come home to a parent or grandparent who has elevated risk.

Economically, front line workers and the unemployed are not only affected by underlying and pre-existing conditions, but also a Black unemployment rate that is always double the White rate. This is true no matter the rest of the economy. EITC is a huge benefit but because of the 2:1 unemployment disparity, a number of Black households cannot access it.

When you look at the impact of COVID-19, the ability of a family to weather the storm is based on personal resources. The median household income for a Black family is 60 percent of a White one: The latter holds five times the liquid assets as the former—\$9,000 for Black families, \$50,000 for White families on a median basis.

Additionally, we find that half of nonelderly Black households are single earners compared to 40 percent of Whites. Given these disparities, the single earners are themselves essential workers, even if not identified that way on the front lines, because their ability to maintain earnings is essential to their households.

COVID-19 is new, but the problems related to racial inequality are not at all. They are a manifestation of the structural racism that our country experiences. These results are tragic, but unsurprising. We can do better.

Tracy Gordon

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Up at Night

By Andrew Kleine

Local government leaders can't be sleeping very well these days. The economic and fiscal fallout of COVID-19 is enough to keep any mayor up at night. Add to it the imperative of addressing long-ignored racial inequities and I can picture a lot of sweaty pillows.

According to the National League of Cities' recent *City Fiscal Conditions* report, city revenues are projected to shrink by 13 percent in Fiscal Year 2021. Such a sudden and severe revenue loss would be like trapdoors opening under downtowns across America. The Great Recession took a similar toll, but over six years, not one.

The shape of the COVID-19 recession is very much in doubt. Will it look like a V, U, W, L or Nike swoosh? Nobody really knows because there are so many variables at play. What kind of relief package will the House and Senate agree on? Will there be another resurgence of cases this and next season? When will new therapies and a vaccine subdue the virus? How much has the COVID-19 experience permanently changed human behavior?

Local leaders have every right to be fretful, but there is opportunity in every crisis. For cities and counties, the opportunity is to become more resourceful, resilient and right. To seize it, I offer three steps: *Fiscal First Aid*, *Long-Term Financial Planning* and *Budgeting for Equity*.

Fiscal First Aid

The size of the federal assistance package and the shape of the recession recovery will determine how deep of a hole cities, counties and special districts find themselves in for the next 12-18 months. They will have to climb out before they can see beyond the horizon.

The easy way out is to tap reserves; after all, isn't COVID-19 precisely what rainy day funds are for? Well, yes. And, so is Hurricane Laura. The point is that local governments face many risks and should use reserves only after all reasonable budget balancing strategies have been exhausted.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) offers a wealth of Fiscal First Aid resources on its website (www.gfoa.org). They cover not only specific actions to cut costs and find revenue, but advice on how to manage people and communicate to the public during times of financial distress.

My advice: Go beyond the usual drill of freezing hiring, deferring capital spending and delaying vendor payments. With a little encouragement and guidance, front-line staff can be the best innovators, finding all sorts of ways to get the job done better, faster and cheaper. If employees feel that they are part of a team effort to right the ship—with sacrifice shared from the top to the bottom of the organization—they will come through.



Long-Term Financial Planning

Most of the short-term actions taken to stabilize the budget are not sustainable. Local governments need sustainable solutions. Laura Larsen, budget director for Madison, Wisconsin, says she is less worried about next year than what happens after that. Much of her city's core is boarded up because of civil unrest and remote work has emptied out office buildings. "Will the businesses ever come back?," she asks. Every jurisdiction should have a five- to 10-year fiscal plan to prepare for these sorts of questions.

A good plan is much more than a revenue forecast. It starts with an understanding of the relationship between revenues and the cost to continue current services, under multiple economic scenarios. From there, elected officials, staff and other stakeholders can assess their community's fiscal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and set goals for where they want to be at the end of the planning period. Goals might include a structurally balanced budget, an important capital project and investments toward racial equity.

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Can ALICE Households Survive the COVID-19 Pandemic?

By Stephanie Hoopes and Dan Treglia

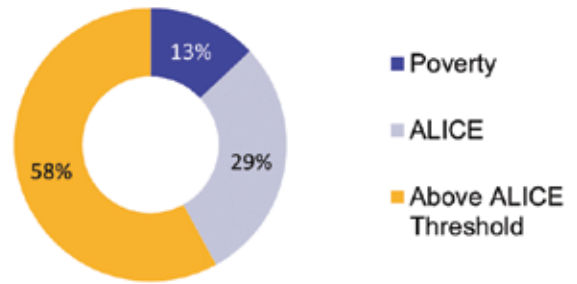
The coronavirus pandemic has exposed critical shortcomings in our economy and systems of health care and education. At the center of these crises is ALICE: households that are asset limited, income constrained and employed, with income above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but not high enough to afford essentials in the communities in which they live. In 2018, of the 121 million households in the United States, 15.6 million (13 percent) earned below the FPL, while another 35 million (29 percent) were ALICE (Figure 1). In total, 42 percent of U.S. households lived below the ALICE threshold—that is, they could not afford the cost of household basics.

The events of 2020—the COVID-19 pandemic layered with natural disasters like hurricanes, derechos, tornadoes and unprecedented wildfires—have amplified the financial hardship ALICE households and those in poverty already felt so acutely. The crises also have exacerbated longstanding inequities in our society.

Economic insecurity and COVID-19 are widespread across the United States. As displayed in Figure 2,

Figure 1. U.S. Households by Income 2018

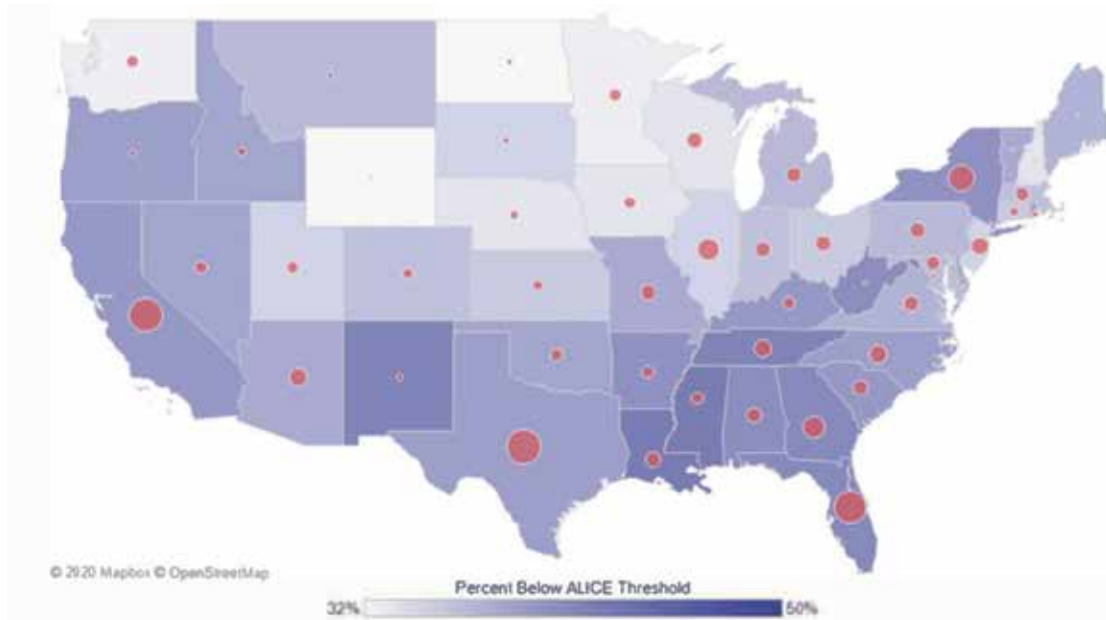
Total U.S. Households in 2018: 121 million



Source: ALICE Threshold, 2018; American Community Survey, 2018

the darker the blue, the higher the percentage of households below the ALICE threshold, a bare-minimum budget level. The larger the red dot, the higher the per capita COVID-19 death rate. An interactive map with more detail is available on www.UnitedForALICE.org/covid2019.

Figure 2. U.S. Households by Income (2018) and COVID-19 Deaths per Capita (October 2020)



Source: ALICE Threshold, 2018; American Community Survey, 2018; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020; New York Times COVID-19 Data Hub, 2020

ALICE households are among those most impacted by the economic slowdown and health consequences of COVID-19. These disparities especially are apparent among ALICE workers, Black and Hispanic households and families with children or seniors.

ALICE Workers Are More Vulnerable

Many ALICE workers are “maintainers,” working in occupations that build and repair the infrastructure and educate and care for the past, current and future workforce; largely, the jobs cannot be done remotely. The pandemic has created two groups of ALICE workers: those who are essential and still working, typically on site, and those who are non-essential, who are now working far fewer hours or not at all.

“Essential” ALICE workers are the pandemic “heroes.” They care for COVID-19 patients and keep the economy running by working in grocery stores or warehouse and fulfillment centers, but they receive little or no personal protection equipment to keep them and their families safe. As a result, they are more likely to contract COVID-19 while on the job, raising questions about whether they are not essential, but expendable. These low-wage workers have little or no savings and are more likely to be paid by the hour rather than have a salary and benefits. They cannot afford to miss work or pay for medical care.

“Non-essential” ALICE workers also are struggling, living paycheck to paycheck before the pandemic and their industries, including food, hospitality and retail, have been more likely to remain closed since.

ALICE populations also work disproportionately for small businesses, offering lower wages and fewer benefits and have been hit hardest by the economic slowdown. Small businesses fell by 44 percent from January to April 2020 and were still down by 24 percent in September 2020.

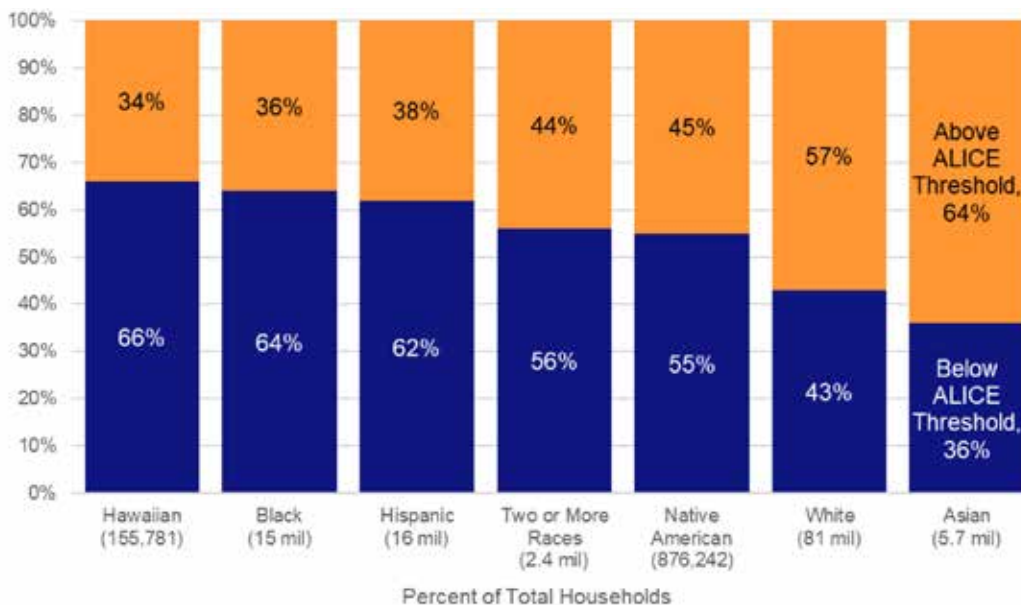
In addition, the pandemic is exposing the digital divide among workers. ALICE workers are less likely to have broadband internet, computers and tablets than their higher income counterparts. They also are less likely to have digital skills, restricting their access to work now and future career possibilities. Further, they are more exposed to COVID-19; low wage workers are six times less likely to be able to work from home than higher-wage workers.

Black and Hispanic ALICE Households at Greater Risk

The largest share of the 51 million U.S. households below the ALICE Threshold in 2018 were White (29 million), but other racial and ethnic groups were disproportionately represented. Sixty percent of Black households, 57 percent of Native American households and 56 percent of Hispanic households were below the ALICE threshold, compared to 36 percent of White and Asian households.

These income disparities stem from differences in work opportunities, housing and health. Black, Hispanic and indigenous workers are least likely to be able to work from home, meaning they are working in jobs that increase their risk of contracting COVID-19 or facing pandemic-related job losses and reduced wages that reduce their ability to

Figure 3: Percent of U.S. Households Below the ALICE Threshold by Race and Ethnicity, 2018



Source: ALICE Threshold, 2018; American Community Survey, 2018

afford critical necessities essential to good health. These communities also have faced longstanding institutional barriers to quality health care. As of October 2020, the age-adjusted death rate of Blacks and Hispanics from COVID-19 was 3.2 times higher than Whites’.

Families with Children Face Additional Hardships

The 38 percent of families with children living below the ALICE threshold are especially vulnerable to COVID-related disruptions that have become the norm in child care, school and university settings. They are four times as likely as their higher income counterparts to lack home internet, severely limiting their participation in online learning. In rural areas, often not covered by broadband, 41 percent of households below the ALICE threshold do not have an internet subscription. This translates directly to reduced job and educational opportunities and access to health care and financial tools.

ALICE families also have lost access to necessary supports like subsidized meals available through schools or child care centers, typically providing up to two-thirds of children’s daily nutritional needs and saving families at least \$30 per week per child. Many ALICE households have turned to food pantries and food banks, one of the few social services that do not require income verification; ALICE families often earn too much to qualify for SNAP benefits.

ALICE Seniors Face Greater Risks

Half of households headed by someone 65 years old or older had income below the ALICE threshold in 2018. Even before the pandemic, they lacked extra income and had little or no savings to cover extra health care costs. This age group is most susceptible to serious illness from COVID-19.

More than 40 percent of U.S. COVID-19 deaths are linked to nursing homes, which puts both ALICE seniors and ALICE health care workers at high risk. Increased social distancing for this vulnerable group is leading to other health problems, especially loneliness and isolation, and increasingly senior food insecurity, up almost 60 percent from the pre-COVID rate. Cutbacks in non-essential health procedures and preventative care—out of caution, as well as financial constraints—have led to an increase in non-COVID-19 health problems, too. With senior centers closing and concern for levels of care in nursing homes rising, many ALICE families face challenges providing care for aging parents, including juggling work and caregiving responsibilities, and covering for the loss of supports like hot meals and social activity.

Returning to a pre-COVID economy will not put financial stability within reach for many ALICE

families. Even before this year’s pandemic and natural disasters, more than two in five American households struggled to make ends meet. Now, they will not have the means to catch up on past rent, repay credit cards or invest in digital training or devices to prepare for new jobs. They are falling into poverty at an astonishing rate.

Compounding the challenges ahead is that there now are more households on the edge of financial hardship—on the cusp of becoming ALICE. In addition to the 51 million households below the ALICE threshold in 2018, another 9.5 million households were just above it. Without substantial intervention, it is very possible that these vulnerable households will become ALICE. Put another way, half of all U.S. households could be in poverty or be ALICE by the end of 2020.

An economy where half of all households cannot afford household necessities cannot sustain economic growth. The pre-COVID status quo was not working for millions of households and the pandemic has pushed our communities and economy to a tipping point. Intervention is needed across the board—in business, government, nonprofit and educational institutions—not just to recover, but to set the groundwork for a more equitable future.

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The Lessons of COVID-19 for the Administrative State

By Pamela Herd and Donald Moynihan

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed systematic vulnerabilities in the administrative processes used to fulfill basic promises of the U.S. safety net. What can we learn from this failure? First, the administrative problems that people encountered were not inevitable, but the result of choices in how the United States implements social welfare policy. Second, when the pandemic struck, policymakers made choices that overtaxed administrative capacity by creating new programs, rather than using tried and tested options.

Since the beginning of the crisis, as people turned to the state for help, they all too often encountered broken administrative systems: long lines, crashing websites, months of delays and the ensuing frustration and despair from not being able to obtain desperately needed help. It is not just that governments were overwhelmed with historic demand. In many cases, unemployment insurance policies and systems were *designed* to fail. Florida's governor described his state's system this way: "Let's put as many kind of pointless roadblocks along the way, so people just say, 'oh, the hell with it, I'm not going to do that'...It was definitely done in a way to lead to the least number of claims being paid out."

The case of unemployment insurance reflects a deeper problem. As we discuss in our book, *Administrative Burden*, most U.S. social welfare programs are administered in ways that ensure eligible claimants struggle to receive the benefits promised. Between 20 and 70 percent of those eligible for a wide array of social welfare programs, from child care subsidies to food stamps, never receive the benefits, due in no small part to administrative burdens: the barriers that people encounter in their interactions with the state. These include the learning costs people face when trying to figure out what programs might help, whether they are eligible and how to obtain benefits; the compliance costs of satisfying administrative requirements to enroll and verify eligibility; and the psychological costs that come from navigating the overwhelming bureaucratic maze.

We should not underestimate the psychological costs of forcing 50 million people to engage in our dysfunctional unemployment insurance systems. The stress, the uncertainty, the frustration, the sense of failure, the feeling of being neglected. "People

that are here, we're all glitches. We fell through the cracks. The computer system didn't work for us," said one frustrated claimant.

Comparatively, workers in many European countries did not deal with these hassles or stresses at the onset of COVID-19 because policymakers elected to pay employees to keep them on payroll, albeit at reduced rates. These employees also did not have to worry about negotiating the public health insurance system if they lost their jobs. The contrast reflects the structural nature of these choices: The U.S. social safety net is designed to stop ineligible applicants from receiving benefits, rather than help the eligible receive needed assistance. Moreover, because states largely administer U.S. social welfare benefits—like unemployment insurance—some choose to make them even more burdensome than required by the federal government, either by reducing public spending or, due to political ideology (though they rarely admit it), preferring instead to use the threat of fraud to justify burdens.

The result? Policymakers often failed to take administrative difficulties into account when choosing how to distribute and administer pandemic aid. Too often, they proposed new programs rather than rely on existing programs. An example is the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), a new program intended to reduce food insecurity created by the loss of school lunch programs. Just 15 percent of kids got benefits within two months, as the program was designed.

What is the lesson? Building complex, new administrative systems—that you rely on overstretched governments to implement—during



a crisis is malpractice. The federal government asked overwhelmed states to take on and quickly implement new eligibility processes and collect new data to implement an unfair task. These are not conditions where bureaucracies work well. In this case, the burdens shifted to lower levels of government. It is like telling the owner of a blazing building to put the fire extinguisher away and start installing a room-by-room sprinkler system. It might work in the long run, but it does little to help with the crisis at hand.

How could states think about extending help while minimizing burdens during a crisis?

First, *limit conditionality on new programs*. Narrowly targeted programs require more administrative capacity, making it less likely they will work in emergency conditions. The \$1,200 checks Congress sent out were delivered quickly, partly because the government made a tradeoff between accuracy and speed; in some cases, the dead or those living outside the United States received the benefits. But, under the circumstances, that was a tradeoff worth making.

Second, *look for the simplest existing administrative option*. Instead of new programs like Pandemic EBT, Congress should have expanded Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, or food stamps), increasing benefits to the same population almost immediately. SNAP is one of the most effective forms of stimulus in a slowing economy. One analysis found that for every dollar spent, it yielded \$1.74 in economic returns in the early stages of the Great Recession. From an administrative perspective, SNAP is imperfect, but it works: It has a high take-up rate of about 85 percent and states already have mechanisms to deliver benefits to low income families. It offered a proven and simpler administrative solution to the problem.

Issues of public administration are absolutely central to managing policies surrounding COVID-19. Moving forward, will the public administration community be central to a discussion of a different social safety net? We can offer technical solutions to reduce burdens, including using administrative data and technology to verify eligibility and sidestep onerous processes. Yet ultimately, deeper normative questions must be addressed, particularly those that challenge assumptions about the role of government in American life. Just one: Do we want an administrative state that focuses on keeping ineligible people off programs, or an administrative state that focuses on ensuring those eligible can readily and easily receive benefits?

COVID-19 has provided a large number of Americans with firsthand experience of the realities of dysfunctional public administration. A

government that does not work is not liberty—it is administrative tyranny in which people spend too much of their lives separately piecing together second rate alternatives to competent collective action. Whether this experience convinces enough people to set aside the traditional U.S. suspicion of centralized power to build something better is a separate question.

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UP AT NIGHT

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The initiatives to achieve these goals should be bold and ensure fiscal resilience. For example, cities and counties hit hardest by the COVID-19 recession are those that rely heavily on sales and income taxes. They might consider shifting their revenue portfolio to less volatile sources.

Budgeting for Equity

The call to “defund the police” has been a “pants-down moment” for local leaders, exposing how little they really know about what is inside the police department budgets they fund year after year. Traditional government budgeting is incremental, with new programs layered on top of old ones and arbitrary across-the-board cuts to fix shortfalls. On closer examination, many cities will find a disconnect between their budgets and evolving community values and priorities.

Local governments must hit the budget reset button if they want to advance racial equity without new resources. A reset starts with measurable goals for reducing disparities in employment, education, health and other outcomes. Strategic plans for achieving these goals should guide the budget process, with departments competing and collaborating for every dollar of their funding—not just marginal increases over last year’s base—by demonstrating how their programs deliver value.

The events of 2020 have forced us all to do some serious soul searching. I hope local governments will find within them the courage to reimagine their fiscal futures.

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contribute to health risks and disadvantages based on how they behave internally, conform to societal norms and exert influence on public policies. This is avoidable, unnecessary and unjust.

The most notable of these systems are the social determinants of health, a set of well known factors affecting health and quality of life. Yet no known combination of these determinants fully accounts for variations in health outcomes. As systemic racism produces inequities, the differences associated with COVID-19 powerfully illustrate the entrenchment of systemic racism across institutions. Among the factors contributing to inequities within the health care system: provider bias and mistreatment; pharmaceutical pricing and its effect on medication adherence; and employer-based insurance coverage. Outside the system, myriad factors play a role in determining how long and how well people live, including education, poverty, income inequality, exposure to environmental toxins, neighborhood safety, stress and social support. Even considering this broad set of factors, there remain fundamental differences in outcomes that people of color experience in communities across the country. So, understanding the role of systemic racism in COVID-19 outcomes warrants examining the health care system, as well as the broader social systems in which it functions.

Why COVID-19 has this effect on people of color is not connected to problems in the health care system singly. It is tied closely to inequalities in housing, education, transportation, economic development and other social policies; it is deceptive to assume only those policies that blatantly target or exclude people of color—redlining and divestment in inner-city schools among them—are problematic. Not only do vestiges of those policies remain evident in communities and policymaking, but there are other policies and practices that directly and indirectly create undesirable outcomes holding real health

risks and consequences. Evidence appears in educational attainment, incarceration rates, income inequality, areas of concentrated poverty and other social and economic outcomes, including wealth accumulation. Simply put, racial and ethnic health disparities are not merely public health concerns; they represent acute issues for all American institutions.

For many people of color, health disparities distort the American dream into an illusion. The social, economic and environmental barriers impeding progress are not of their own making; they are entrenched societal norms that tether them to generational trauma. Dismantling systemic racism will require reshaping the dominant paradigm to halt the progression of unabated disparate outcomes, with an intentional effort to advance toward racial and social equity using accountable social policies at the forefront. In the process, the social contract must be renegotiated to include the voices and values of all citizens, including those increasingly made vulnerable by American institutions.

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Best Practices for Equitable Hiring in the Midst of COVID-19

By Ramona Nabors and Jenny Swearingen

COVID-19 has affected every aspect of our lives. No longer are we able to have meetings with multiple people in one room, or even get together for a quick team huddle to set a plan for daily goals. Due to the pandemic, interviews via Skype, Zoom or phone are the new normal, along with the technological and communication challenges they present. Keeping some best practices for equitable hiring at the forefront of an organization's policies and procedures will ensure a more representative workforce, even as we grapple with this virtual environment. While these practices are geared toward state government, they have applicability across levels of government and in all sectors.

Amidst the pandemic, there is a national reckoning with the racial injustice people of color have faced for centuries. Human resource managers must be intentional when creating and implementing policy, be critical of assumptions and internal biases, bring many perspectives into the decisionmaking process and accept feedback and adjust, as needed. Ask yourself: "Does this policy reinforce oppression or does it help dismantle it and level the playing field?"

What that looks like for your agency will differ from the organization two cities over, which is one reason to have many voices at the table. Communities of color are experiencing a disproportionate impact from COVID-19, as their members are more likely to earn a low wage, work in the service industry and have little or no access to adequate health care. HR professionals have a role in correcting these injustices. Ensuring equitable hiring is a responsibility, both now and when we come through this pandemic.



Photo by fauxels from Pexels

Creating an Equitable Job Posting

Contemplating how to build diversity within our agencies and address issues of equity during these times starts with the job posting. A position description tells potential candidates whether they have the skills and qualifications to be a successful applicant. When creating a description, there are many factors to consider, including, but not limited to, appropriate job titles and duties, salary range and the extent to which educational requirements and lived experience are interchangeable.

Additionally, it is important to set expectations about work schedule and mode. Consider whether the employee can work remotely full- or part-time while the pandemic remains at issue, or if in-person work is required, and to what extent. If remote work is an option, be upfront about the accommodation of remote working needs.

Having a Diverse Interview Panel

Prior to COVID-19, potential employees could observe an agency's makeup during the in-person interview. Now, candidates usually get a feel for the agency based upon what they see on their screens or hear through their phones. This changed dynamic

highlights the need for a diverse interview panel. It is great for an agency to talk about how it values diversity, equity and inclusion, but showing it on an interview panel speaks volumes.

A diverse interview panel is beneficial for the agency, as well. When the panel comprises different races, genders and lived experiences, it tends to hire an employee open to new concepts and ideas. With that in mind, it is essential to take the time to discuss how the agency values diversity, equity and inclusion during each interview. One approach is to ask each panelist to share why diversity in the workplace is important to them. Finally, posing a question to each candidate about their thoughts and experiences with diversity, equity and inclusion gives the panel an idea of whether and how they would help to build toward the organization's mission, vision and values.

Be Flexible

Employees with at-home children now find themselves filling the role of teacher as they continue in the virtual learning environment. Whether the child's school follows a virtual or hybrid model, leaving a younger child home alone simply is not an option. Yet full-time child care is a financial burden for many families.

Employers should consider there will be employees who prefer to work remotely until it has been deemed safe to return to the workplace. These employees may have some risk factors that make them or others in their home more vulnerable to serious illness due to COVID-19. Seek feedback from them before using your resources on policies that may not work for everyone. As much as possible, create options for employees that will accommodate a wide array of needs.

This material stems from the authors' 2020 MPA capstone, Equity in Government A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Toolkit, through The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.

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MANAGING COVID-19 AND POLICIES

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State and local governments are on the front lines of delivering the social safety net, in partnership with the federal government. People will make assumptions about transfers to states as if it were a blank check. It is not. There are real processes here.

States began 2020 not expecting something like COVID-19 to happen; they were in relatively good shape with high reserves that they projected to be higher this year. Stay-at-home orders and others staying at home out of health concerns meant that sales taxes fell 16 percent in April compared to the prior year, an early data point because the numbers lag. Income taxes fell due to mechanics (filing deadlines were delayed); some will come back but people are losing jobs and income, which will show up in state revenues for 2021. These are at eye popping levels in California and New York, and they are occurring just as the needs they have to fulfill increase. The economy will mean for California alone a nine percent increase for Medicaid, a 50 percent increase in SNAP and a 75 percent increase in TANF.

Federal measures have helped but states can expect \$765 billion in shortfalls over the next three years. It is possible that consumers will come back, but states are not anticipating it.

The design is off, too. Social safety net adjustments have been aligned to public health, not to revenue shortfalls—this and next fiscal year—which makes a difference. The Fed is making funds available for places experiencing difficulty bridging the gap between revenue and spending. Yet it is limited to states and cities above a specific threshold. Smaller cities, already experiencing challenges, are going to be in a world of pain because states often cut their assistance to cities in their own shortfalls.

More than the price tag, the design is really important. In the Great Recession, the timely, temporary and targeted assistance was key. Governors need to deploy aid quickly to fit their needs. If the aid is pegged to economic or fiscal damage, you do not have to worry about overcompensating with aid that goes on for too long. There is a sense that the federal government should not take on state debt—that if they do not intervene, states have to be responsible for themselves. Today's fiscal design comes from that premise. But, the federal government is a partner and better situated to cushion against these kinds of giant fiscal risks.

DEALING WITH COVID-19: How Coral Gables Is Using IoT and Data Analytics to Respond

By Raimundo Rodulfo and Sukumar Ganapati

Coral Gables is a medium-sized city in the heart of South Florida with a population of 51,000 residents. George Merrick developed it in the 1920s, following the post-World War I real estate boom. His vision was inspired by the “City Beautiful” movement, reflected in the city motto, tree-lined avenues, monumental buildings, winding roadways, green spaces, ornate plazas and fountains. Coral Gables also is a dynamic and prosperous community featuring the University of Miami, high-end shopping, restaurants, professional offices and other commercial establishments. And more recently, its dynamism showed in its robust investment in advanced information technology (IT) infrastructure, providing an excellent case study of how a city leverages IT infrastructure to respond to COVID-19 through the different phases of the crisis.

Smart City Framework

In 2016, Coral Gables implemented a smart city engineering framework and long-term vision to ensure an advanced IT infrastructure for operations and transparency to residents (Figure 1). The framework features cyber-physical systems, Internet of Things (IoT) platforms and smart connected devices, allowing IoT sensor, civic and other administrative data to flow with high speed, security and reliability. IoT devices are strategically distributed in key spots throughout the city, connected through a transport layer of high-speed resilient communications with fiber optics and wireless infrastructure covering the most critical arteries, facilities and business districts. The devices also provide high visibility of real-time urban and environmental variables like vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The data are stored in distributed cloud platforms and data centers. Since it is paramount for all components of a smart city ecosystem to communicate with each other securely, the framework was built with a central focus on interoperability, security and resilience from early ideation and design.

Figure 1: Coral Gables Smart City Engineering Framework



A central feature of the framework is the Coral Gables smart city hub public platform (www.coralgables.com/smartcity) (Figure 2), a “digital supermarket” of administrative and civic information, all in one place. It is a horizontal integration model, bringing together data from different sources in a seamless way to the end user. The data can be overlaid on GIS layers for easy visualization, and they are machine readable and can be aggregated, integrated and correlated for back-end business intelligence processing and analytics. As important, residents, policymakers, business owners and other stakeholders can access the data analytics.

Features of Smart City Hub

- IoT Portals, Dashboards and Analytics: Real-time Pedestrian and Vehicular Traffic Data Dashboards, Environmental Sensors Data
- Open Civic and Administrative Data
- GIS Data
- App Store
- eGovernment Enterprise Systems and Digital Citizen Services
- Citizen Engagement Tools

This smart hub provides city leaders and professional staff with comprehensive and robust visibility over the government enterprise functions with key performance indicators by location and department. Software developers can access the data freely over the internet through application programming interfaces to build additional services. The result: The smart hub democratizes data and fosters citizen engagement, collaboration and crowdsourcing.

Figure 2: Coral Gables Smart City Hub (www.coralgables.com/smartcity)



Leveraging IT Infrastructure for COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Coral Gables’ smart city engineering framework, with its hub, provides an agile platform from which the city can respond to COVID-19. From the City employees’ perspective, when Coral Gables shut down in March 2020, it could decentralize operations and support telework immediately, thanks to the IT infrastructure in place. It capitalized on mobile and cloud-based enterprise systems to support work safely and securely. It also deployed mobile computers and devices for remote access and telework; increased the number of licenses for access to computers and applications for virtual workspaces; and enabled leaders to conduct virtual commission meetings. Coral Gables leveraged the functionalities of scalable, flexible and secure cloud-based platforms and enterprise systems to support this work.

For residents, the smart city hub helps the COVID-19 response in multiple ways. Data are continuously monitored to inform policies with respect to opening operations; monitoring both data and COVID-19 incidences allows for the formulation of evidence-based policies on when and how to undertake City operations and open public facilities and commercial establishments. Three types of IoT sensor data are monitored for the COVID-19 response:

- **Traffic Sensors Data:** pedestrian, visitor and vehicle traffic data gathered from street sensors
- **Environmental Sensors Data:** water quality sensors (buoys) located on city canals and waterways, plus air quality and noise sensor data being integrated into the IoT data platform
- **Energy Sensors Data:** energy consumption data dashboards from the City’s smart light controllers IoT network, and from Florida Power & Light smart meters, plus water consumption data dashboards from Miami-Dade Water & Sewer smart meters being deployed soon

Traffic Sensors Data

The City has deployed IoT sensors for measuring traffic flow; they report vehicular and pedestrian traffic data in real time from the major blocks and intersections. The sensors include geofence CPS, Closed Circuit Television systems, Waze Connected Citizens Program network, laser counters, speed sensors, mobile trailers, 360° HD/4K cameras, Wi-Fi smart mesh networks and Radio Frequency sensors. Consistent with Coral Gables’ “City Beautiful” motto, the sensors’ visual appeal is important for their

placement in public spaces. Conceived as “smart city furniture” satisfying the urban aesthetic appeal, they are designed as modules fitted with multiuse devices that can be changed to accommodate new smart devices and evolving technology. The data are integrated and analyzed using such technologies and methodologies as edge computing, computer vision and artificial intelligence tools. They provide insights on traffic patterns throughout the day or the number of people connected to the city’s Wi-Fi systems in public spaces.

Figures 3, 4 and 5—depicting vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic and Wi-Fi connections in popular spots—show that traffic has dipped significantly since precautions taken to address COVID-19. Monitoring traffic flow and crowding provides insights that inform City analysis by taking the data and overlaying a timeline of COVID-related events, emergency policies, curfews, restrictions and other safety measures. The data then can be integrated with external data from the University of Miami, Florida Department of Transportation and others. First responders and emergency management department can utilize these analytics to gain insights into COVID-19 policies for public safety.

Figure 3: Vehicular Traffic Data from IoT Sensors at an Intersection in Downtown Coral Gables

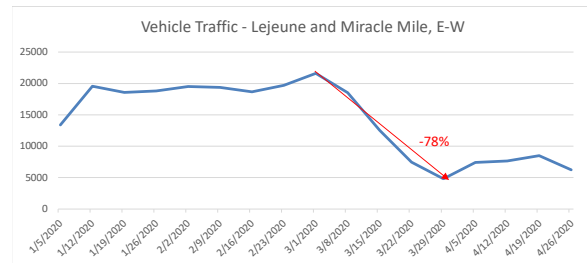


Figure 4: Pedestrian Traffic Data from IoT Sensors at an Intersection in Downtown Coral Gables

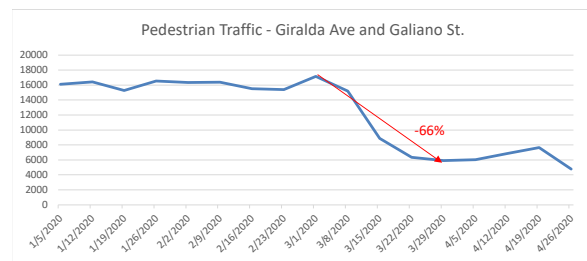
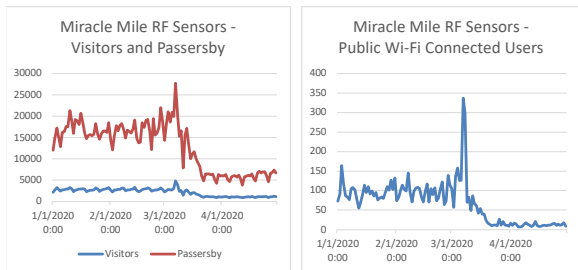


Figure 5: Behavioral Traffic and Wi-Fi Data from RF Sensors at Miracle Mile in Downtown Coral Gables

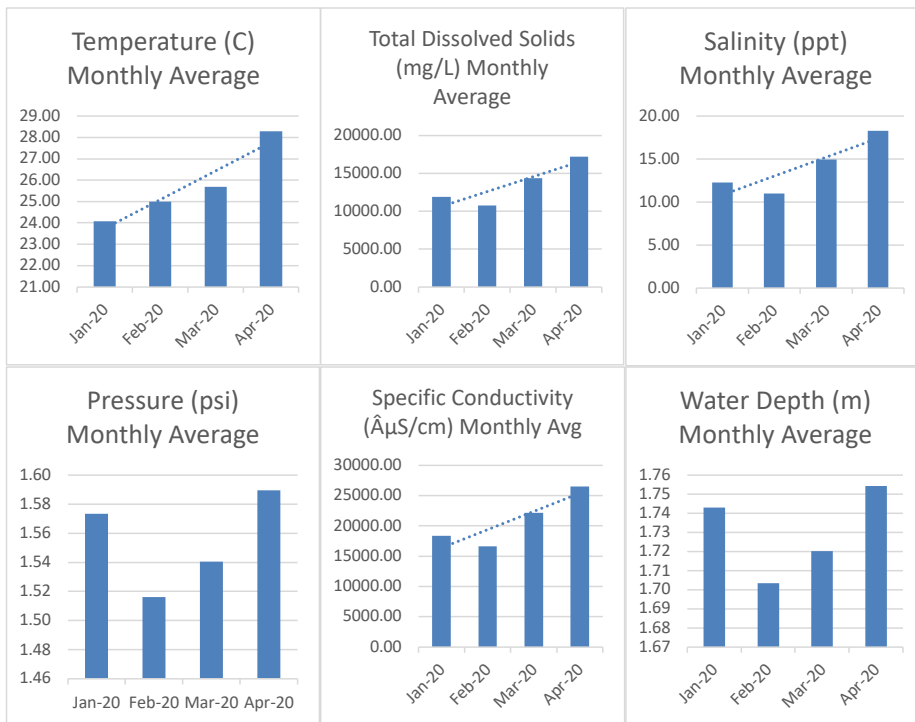


Environmental Sensors Data

The environmental sensors provide information on water, ambient air quality and noise levels. Monitoring these conditions not only are significant for COVID-19, but for the compounding of disasters. During hurricane season, it is important for the region to monitor waterway levels to prevent flooding. In collaboration with Florida International University researchers, the City deployed buoy sensors in its main water canals; the IoT water sensor dashboards are available to the public on the smart city hub platform. Real-time data include salinity, resistivity, conductivity, depth (for flooding detection), density, pressure, temperature, dissolved oxygen and other valuable data, as Figure 6 shows.

Ambient air quality is another important indicator of a healthy environment. Epidemiologist Michael Brauer has warned that gases and particles in polluted air can worsen the effects of infections from respiratory diseases like COVID-19. Air quality environmental sensors measuring data like carbon emissions and air pollutants are installed in downtown Coral Gables and soon will expand to major traffic arteries. The sensors provide insights into hyperlocal environmental conditions to take appropriate actions.

Figure 6: Water Quality Data from Buoy Sensors in Coral Gables Waterways



The data also will be available to researchers for investigating long-term relationships between air quality and COVID-19 morbidity.

Energy Sensors Data

Energy sensors allow the City to monitor energy and adjust consumption in real time for optimal use and savings. It has installed smart lighting controllers on LED light poles in its downtown area to provide intelligent ON/OFF switching, dimming control, GPS, highly accurate power metering, analog and digital sensor inputs and constant status and health monitoring of light fixtures. They also enable City staff to manage the lights, individually or as a group, apply business intelligence rules for energy and cost efficiencies and generate automatic alerts when issues affect the light fixtures. Smart utility meters monitor energy consumption data on City-owned streetlights, facilities, buildings and garages. Figures 7 and 8 show energy consumption from the street lights and City-owned facilities. Given COVID-19's work-from-home policies, energy consumption in public facilities has lessened significantly. Remote-controlled operations have been especially beneficial during the pandemic as the employees largely work from home and must maintain social distancing. Very few staff have to be deployed to the site as a result.

Figure 7: Energy Consumption Dashboard of Smart Street Lights in Downtown Coral Gables

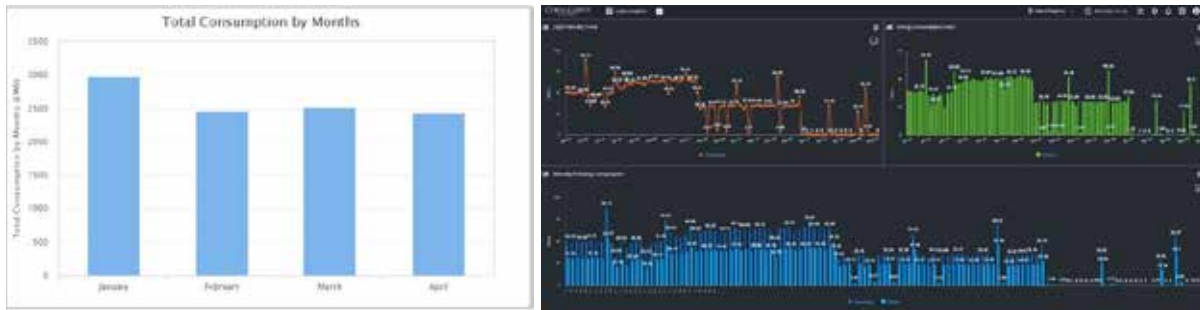
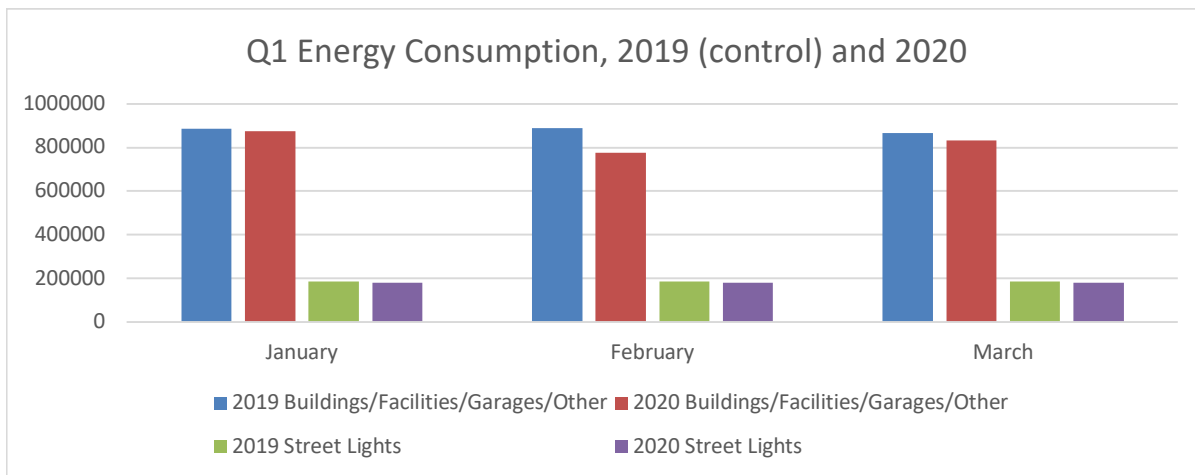


Figure 8: Energy Consumption from City Facilities in Coral Gables



Overall, the City of Coral Gables offers a solid case study of how existing smart city initiatives can be leveraged to respond to COVID-19 and how strategically investing in advanced technology infrastructure can help public sector management in the long run. In this case, the infrastructure investment did not require additional funding from the City budget. Early IoT projects were funded as research and development and innovation pilots, utilizing cost savings from implementing quality engineering and lean six sigma process improvement programs. IoT implementation for Coral Gables’ smart districts leveraged capital improvement projects and incorporated smart technology components and fiber optics into them.

The Coral Gables Department of Information Technology follows a continuous improvement process of implementing cyber infrastructure, with a long-term strategy that follows established industrial engineering protocols and standards. The department collaborates with such national research organizations as the National Institute of Science and Technology and regional universities like the University of Miami and Florida International University. Its innovation strategy maximizes its

return on investments for the benefit of Coral Gables residents, especially in the COVID-19 period.

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COVID-19's Effects on the "No Wrong Door" Approach to Tackling the Opioid Crisis

By D. Abraham Gardner and Lachezar Anguelov

Opioid overdoses and their impacts vary across regions and urbanization levels, making localized responses necessary to tackle this epidemic. Mason County, Washington, provides an example of such a response in action, especially when COVID-19 disrupted its process.

The Mason County Comprehensive Opiate Abuse Program (COAP) seeks to eliminate deaths due to opioid overdose in the county, primarily through enhanced communication and agency collaboration dubbed the "no wrong door" approach. It starts with understanding how multiple stakeholders are linked in a multisectoral system or network, examining the referral process and bringing all stakeholders to the table.

Prior to COVID-19, community partners worked to connect clients with appropriate services, while routing referral processes throughout the entire network of service and treatment providers. Some of these processes needed to be strengthened; a "warm handoff approach"—in which a patient is introduced to a new service provider directly and in person—is possible only if clients actually are connected to the services, treatment and support they need to be successful in their recovery journey. This means relationships between treatment providers and recovery services are crucial, as are those between clients and local organizations. Prior to COVID-19, COAP was strengthening them to ensure a successful effort.

COVID-19's negative and overwhelming impact on the county's behavioral health response system was felt immediately; fortunately, professionals within the system reacted just as swiftly. Although barriers still exist in providing complete and traditional services to individuals experiencing substance use disorder (SUD) and other behavioral health complications, Mason County providers are adapting to them.

Connection and relationship are at the root of recovery for mental health and SUD. As COVID-19 hit Mason County, just as it did the rest of the nation, it forced local providers to begin to contemplate and implement ways to connect with clients for ongoing



support and accountability that did not include meeting in person. Telemedicine options have allowed for new opportunities to provide connection and support. Of course, these solutions bring their own challenges, but those in recovery are working with their providers to develop creative treatment and recovery plans within state and federal recommendations and guidelines.

More than providing care and treatment for those with SUD, COVID-19 also has impacted providers' abilities to refer patients to other partners within the provider network. With fewer staff available, many of them working remotely, agencies have been forced to redefine the referral process, a difficult task. Collecting comprehensive and accurate data has been more challenging than normal as many agencies initially were forced to shut their doors and adapt to a new and strange way of providing services. Additionally, and sadly, many staff were laid off or asked to work part time. These events have put most

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A Proactive Approach to Government and Nonprofit Relationships During COVID-19 and Beyond

By Stacy Yeager

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced a “new normal” for planning in a post-crisis world. Social distancing and masks may be adequate tactics for the short term, but long-term planning must ensure that the United States is prepared for future pandemics. A key realization from our experience to date: A stronger alliance between the government and nonprofit sectors could have alleviated some of the strain on government agencies, while providing more personalized help to individuals and businesses as the economy began to falter.

The government-nonprofit relationship is symbiotic: The former provides funding and the latter fills the gaps left by legislation and policies. Typically, each sector works in its own silo, perpetuating a pattern of reactionary problem solving. Engaging more proactively by co-creating solutions would produce more desirable outcomes that could come faster and require less resources.

In 2010, U.S. Representative Betty McCollum introduced the Nonprofit Sector and Community Solutions Act, which garnered bipartisan support but did not gain traction in the House. The bill’s purpose addressed the theme on which this column focuses: Strengthening the partnership between nonprofit organizations and the federal government. As the country forms its post-crisis plans, it would be beneficial to revisit and revise the legislation to create efficiencies in interactions between the two for the greater good of the people they serve.

The U.S. economy experienced a downturn in mid-2020 and the government continues to spend enormous amounts of money on stimulus packages to help citizens and businesses stay afloat, though that aid is slowly diminishing. Meanwhile, nonprofits are working diligently to fulfill their missions, many of which

involve helping people through the COVID-19 crisis, while speculation looms that many are at risk of dissolving before the economy rebounds. Given the interconnectivity of the government and nonprofit sectors, one might wonder whether they are talking to each other and have a coordinated strategy for working through current issues.

Now is the time to begin establishing a robust governmental-nonprofit strategy, which should include creating an independent government agency focused on liaising with the nonprofit sector. Such an agency could absorb the work of existing agencies where it makes sense, though overlap between may remain, such as when departments issue grants to nonprofits. In this situation, they should work collaboratively, with the proposed agency acting in an advisory capacity related to terms and administration.

Duties of the proposed agency would include:

- **Collaborating with other public agencies and nonprofit organizations to design a forum where relevant stakeholders participate in issue identification and problem-solving for**



the country's key social, political and economic challenges. Providing this forum would facilitate a coordinated response to the major problems plaguing the country, including homelessness, food insecurity and access to medical care. Some issues are better solved by nonprofits than government and vice versa. Every stakeholder would know what role it should play in combatting the issue; the ongoing dialogue would inform future legislation and nonprofit commitments.

- **Acting as an advisor on mission realignment and consolidation of nonprofits, when necessary.** There is no denying that numerous nonprofits have similar missions. As nonprofits receive much of their funding from government agencies, the latter have a stake in ensuring there is no unnecessary duplication of effort. This agency would be charged with helping organizations differentiate themselves by recommending realignment of missions or consolidation of entities.
- **Collaborating with governmental departments, agencies and legislators to set funding levels, policies and new initiatives.** More communication and coordination of goals between the government and nonprofit sectors would provide clarity for how funds should be distributed. This agency would make recommendations for grant funding and tax credits, plus develop creative funding opportunities and initiatives to help nonprofits with resource shortages.
- **Maintaining a website with resources to help nonprofits succeed.** Nonprofits are unique institutions that have different needs than for-profit businesses. The agency would create a portal, similar to the Small Business Association, that acts as a "toolbox" for nonprofits. Content could include fundraising tips; information on recruiting, managing and motivating volunteers; and templates for strategic planning, accounting and grant-writing.

A thoughtful strategy to facilitate collaboration between the public and nonprofit sectors is not exclusive to the federal government. It can be employed by state and local governments that want to work closer with nonprofits at their level, as well. And, it does not have to be costly. Local officials can evaluate where some initiatives already are occurring and bring them together under one umbrella to lay the foundation for a collaborative nonprofit strategy that could be broadened in the future.

Every person in the United States interacts with nonprofits on a regular basis, either as a donor or consumer of such services as health care, education,

youth sports, religious events, entertainment, food assistance and more. Everyone has something to gain from a more effective relationship between the government and nonprofit sectors. It is incumbent on them to expedite this strategy to effectively help people through these difficult times.

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OPIOID CRISIS

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agencies and staff in a position of playing catch-up and created a larger caseload for each provider; in turn, there has been less time for paperwork and data collection has become a lower priority.

As the Mason County community continues to navigate the unknown and negative impacts of COVID-19, service providers are working diligently and proactively to provide services to support those experiencing SUD and mental health issues. The County had developed partnerships across stakeholder groups prior to COVID-19, which has laid a solid foundation to mitigate the pandemic's impacts. Agencies and community members are relying on those partnerships and lines of communication to ensure the behavioral health system is functioning properly, with every door of entry open, so those seeking services do not fall through the cracks. Recent data show COVID-19's impact on those experiencing SUD and mental health issues is increasingly negative. It is more important than ever that current resources are available and new ones are found and brought to bear for this population.

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The Response to COVID-19 in Mexico

By Edgar Ramírez de la Cruz and David Arellano-Gault

Statistics on infections, hospitalizations and deaths reflect Mexico’s inadequate management of the COVID-19 epidemic, with the nation having one of the highest rates of deaths worldwide. These results show a failure of a strategy and policies to confront the crisis, given that the nation had two months to prepare itself once the pandemic was declared. However, polls taken in recent months reflect an increase in approval ratings for how the president has handled the crisis from March (43.5 percent) to August (52 percent). This approval extends to the undersecretary in charge of the strategy (55.2 percent), as well as doctors and hospitals (50.4 percent). According to newspaper coverage, the president’s approval on September 1 ranged from 54 and 65 percent, depending on the media reviewed.

COVID-19 Contagions and Deaths Caused by COVID-19 By Country (top 7)

Country	Total Deaths	Total Cases
1. United States	188,931	6,259,046
2. Brazil	122,681	3,952,790
3. India	66,671	3,792,746
4. Mexico	65,241	606,036
5. United Kingdom	41,504	337,168
6. Italy	35,491	270,189
7. France	30,661	286,007

Source: World Health Organization (as of September 2, 2020)

This apparent contradiction must be understood within the context of how President López Obrador was elected. Although the country experienced significant growth since the 1990s, poverty reduction slowed. At the same time, Mexico generated a concentration of income significantly higher than seen and in previous governments (particularly in the Peña Nieto administration), and corruption scandals significantly undermined the government’s legitimacy and political and bureaucratic elite.

In research published in 2010, one of us defended the fact that new public management (NPM) neglected discussing equity and justice. Since that time, governments adhering to NPM’s rhetoric of efficiency have concentrated the country’s income and more corruption has ensued. At least for Mexico, the consequences are clear: NPM and “reinventing government” practices decimated the legitimacy of Mexican public administration significantly, opening the door to the rise of a populist movement

with an antiliberal vision of democracy. First, the bureaucratic elite stopped talking to society. The technical level of discourse about public policies, performance indicators, macroeconomic indicators and even social policies like the fight against poverty have allowed public policies to be less public and directed by the elite. Second, in a society where our children are in school for only nine years on average, our citizens are alienated from bureaucracy. This alienation, coupled with poor or limited results in almost all policy areas, greatly facilitated the popularity and election of a government with a highly anti-bureaucratic, anti-professional and anti-scientific rhetoric.

In this context, Mexico elected President López Obrador on a candidacy that used highly popular and simple discourse: End corruption in the government and improve wealth distribution to “the people” against the wishes of the “conservatives” or “the elites.” However, steps to solve these problems and deliver on campaign promises took unexpected paths. Today, Mexico feels the effects of “downsizer populism”—that is, the public administration apparatus has been the target for reductions not seen in NPM or neoliberal governments’ recent worst case scenarios. Apart from the severe attack on public administration (even in the health sector), corruption was tackled by centralizing decisionmaking, including personnel management and government procurement of the entire federal government into a single secretariat. Further, the government took office with an “anti-neoliberal” discourse interpreted as an “anti-professional” government.

Claiming, “We should not have a rich government while the people are poor,” the president’s attacks have ranged from putting salary caps on public professionals to extensive dismissals in almost all federal bureaucratic sectors. These actions also included public health, though it had proven to be one of the country’s most professional sectors. Medical doctors and nurses complained about budget cuts and the shortage of medical supplies and medicines due to the consolidated and centralized purchased medicines to fight corruption.

The anti-corruption and anti-professional rhetoric that helped the López Obrador rise to power was an obstacle to producing the necessary conditions for a government ready to make COVID-19- related conditions, even if they were to be unpopular. As

a result, outcomes are poor, not only when facing the pandemic but almost any other problem, such as violence or economic performance. At the same time, in avoiding making harsh decisions to face the crisis, the president thus far has been able to insulate himself from being held accountable for such adverse outcomes.

In a deft political maneuver, the president appointed a public official with excellent technical credentials to the forefront of the COVID-19 battle, claiming he was leaving control of the pandemic in experts' hands. However, the epidemic czar does not seem insulated from the political pressure. As a continuous communication mechanism, the czar holds a daily press conference to offer information about the state of the pandemic and the government's actions. Yet some of the measures established as general guidelines—social distance, use of face masks, hand washing, confinement, use of antibacterial gel and others—are inconsistent with other messages the public receives. Since the president rejected using a face mask in public, notwithstanding local health authorities that established this containment measure to reduce infections, it forced the czar to support the president's decision arguing, "there is no scientific evidence that it reduces contagion."

Nevertheless, several states and local governments quickly put substantial economic activity restrictions into place and imposed stricter measures for social

distancing and face masks. The effect is clear: The federal government has been able to decentralize the responsibility of harsh decisions to state governments.

The federal government is full of anti-neoliberal rhetoric, polarizing society between the good, the poor and the people against all "evil ones:" the wealthy, the professionals and the experts. Even with terrible outcomes, the rhetoric blaming everyone else for the situation is working. The elitist and haughty discourse of past governments that held NPM and neoliberal discourses share part of the blame for the populist government's current rise. Mexico is a case study demonstrating the urgency to develop, build and defend plural democracies that can sustain professional governments sensible to the situation of persons, families and overall social impacts (in labor, health, education, income), not only efficientist technocratic solutions.

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Thank God for Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act

By Richard Keevey

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been controversial since it was passed. Yet behind the statistics and challenges are real people. Proper medical care improves the quality of life and all that goes along with good care, especially during pandemics.

Medicaid provides health benefits to 72 million Americans who cannot afford health care. Many statewide programs include Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program and the ACA. They also provide health care to millions of lower income adults and children, among them senior citizens in nursing homes and others receiving both Medicare and Medicaid benefits.

The ACA's passage in 2010 dramatically impacted health care, allowing states to expand Medicaid eligibility to encompass more working people. For example, a family of four in New Jersey is eligible—without premiums or copays—if its income is below \$36,156, or 138 percent of the poverty level. Children are eligible if their family's income is below \$93,012, 355 percent of the federal poverty level, with modest premium and copay requirements. Other, less wealthy states offer the same coverage, albeit at different income levels.

A Tale of Three Families

Imagine Joe Jones and his family live in New Jersey, Jane Smith and her family live in Texas and her cousin, Frank, and his family live in North Carolina. The main salary earners have jobs and each family of four earns approximately the same amount—\$36,156—with some level of health insurance.

However, Joe pays nothing for health insurance, while Jane and Frank pay approximately \$1,000 per month for their employer-offered insurance. Why? New Jersey accepted the ACA; Texas and North Carolina rejected it. The federal government assumes 90 percent of the cost of the ACA, down from 100 percent for the first three years of the act, leaving Joe with little to no payments for his coverage.

Let's adjust the scenario. These families have lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19. Joe still has coverage, but Jane and Frank are searching for theirs as their employers only agreed to cover them for one additional week following termination.

They can apply for basic Medicaid coverage since they are unemployed, but they could have had coverage under the ACA while working, as Joe does, with no cost since their income was below the poverty level.



Apply this story to families in 12 other states, including large ones like Florida and Georgia, that also rejected the ACA. If you do, you can see that many families face tremendous health care burdens.

These states and the federal government also are considering new eligibility requirements, time limits and a block-grant concept to limit future benefits. Even taking COVID-19 into account, the rise in unemployment and resulting loss of employer health insurance, the administration refuses to reopen the ACA enrollment period so that more individuals and families can receive coverage.

But Wait...There's More

The benefits to the ACA extend beyond these vignettes. People can apply for Medicaid or the ACA easily on their states' Medicaid program websites, which inform visitors of the income eligibility levels for each type of client: pregnant women, children, families or adults. There are no out-of-pocket charges for enrollees for most services and the program covers the range of traditional health care needs, from doctor visits to hospital stays to drugs. Not all doctors participate but most hospitals do.

The ACA also is available for higher income families and those whose employers do not provide coverage, or when the plan is too expensive. There are various plans and levels, some with higher premiums and deductibles, but many can apply for a federal subsidy based on income and family size, which can bring the monthly cost down considerably, sometimes to \$0. Family members under age 26 can be added to any ACA plan, no one can be rejected because of preexisting conditions, the range of services covered is comprehensive and the program pays for prescription drugs—a critical factor since drug therapy is a much cheaper alternative to hospitals.

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No, No, No Sweetie. It's About Power

By James Nordin



A recent social media post contained language that I paraphrase here: *It isn't about diversity or inclusiveness or acceptance. No, no, no sweetie. It's about power.*

It is time to stop simply studying mistreatment of marginalized people—Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)—and asking for policy changes. Women are a numerical majority in the United States yet they are less powerful in government and society than their testosterone enhanced counterparts. We see Kamala Harris as a vice presidential nominee as a milestone because a woman of South Asian and African-Caribbean decent was chosen. The tragedy in this thinking is that it is so impressive that it happened. But, women of color have been privately powerful for centuries.

The milestone is not that a woman of color was selected. It is that the white power structure at last partially opened its eyes. That also is the tragedy: that 2020 was the first time those eyes—begrudgingly—were opened.

We cannot count as success the inclusion of BIPOC members in discussions. We cannot count as success that student bodies or workplaces have more diversity. We cannot even count as success the support and enthusiasm of portions of the white population for equal rights. Success is Black, Indigenous and People of Color making the decisions, being full partners in the power structure.

As long as white males primarily are in charge, no matter how inclusive we are, we still have a plantation society.

White privilege is a dominant fact in U.S. society. And if you are White, it feels pretty good. I know firsthand. White privilege is also insidious. Most White people are not aware of their privilege or the advantages that accrue as a result of it. That is mostly because we are still in charge. As one anti-protestor in Kenosha railed, “You’re trying to make Caucasian-Americans a minority.” I guess she knows what goes around, comes around; the way that Whites have treated BIPOC people doesn’t look that attractive if you suddenly become a minority.

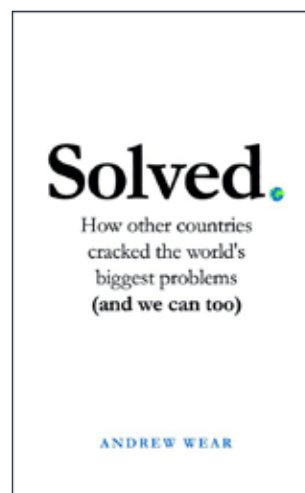
We should not stop working for incremental changes/improvements in the rights of BIPOC people. But, we should acknowledge that those changes are just steps on the way to making less powerful members of society more powerful—really, equally powerful. We cannot simply be happy that women and BIPOC people are “allowed” to participate. They have the absolute right to participate, and to decide. If you aren’t at the table, you’re on the menu. The White male power structure has to be willing to step aside or they will inevitably be pushed aside.

Power to the People!

James Nordin is adjunct professor in the EMPA program at Golden Gate University. He has taught at San Francisco State University and at the University of San Francisco. He retired from the federal government after more than 33 years of service as a regional grants and financial manager and program supervisor for the Department of Health and Human Services Administration and the Department of Agriculture. He has a passion for social equity and created and endowed ASPA's annual Gloria Hobson Nordin Social Equity Award. He also is a founding member of ASPA's Section on Democracy and Social Justice and has served several terms on ASPA's National Council. He received his BA from Knox College, his MPA from Roosevelt University and a DPA from the University of Southern California. Nordin can be reached at jnordin1945@gmail.com.

How Other Countries Cracked the World's Biggest Problems (And We Can Too)

By Andrew Wear



So far, 2020 is a year when good news seems hard to come by. Yet if we look in the right places, there are a slew of positive policy developments occurring around the world. Denmark will reach 100 percent renewable electricity by 2030. Iceland has topped gender equality rankings for more than a decade. In a little over 50 years, life expectancy of the average South Korean has increased by 30 years.

Solutions exist. We just need to know where to find them and they are not always where we are accustomed to looking. Understanding how other countries around the world are working to crack the big problems helps illuminate the sort of government and community action required to make a difference. Other countries' successes can reassure us that we *can* make real progress toward solving humanity's biggest challenges.

Denmark

For the past 20 years, Denmark's Samsø Island has been a world leading green energy community. All of its electricity comes from massive community-owned wind turbines, while biomass boilers burning local straw meet 70 percent of the island's heating needs. Each of its 3,724 residents now emits an average of negative 3.7 tonnes of greenhouse gas per year.

The success of Samsø Island is indicative of broader efforts in Denmark to address climate change. Since 1992, the country has reduced its per capita emissions by 46 percent. (During the same period, per capita emissions in the United States have decreased by 21 percent.)

There are now more than 6,000 wind turbines installed in Denmark, distributed across the country. In 2019, 47 percent of electricity was generated from wind, a rapid increase from just 19 percent in 2009.

In 2018, Denmark's government secured support from all sitting parties in its parliament for an ambitious new energy agreement. It outlines measures that will see 100 percent of Denmark's

electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030. Key measures in the agreement include three large new offshore wind farms and a complete phasing out of coal in the electricity sector by 2030.

Singapore

Just 50 years ago, Singapore was an impoverished tropical island with no natural resources, little fresh water and rapid population growth. Yet it has since managed to transition to a wealthy city-state with a high degree of urbanization and strong focus on education. Singaporean students are near the top of the international education rankings on just about every metric. The average 15-year-old has a mathematics skill level three years ahead of students in the United States.

Professor Saravanan Gopinathan has been a dominant figure in Singapore's education system for decades. He tells me that the Singaporean government has a specific attitude: "We want the best people to come into teaching and we want to be able to keep them. We need to pay them well." While Singapore recruits teachers from among its top-performing students and provides intensive support during training, the system also shows the importance of supporting teachers' ongoing development. Mentoring, team-based learning, classroom observation and feedback all play a critical role. With 100 hours of professional development available to each teacher every year, there is ample opportunity to participate in research, learn new approaches to delivering the curriculum and running the classroom, or even travel and learn from best practices overseas.

United Kingdom

A typical British police officer wears a stab vest and carries a baton, a radio, a spray similar to pepper spray, a torch and handcuffs on their duty belt. While some also carry a taser, less than five percent of police in the United Kingdom carry guns. Officers routinely patrol the community on foot or on bicycle.

United Kingdom police services are acutely aware that their efficacy rests on their ability to secure the trust and respect of the communities in which they work. They consciously try to remove anything that might create a barrier between them and the community. Police authority comes from public consent, not state force.

As former chief of the Thames Valley police Dr Peter Neyroud stated: “The more you gravitate toward a paramilitary force, armed to the teeth, with a distance between you and the public, the more you’re in trouble.” By one measure, the United Kingdom has the lowest homicide rate in the OECD. Violent crime has decreased dramatically and is now less than one-third of what it was 20 years ago. With an approach to violent crime that has more in common with public health strategies than traditional heavy-handed policing, the United Kingdom arguably is now the safest of all industrialized countries.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, there is a lot to be positive about. Whatever the problem—climate change, loss of manufacturing jobs, poor health outcomes, violent crime—somewhere in the world there is a country making strides to address it. These countries have booming economies, low inequality and populations that are becoming healthier each year. They have integrated migrants from around the world into their societies, dramatically increased students’ abilities in literacy and math and are on the way to eliminating greenhouse gas emissions.

Could their ideas and strategies really work in the United States? I think they could. Of course, every country has its own history, institutions, politics and culture. It is unreasonable to expect that what works in one country will have the same impact in another. Even so, there are significant lessons we can learn from international experience. The challenge is to take inspiration from overseas and adapt relevant ideas to apply in our own local, regional or national context.

If other countries can do it, why not us? These countries’ stories show us what is possible. They give insight into what—with the right attitude and the right policies—we might be able to achieve, as well.

This is an edited extract of Andrew Wear’s book, Solved. How other countries cracked the world’s biggest problems (and we can too), now available.

Andrew Wear is a senior Australian public servant and Victorian fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia. With degrees in politics, law, economics and public policy, he is a graduate of the Senior Executive Fellows Program at Harvard Kennedy School. Wear can be reached at andrew@andrewwear.com.

MEDICAID AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

continued from page 41

Medicaid and the ACA are an essential source of support for hospitals, health centers and much of the nursing home sector. And, these institutions are a major source of jobs in each state. Yet our friends in Texas and North Carolina—and the other 12 states not part of the ACA—do not have access to these options.

COVID-19 highlights structural problems within the American health care system, especially when people suddenly terminated from work lose both their income and health coverage. Medicaid and the ACA are good for America. Yet despite its obvious benefits, it recently was in front of the U.S. Supreme Court again, the third time in a trilogy of cases threatening its existence. This suit centers on repealing the financial penalty provision for people failing to carry health insurance, challenging the act’s constitutionality. With no alternative program to replace it, this shows blatant disregard for a critical health care program.

Behind the statistics and challenges to the ACA are real people. We know proper medical care improves quality of life and minimizes alternate, expensive interventions. The ACA has made a significant impact on reducing the uninsured across the country; approximately 20 million people have health coverage under it, a number that would be higher if more states participated.

What happens when individuals and families do not have health insurance? First, they are reluctant to seek medical assistance in a timely fashion, often resulting in their health getting worse. Second, when they finally do, it is often via more expensive options like emergency rooms. And, third, their family budgets are more likely to be disrupted as a result of exorbitant medical bills.

Families and individuals who lose their jobs as the result of COVID-19—as well as *other* maladies—will be thankful that Medicaid and the ACA exist.

Richard Keevey is the former budget director and comptroller of New Jersey, appointed by governors from each political party. He served as deputy undersecretary for defense in the U.S. Department of Defense and chief financial officer at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Keevey is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, practitioner-in-residence in the Bloustein School of Planning and Policy at Rutgers University and lecturer in the School of International and Public Affairs at Princeton University. He can be reached at rfkeevey@yahoo.com.

ASPA'S FOUNDERS' FELLOWS PROGRAM: Reflections from the Next Generation of Public Service Leaders

The Founders' Fellows program is ASPA's premier program that celebrates the current and future accomplishments of the next generation of those serving the public good—whether in the academic or practitioner communities, or both. PA TIMES asked several 2019 Founders' Fellows to reflect on their experiences and share their insights with the 2020 class of fellows and those pursuing public service-based careers. They were Michael Bednarczuk of Grace College; Justine Cameron of University of Massachusetts; Nuri Heckler of the University of Nebraska; Joseph Maya Rodriguez of the Rhode Island Department of Health; Evelyn Trammell of Florida International University; and Yifei Yan of London School for Economics.



Michael
Bednarczuk



Justine
Cameron



Nuri
Heckler



Joseph Maya
Rodriguez



Evelyn
Trammell



Yifei
Yan

How has your Founders' Fellow experience shaped your perceptions of—and experiences in—public administration?

Bednarczuk: My experience allowed me to spend more time with practitioners. Several Fellows were employed in the public sector or planned on joining it, as opposed to going into academia. My mentor spent her career in the public sector, as well. I enjoyed getting to see the perspectives of those on the front lines of the delivery of services; it encouraged me to better appreciate the duality of public administration.

Cameron: My experience as a Founders' Fellow opened my eyes to so many facets of public administration to which I was not exposed previously. I also have learned more about public policy in practice. ASPA's 2020 Digital Experience showed current policy problems and solutions in different cities across the United States and around the world. As someone who has always lived, worked and been educated in Massachusetts, I was not acutely aware of challenges that other state governments face. Finally, it has shaped how I see organizational leadership in the profession: The learning experiences catalogued bureaucratic inefficiencies and were supplemented with robust

discussions on how to govern more effectively. I am able now to identify these inefficiencies better and problem solve in an advanced way.

Heckler: In many ways, the Founders' fellowship was the beginning of a feeling of inclusion for me, that I was now a part of the public administration discussion. Although I had been to the ASPA Annual Conference before, I had felt like an outsider: a lawyer and nonprofit executive who liked thinking about public administration but was not really a part of the dialogue. The fellowship brought me into the ongoing dialogue about democracy, service, effectiveness and equity that hums throughout all ASPA conversations. I had spent so much of my education coming into myself as a human being and scholar that I had not given much thought to where I would fit within the public administration discussion. This program gave me resources to enter a pre-existing dialogue with a wider audience.

Maya Rodriguez: The Founders' Fellows experience gave me a new look at what public administration represents in different parts of the world. The 2019 class reflected the diversity of membership: We had members from Mexico, India, China, South Korea, Puerto Rico and across the United States. Sharing

ideas with my colleagues allowed me to see how public administration is a changing discipline, to respond to social interests around the world and learn different practices used by governments around the world.

In my case, I was able to learn from the public sector in Mexico. Thanks to the program, I was able to learn from Edgar Bustos of CIDE. During our conversations, we could understand how our countries have similar problems yet adopt different options to solve them. I began to see that public administration has no territorial borders. It is not a discipline that responds to a single political ideology. Rather, it focuses on the public and the management of government systems to serve the public.

Trammell: Prior to the Founders' Fellows program, my experience of public administration had been shaped primarily by my work experience in local government, the military and education. The program has provided me the opportunity to listen and learn about other areas of public administration research, perspectives and approaches. The public administration experience is a constant evolution and I am so happy the Founders' Fellows program is part of my own.

How has your relationship with your Founders' Fellows mentor shaped your professional development?

Cameron: My mentor shared with me her journey to her current position, which enabled me to think more creatively about how to forge my career path. This was such a meaningful conversation, as it showed that my goals in the field are not only attainable, but also have been accomplished by women with similar backgrounds as mine. She also has shown me what it means to "pay it forward," as she gives back to ASPA in real and powerful ways. Her ability to balance her responsibilities is inspiring.

Heckler: In my time as a Founders' Fellow, I had mentors who are true to themselves, yet practical in the approach to their careers. They both are passionate about their research topics beyond simple interest and scientific distance; they are extremely pragmatic in their approach to the profession. They continue to give me advice about my career path, for which I am grateful. Their mentorship will continue to shape my career for years (decades?) to come.

Maya Rodriguez: My mentor relationship was brief, but very effective. We met during the Annual Conference for a lengthy conversation, during which we talked about my research, experiences and professional interests. His advice provided a path that led me to my next professional role.

Yan: For me, meeting my mentor—a well-known individual in the discipline—is like a rookie NBA

player meeting a Hall of Fame legend: I am both excited and deeply thankful for this connection. Due to COVID-19, I have not met him face to face and our exchange is understandably less frequent, but I am grateful for his warm encouragement and constantly remind myself to model that behavior when mentoring my own students and mentees. As we keep in touch in the future, I am sure I will benefit from his career-long advice. This mentorship experience will be a lifelong journey of standing on the shoulders of, as well as walking side by side, a giant in the field.

What has been the most meaningful part of your Founders' Fellows experience?

Bednarczuk: As one who earned a Ph.D. in political science, not public administration, I felt as if I approached the discipline from a different perspective. Becoming a Founders' Fellow and earning its James E. Webb Award showed me that the questions I pursue are embraced by those in the field.

Cameron: The most powerful experience was learning that I have and bring value to the profession. Being recognized as a Founders' Fellow confirmed for me that my research and work have not gone unnoticed and have helped me believe that what I do matters on a broader scale. I also hope the members of my cohort know they have brought value to both the profession and my personal growth; I hope I can do the same for even just one of them. With this increased confidence and desire to give back, I find myself considering advanced academic and career paths—far beyond what I thought I was capable of prior to the program.

Trammell: ASPA is incredibly supportive of students, professionals and scholars. The Founders' Fellows experience is no different. While COVID-19 has presented particularly difficult challenges, ASPA was innovative and provided a meaningful program for participants. Two elements specifically stand out. First was establishing a platform—the 2020 Digital Experience—through which I could share my research with a broad audience. ASPA coordinated and promoted the Founders' Fellows panels widely and it resulted in good attendance and views of recorded content. Second, I truly value and appreciate being paired with a supportive and engaged mentor.

Yan: Undoubtedly, the most important benefit has been the Founders' Fellows panels included in the Digital Experience. While presenting live at the 2020 conference would have been better, I appreciate the wonderful efforts of the organizers and was happy to be part of the event. It provided an excellent platform to learn about other Fellows' research. I was already impressed—before the panels took place—as I read their official web pages and listened to their self-introductions during our Fellows orientation.

Second, having an exclusive event in which we each walked the audience through the problems about which we are passionate, how we are tackling them and what differences the research is going to make, is both exciting and inspiring.

What about this experience will shape the next few years of your career?

Cameron: The robust learning experience that mentorship provides and how enriching it can be. I also will take with me an increased level of self-confidence: ASPA has empowered me to step out of my comfort zone. This increase in confidence has helped me advocate for myself as I work to advance in my career. I am more aware of and able to demonstrate my worth. Further, my role as a Founders' Fellow exposed me to the Section for Women in Public Administration. I have participated in its meetings to learn more about the challenges and opportunities that women experience in the field. Not only does the camaraderie bring me joy, but also the stories shared are so valuable.

Heckler: I will try to replicate this experience in my classes and in life, and to use discomfort to become a more authentic and kinder person. Similarly, I attempt to create openness to discomfort in my classes and research presentations. It is in this that true growth and learning take place. By modeling that openness, I hope to create an atmosphere of openness around myself and to develop what I see in scholars like Brandi Blessett, Tia Gaynor, Susan Gooden, Mary Guy, Meghna Sabharwal and so many others.

Maya Rodriguez: The experience will accompany me for the next few years. Thanks to it, I decided to put the theory aside and learn in practice. This program has a lot to do with my current professional choices and the goals I have set for myself.

Trammell: ASPA and its Chapters and Sections provide a community that supports, encourages and provides unparalleled opportunities to their members. Their energy is contagious. This experience has further instilled in me the enthusiasm to give back to the ASPA and the public service community.

What advice would you give the 2021 Founders' Fellows as they begin their year?

Cameron: Take advantage of all this Fellowship has to offer. It is a world-class, once in a lifetime experience that will expose you to so many people and opportunities you may not have seen otherwise. Also: Ask questions! The best way to truly learn from this experience is to fill your knowledge gaps. In addition to attending talks or connecting with people from similar fields, branch out and listen to a talk completely unrelated to your interests. Some of my closest contacts now are people working on things completely unrelated to my work. Finally, stay

in touch. We have an exclusive network as Founders' Fellows that should be capitalized upon. I look forward to hearing from future Fellows and hope to one day return the favor and give to the program what it has given to me.

Heckler: Prepare in advance of conferences you attend. Reaching out to your mentor and other attendees to learn about the event is a good first step, but the more you can plan how you will follow up and what you want to get out of the experience, the better off you will be. The experience with my mentor was a prime example. I started the relationship knowing I wanted to keep in regular contact and set a goal for my meeting with her that I would learn how she likes to communicate and honor those preferences. I was rewarded with a rich and fulfilling experience with a mentor who continues to guide me on my journey.

Maya Rodriguez: Talk to everyone, ask all of your questions, share as a group and learn what makes members of your cohort different. Experiences like the Founders' Fellows program depend a lot on the effort each person puts in. Also, enjoy conferences. Work to exchange ideas with everyone you encounter. Do not be afraid to reach out to your cohort and their mentors. Use every opportunity.

Yan: Try to make the most of it. If you can treat the experience as an integral part of an intellectual journey in which you are constantly learning, inquiring and contributing to addressing the public administration problems of our time, you will gain a lot. Engage and interact so you come to know how wonderful this community is. Stay in touch so that can be updated on and celebrate each other's achievements long after the program reaches an end. Finally, take time to reflect on the lessons, ideas and inspiration gained as the experience unfolds. At times, they may look like minor points, but once you have a solid record of how your thinking is constantly prompted forward along the journey, the cumulative effect can be very powerful.

Michael Bednarczuk is instructor of political science at Grace College. His research focuses on public management with a concentration in the work motivations and actions of those in the public sector. His work has been featured in The American Review of Public Administration, Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs, Administration & Society and Public Administration Quarterly. He can be reached at mebednarczuk@gmail.com.

Justine Cameron earned her BS, MPP and graduate certificate in educational policy at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, where she received the Leduc Center for Civic Engagement Community Engagement Fellowship, through which she worked in the Fall River Public Schools to incorporate community engagement and public service into their

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Congratulations, David Ammons

Joseph Wholey Distinguished Scholarship
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summer curriculum. She won the Massachusetts ASPA Beineke Best Capstone Competition in 2019 for her capstone, "A Review of Title IX and the Impact of the 'Dear Colleague' Letter: Understanding Sexual Assault Reporting Policies on Massachusetts College Campuses." She can be reached at justine.a.ashley@gmail.com.

Nuri Heckler is assistant professor at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. His research topics include human resource management, administrative law and whiteness and masculinity in public organizations. He is a husband, father of two children and avid commuter cyclist with a passion for musical theater. He can be reached at nheckler@unomaha.edu.

Joseph Maya Rodriguez is data analyst at the Rhode Island Department of Health. He has a background in public administration, quantitative and qualitative research and data tool development. He has a master's degree in public administration from Rutgers University—Newark and a bachelor's degree from University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus. He can be reached at jmm889@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

Evelyn Trammell earned her Ph.D. from the Department of Public Policy and Administration at Florida International University. Her research interests are government contracting, socio-economic equity, bureaucratic representation, public management and policy analysis. She has nine years of experience working in local government and served eight years in the U.S. Army Reserves, deployed under Operation Enduring Freedom in the Horn of Africa from 2006-2007. She is the media coordinator, immediate past chair and a founding member of ASPA's Section on Procurement and Contract Management. She can be reached at etram003@fiu.edu.

Yifei Yan is LSE Fellow at the Department of Social Policy, London School of Economics. Her research interests are at the intersection of governance and accountability, education and development, and China and India. She can be reached at Y.Yan10@lse.ac.uk.



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Members in the News



Public Service Recognition Week Engages Chapters Nationwide in COVID-19 Times

Although COVID-19 has slowed a wide range of 2020 activities, including keeping Chapters from the robust Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) events they normally host, several honored public servants through online activities.

ASPAs Greater Cincinnati, Metropolitan Detroit, Georgia, Hampton Roads, Greater Houston, Kansas, Lowcountry, New Jersey and Sacramento Chapters held awards ceremonies throughout the spring and summer or are planning to do so this fall. Honorees have included rising stars, city managers, professors, area nonprofit organizations, local and state governmental departments and more. In addition, the Lowcountry Chapter worked around COVID-19 to post stories about essential employees online and honor those on the front lines of the pandemic by sharing their exceptional stories.

We applaud our Chapters for honoring our public servants throughout the pandemic, in ways big and small, and look forward to hearing more about their activities as the months progress. Public Service Recognition Week 2021 will take place May 2-8; we look forward to our Chapters' ongoing creativity to honor their public servants.

Aristigueta Named Dean of Biden School

2015-2016 ASPA President Maria Aristigueta has been named the first dean of the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration at the University of Delaware (UD).



A member of the UD faculty since 1997, Aristigueta is the Charles P. Messick chair in public administration and has served as director of the Biden School since 2007. Her research centers on organizational behavior and performance management in the public sector. Before joining UD, she taught in the University of Central Florida's Department of Public Administration and was a senior management analyst for the Cities of Orlando and Miami. She started her career as an evaluator for the U.S. General Accounting Office.

"It is an immense privilege to serve as the first dean of the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration," Aristigueta said. "Our faculty, staff, students and alumni create and use interdisciplinary, nonpartisan research and empirically based analysis to inform effective decisionmaking and policy and to improve leadership and administration...The challenges that we collectively face serve to highlight the need to strive to improve the quality of life in communities in the region, the country and the world and I am grateful for the opportunity to lead the Biden School as we strive to meet the challenges."

Aristigueta is the author of *Organizational Behavior, Civil Society in Cuba: Advancing through Moral Convictions and Public Connectedness and Managing Results in State Government* and coauthor of other books, including *Managing Human Behavior in Public and Nonprofit Organizations, Organizational Behavior, Managing and Measuring Performance in Public and Nonprofit Organizations: An Integrated Approach*, and coeditor of the *International Handbook of Practice-Based Performance Management*. She earned her BS and MPA at the University of South Florida and her Ph.D. in public administration at the University of Southern California.

University of Pittsburgh Names New Dean to Lead GSPIA

Carissa Schively Slotterback, associate dean of the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, has been named dean of the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA).



At the University of Minnesota, Slotterback led academic programs and curricula, faculty mentoring and promotion and research advancement; she also set strategy for and supervised staff teams in academic programs, advising and retention, academic and information technology and career and professional development. Slotterback led a school-wide curriculum review, created a new student services leadership team, supported the development of an equity and inclusion plan and collaborated to advance interdisciplinary initiatives.

"Carissa is an urban planning scholar, a leading authority on authentic engagement and a fierce advocate for students, faculty and communities,"

said Pitt Chancellor Patrick Gallagher. “I am excited to welcome her to the University of Pittsburgh and look forward to seeing where she takes GSPIA next.”

During her 16-year career at the University of Minnesota, Slotterback served as director of research engagement in the Office of the Vice President for Research. In that role, she developed and implemented strategic initiatives to advance interdisciplinary and engaged research, as well as initiated and directed the university’s Resilient Communities Project to support faculty and student engagement on community sustainability projects.

Slotterback earned her Ph.D. in urban and regional planning from Florida State University, a master’s degree in city and regional planning from Clemson University and a bachelor’s degree from Winona State University.

UA Little Rock Names Williamson Director of School of Public Affairs

Anne Williamson, a nationwide expert in housing policy, has been selected as the new director of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Williamson brings to the table extensive leadership experience in university research centers, as well as public service research projects that help local communities.



“Professor Williamson brings with her leadership experience, expertise in the public and private sectors, as well as with university research centers,” said Sarah Beth Estes, dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Education. “She is adept at working in multidisciplinary teams on pressing community issues, such as fair housing and youth homelessness. She is lauded as an exceptional teacher. Her visionary leadership will enhance our ability to collaborate with our community and city as we educate future leaders.”

Williamson joins UA Little Rock from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where she served as the Victor and Caroline Schutte/Missouri professor of urban affairs and director of the L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs. In her new role, she plans to lead the School of Public Affairs to become more engaged in the community and work with partner organizations to create effective collaborations and solutions to issues at the city, regional and state levels.

Prior to working in higher education, Williamson held leadership roles in state government and the private sector. She was director of the Office of Research and Analysis and development manager

for Georgia’s affordable housing rental programs at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. She earned her Ph.D. in public administration and policy from the University of Georgia and served on the faculty of the University of Texas at San Antonio and the University of Alabama.

Rosenbaum Receives Distinguished University Professor Award

ASPA President-Elect Allan Rosenbaum has been recognized as a Florida International University Distinguished University Professor, the highest rank available to full professors of the university. The designation recognizes his leadership and dedication, continued contributions and distinction in the field of public administration and affairs over the past decades.



A professor of the Department of Public Policy and Administration, Rosenbaum is the third person to be elected twice to serve as president in ASPA’s history. He also is the founding director of the Institute for Public Management and Community Service and has organized the annual Inter-American Conference of Mayors and Local Authorities since 1996.

Lewis Receives Sweeney Award

Jerome Lewis, director of the Institute for Public Administration in the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration was honored by the International City/County Management Association with its Academic Award in memory of Stephen B. Sweeney. Established in the name of the longtime director of the University of Pennsylvania’s Fels Institute of Government, this award is presented to an academic leader or institution who has made a significant contribution to the formal education of students pursuing careers in local government. Lewis continues to innovate and inspire a new generation of public administrators, including local government professionals. With a half century of public service at UD, he remains active teaching, mentoring and leading several programs.



Stenberg Awarded ICMA Honorary Membership

ASPA Past President Carl Stenberg has been named an honorary member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), an award given to individuals outside the local government management profession for distinguished public



service and contributions to the improvement of local government. He has served city and county governments in North Carolina and across the country for more than 50 years, recruiting talent to pursue local careers, teaching graduate students, establishing executive leadership development programs and writing about local issues and trends. His academic positions include dean at the University of Baltimore, director of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia and MPA director at University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill.

At UNC Chapel Hill, Stenberg led creation of the Public Executive Leadership Academy, which has served hundreds of local government professionals. He has received the Donald C. Stone practitioner and academic Awards for contributions to intergovernmental management, the Louis Brownlow award for the best article by a practitioner in *Public Administration Review* and the Stephen B. Sweeney Academic Award from ICMA for contributions to the education of students pursuing local government careers. He is a National Academy of Public Administration fellow.

Prior to his academic career, Stenberg served in senior positions at the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and executive director of the Council of State Governments. In nominating him for honorary membership, an ICMA member wrote, “Carl has provided a lifetime of service to our profession. He’s a rare academic who understands the theoretical foundations of management and leadership, but who is also steeped in the practical aspects, especially at the local government level.”

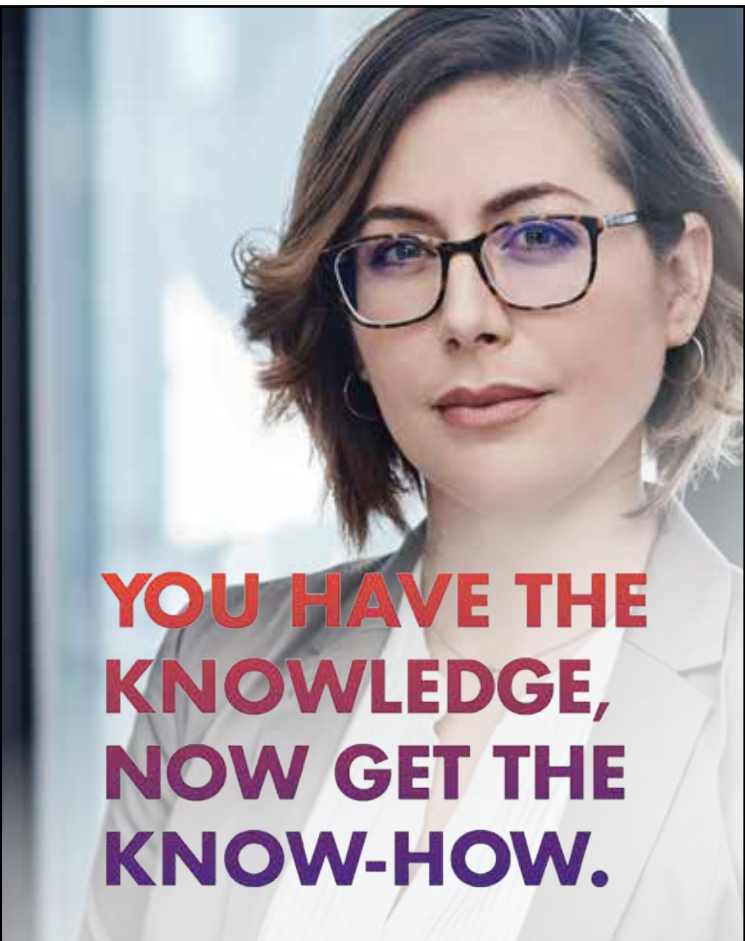
Michigan Chapter Hosts Lansing Mayor for Webinar on the Economy

On September 23, ASPA's Michigan Capital Area Chapter hosted “Moving



Lansing’s Economy Ahead under COVID-19” with Lansing, Michigan Mayor Andy Schor. A few of the topics discussed during the virtual event included dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace; the One Lansing Fund, which helps community members with basic needs like childcare, food, utilities, rent and mortgages; assisting small businesses in adapting to COVID-19; and the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, which provides support for mayors during the pandemic

The full video of the event is available at www.aspamicap.org.



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In Memoriam

Velma Ballard

Velma Ballard passed away on September 10. She was an active ASPA member, attending the annual conference and contributing to the Central Virginia Chapter and several Sections, including the Section on Democracy and Social Justice, Section for Women in Public Administration, Section on Professional and Organizational Development and Section on Public Administration Education.



With more than 40 years of service, Ballard retired from the Commonwealth of Virginia as deputy director of operations at the Department of Housing and Community Development in 2018. She served on various boards and committees with Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) of Virginia, believing with deep conviction that all people are equal and should have access to affordable housing.

Willa Bruce

Willa Marie Bruce of Omaha, a former Kayser professor of public administration at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), passed away earlier this year after a long illness. Bruce served as chair of the Section for Women in Public Administration in 1991-1992, part of her long history of ASPA membership that continued through the early 2010s. She also was involved with the Section on Ethics and Integrity in Governance, Section on Historical, Artistic and Reflective Expression, Section on Public Administration Education, Section on Public Administration Research, Section on Public Performance Management, Central Illinois Chapter and Nebraska Chapter.

After graduating from Marshall University in 1960, Bruce became an English teacher, then a social worker in rural West Virginia. Following her husband's untimely death, she returned to school to earn her Ph.D. and three master's degrees, while also raising three young sons as a single mom. She started at UNO in 1985 and had a distinguished academic career, authoring four books and more than 50 refereed articles, while also being an acclaimed teacher.

Gwendolyn Williams Bullock-Smith

Gwendolyn Williams Bullock-Smith passed away in July 2020. She was the first president and "founding mother" of the Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA).

Bullock was hired as a temporary clerk-stenographer by the U.S. Veterans Administration in 1948 and her official service began in September of that year. She moved to the U.S. Department of Labor, serving in the Bureau of Employment Security and Bureau of Labor Management Relations. She also served for the National Democratic Party, assisting with the 1960 presidential campaign; White House Office of Economic Opportunity; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and Office of Personnel Management. She served in D.C. government within its Department of Human Resources and Department of Housing and Community Development. When she retired in 1989, she had 41 years of service with federal and District of Columbia governments.

In 1970, ASPA created COMPA after Bullock met with the National Council and successfully argued for acceptance of the Section as an ASPA affiliate. After considerable debate over her gender, she was elected to serve as its first president in 1971. She was honored for her role in "establishing and institutionalizing" COMPA as an affiliate of ASPA in 1972.

Bullock was one of two female members of the first class of National Urban Fellows (NUF) in 1969-1970. NUF was funded by the Ford Foundation through the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors to develop public agency managers and executives from among minority persons experienced in local community poverty programs.

H. George Frederickson

ASPA Past President H. George Frederickson passed away on July 24. He recently had turned 86 and had the distinction of being one of ASPA's oldest living past presidents.



In 1968, Frederickson put forward social equity as the "third pillar" of public administration—for social equity to take on the same status as economy and efficiency as values or principles to which public administration should adhere. History would prove him correct and social equity remains a pillar of public administration, gaining strength over time.

Frederickson excelled as a university executive as founding associate dean of Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs and dean of the University of Missouri's School of

Community Affairs. He was appointed president of Eastern Washington State College in Cheney, where he served for 10 years. Under his innovative and dynamic leadership, and in the face of considerable resistance, the college transitioned into a thriving regional university including a name change to Eastern Washington University with campuses in Cheney and Spokane.

Frederickson returned to full-time scholarship when he was appointed the Edwin O. Stene Distinguished Professor of Public Administration at the University of Kansas (KU), where he founded and edited the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. He also was the founder of the *Journal of Public Affairs Education*. He was a proud “generalist,” known to young scholars and tenured professors alike, and made seminal contributions across the disciplines. He retired from KU in 2012, though he continued to write and visit his office on campus daily until this year.

Over a long and distinguished career, Frederickson frequently was recognized for his achievements. To him, these honors were a reflection of meaningful and lasting contributions in scholarship and civic engagement. He was awarded ASPA’s Dwight Waldo Award for outstanding contributions to the professional literature of public administration over an extended career in 1992 and its Gloria Hobson Nordin Award for lifetime achievement and effort in the cause of social equity in 2015. ASPA’s annual award for the best *PA TIMES* article, first awarded in 2007, is named in his honor. He also received honors from APSA and NASPAA, and was elected a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.

Michael Hail

Michael Hail, professor of political science at Morehead State University (MSU), died August 6 at the Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital in Somerset after a brief illness. Hail came to Morehead State in 2000 as director of research and assistant dean of the newly created Program of Distinction, the Institute for Regional Analysis and Public Policy (IRAPP). He served as chair and dean of IRAPP and directed both the government and MPA graduate programs. He worked with the University of Kentucky Martin School of Public Policy on a joint doctorate of public policy program and, since 2004, as associate director of the Institute for Federalism and Intergovernmental Relationships.



He founded, directed and obtained external funding for the MSU Statesmanship Center and the MSU Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence.

Hail was appointed to the Truman Scholarship committee by Presidents Obama and Trump. He was a prolific scholar, publishing articles, books and book chapters, as well as taking leadership roles in various organizations, including ASPA. He served as editor or editorial board member for *PUBLIUS: The Journal of Federalism*, *Commonwealth Political Science Review*, *Public Administration Review* and *The Federalism Report*.

Reggie Robinson

Reggie Robinson, president of the Kansas Health Foundation, longtime University of Kansas (KU) faculty member and administrator and former president and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents, passed away on September 19. Robinson was an active ASPA member, attending conferences and participating in Greater Kansas City and Kansas Chapter activities. He was the 2015 Elliot Richardson Lecturer at the ASPA Annual Conference in Chicago, was active on a number of ASPA awards committees and served on the ASPA nominating committee, helping choose future ASPA leaders to be presented during ASPA’s annual elections. He also was a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.



Known for his decades of public service, Robinson served as a White House fellow and special assistant to Clinton administration Attorney General Janet Reno before returning to KU, his alma mater from which he received undergraduate and law degrees. Robinson was chief of staff to former KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway and visiting professor in KU’s School of Law for several years in the late 1990s and early 2000s, before being appointed president and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents, a position he held from 2002 to 2010.

After his stint leading the governing body of Kansas’ public colleges and universities, Robinson worked as director of the Center for Law and Government at Washburn University for several years before returning to KU. He led KU’s School of Public Affairs and Administration from 2014-2018, when he became KU’s vice chancellor for public affairs. He held that role until November 2019, when he left KU to lead the Kansas Health Foundation.

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