



IBM Center for
The Business of Government

Connecting Research to Practice

2012 Call for Research Report Proposals



Dear Colleagues:

Since the creation of the IBM Center for The Business of Government over fourteen years ago, it has been our goal to help public sector leaders and managers address real-world problems by sponsoring independent, third-party research from top minds in academe and the nonprofit sector. Our aim is to produce research and analysis that helps government leaders more effectively respond to their mission and management challenges.

The IBM Center is named “The Business of Government” because its focus is the management and operation of government, not the policies of government. Public sector leaders and managers need the best, most practical advice available when it comes to delivering the business of government. We seek to “bridge the gap” between research and practice by helping to stimulate and accelerate the production of actionable research.

For this reason, we are pleased to solicit proposals that ultimately will result in reports with insightful findings and actionable recommendations for government leaders and public managers in the following areas of interest:

- Leading in an era of complex challenges
- Managing collaboration and connectivity
- Using data and analytics to make better decisions
- Pursuing cost savings and improving performance
- Identifying acquisition approaches that engage the private sector more effectively
- Managing risks and responding to threats in today’s security environment
- Providing insights for the presidential transition from campaigning to governing

We are eager to help communicate what you know about “what works” in these areas to busy government leaders and public managers.

The summer and fall of 2011 were dominated by negotiations between Congress and the president over the federal deficit, and the impending austerity facing government operations in the decade ahead. There is little doubt that agencies across government will face austere budgets for the foreseeable future while facing demands to maintain, if not improve, the performance of their operations. According to GSA Administrator Martha Johnson, “tough budgets should trigger innovation not fear.” The challenge thus facing government leaders will be to use this new environment to transform their organization while also making the necessary reductions in spending.

In November 2012, there will be a Presidential election, and depending on the result, either a transition to a second Obama term or a new administration. Either way, leaders in government will be looking for insightful findings and actionable recommendations that government leaders and public managers can use to achieve savings and improve performance in their operations.

We look forward to receiving proposals that continue our partnership with the world’s leading public management researchers. Our next deadlines are April 2, 2012 and October 1, 2012. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding the IBM Center for The Business of Government.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan D. Breul". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jonathan D. Breul
Executive Director
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The IBM Center for The Business of Government connects public management research with practice. Since 1998, we have helped public management executives and managers improve the effectiveness of government with practical ideas and original thinking. The Center is one of the ways IBM seeks to advance knowledge of how to improve public sector effectiveness.

Governments around the world are at a critical juncture. Fiscal austerity is changing the game for successful leadership at all levels of government. The IBM Center’s research priorities are the challenges and issues that we judge to be the most critical facing government leaders and public managers as they attempt to execute their organization’s mission successfully.

The Center has as its focus practical, actionable recommendations — not simply theory or concepts — that assist public sector leaders and managers to more effectively respond to mission and management challenges.

The Center seeks proposals to prepare reports that address the following public management topics:

Leading in an era of complex challenges

Government leaders are facing very serious, seemingly intractable public management issues that go to the core of effective governance and leadership, testing the very form, structure, and capacity required to meet these problems head-on. These types of challenges run the gamut from the 2008 meltdown of the global financial system to the Y2K challenge, pandemics, and natural and man-made disasters. There is no single leadership style on which to rely to address all problems. Public sector leaders can often achieve greater success by adjusting their style to the specific situation and environment confronting their organizations. But their organization’s capacity, agility, and governance structures matter as well. Leaders will need to lead transformations as their organizations evolve and external environment shifts, whether from an anticipated or unanticipated chain of events.

Areas of interest and research questions include:

- Case studies of successful public sector leaders who have tackled complex challenges head-on, their techniques, impact, lessons learned, and recommendations.
- Case studies of public sector leaders who have successfully employed collaborative action, strategic intent, and unity of effort in tackling “wicked” challenges.
- What can you learn about leadership and transformation from the successes of previous public sector leaders?

Pursuing cost savings and improving performance

Government agencies have an opportunity to spend smarter while also improving their performance. By harnessing major technological shifts and adapting proven, public-sector and commercial best business practices, government leaders and managers can not only make their agencies far more productive, but also foster greater innovation in areas ranging from health care to education and energy – innovation that will generate economic growth and job creation.

Areas of interest and research questions include:

- Cases studies on how best to apply advanced business analytics to reduce improper payments and eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Cases studies on the most effective ways to move to shared services for mission-support activities.
- Case studies of best practices in streamlining public sector supply chain management and speeding adoption of new supply chain management approaches.
- How can government use performance information beyond simply setting goals, demonstrating progress, and explaining trends? What's next?

Managing collaboration and connectivity

Collaboration and connectivity are quickly becoming the decade's watchwords because the problems we face involve numerous and varied players, and because those players have 24/7 access – not only to one another – but to data, information, and even things in the real world that are plugged into a sprawling communications infrastructure that never closes down.

Fiscal austerity will drive government leaders and public managers to develop new ways of doing business with citizens, the private sector, and other government organizations. At the same time, the complexity of problems faced by agencies will require collaborating across bureaucratic boundaries, and at times with people and organizations outside of government. It is within this environment that government leaders and public managers are confronted with the challenge of how best to use the new tools of connectivity, such as social media, to effectively meet their agencies missions.

Areas of interest and research questions include:

- What are successful approaches and best practices for successfully managing across boundaries—including both intra- and extra-governmental collaboration?
- What will be the effects of changing roles of citizens and employees as they become involved in cross-boundary networks?
- What are the tools and best practices that government leaders should use to meet new expectations created by recent emphases on digital engagement?
- How can government leaders and public managers select the most appropriate strategies and tools for transparency, participation, and collaboration in delivering their mission?

Managing risks and responding to threats in today's security environment

Government leaders and public managers have a fundamental responsibility to mitigate risks and protect citizens from security threats, as well as from man-made and natural disasters. Today's complex and continuously evolving security environment requires government leaders to focus on ever-present challenges while adapting to emerging threats.

This will require government leaders to look across threats, vulnerabilities, and resources and prioritize resource allocations. Further, issues such as energy security and climate change will influence existing national security concerns. How does one make sense of these many challenges and begin to craft practical and affordable respond strategies? The Center seeks research that gives government leaders and public managers a clearer understanding of these problems as well as strategic and practical approaches to responding to them.

Areas of interest and research questions include:

- Case studies on the cyber priorities for government action and how government can enable the new public and private partnerships to dealing with the cyber threat.
- Case studies how government should organize and operate for routine inter-agency security operations from the National Security Council to front-line agencies.
- How should the government's risk management and cyber approaches protect the whole of government and better enable agencies to meet mission and improve performance?
- With the availability of open source information, how can government best structure its analysis of strategic security issues, such as regional stability?

Using data and analytics to make better decisions

Government leaders and public managers over the next several years will need to respond to new demands from political leaders and the public to rapidly access information that can be used for decision-making, improving performance, and accountability. This will challenge leaders and managers to collect better data, conduct better analysis, make better decisions, and take smarter action. Performance expert Harry Hatry says, "The challenge today is no longer in collecting information; the challenge now lies in using the information that is regularly collected."

Areas of interest and research questions include:

- Case studies of the successful use of analytics, data, and performance information to improve quality and reduce costs.
- In what areas can data analytics and advanced analytic techniques be used to benefit government agencies, public leaders, and the public?
- Case studies on how government can enhance both its institutional capacity and staff competencies in the use of analytics and advanced analytic techniques to improve decision-making.

Identifying acquisition approaches that engage the private sector more effectively

Government leaders and public managers are increasingly doing business using methods and approaches that differ radically from the traditional contracts and grants processes. Today, government leaders and managers need to know how to use innovative acquisition methods that shorten the life-cycle of a contract or grant, as well as how to leverage new ways of tapping into the private sector.

Areas of interest and research questions include:

- Case studies of the most effective uses of strategic sourcing and other innovative means of acquisition.
- Case studies on the effectiveness of pre-Request-for-Proposal (RFP) communications between government and industry.
- How can government improve the management of contracts and measurement of acquisition outcomes?
- How can government attract the right talent and provide training in the required skills for the acquisition profession?

Providing insights for the presidential transition from campaigning to governing

The transition from campaigning to governing requires that presidential campaign policies be transformed from rhetoric into an actionable agenda and then into concrete results. Our goal is to identify new ideas and new approaches to management and governance that can assist the next administration meet the challenges of today while seizing the opportunities of tomorrow.

Areas of interest and research questions include:

- Case studies on identify cutting edge transition practices in states, localities, other countries, and private industry.
- Case studies on creating the capacity for government to respond to the increase in non-routine problems, like terrorism, hurricanes, or public health emergencies.
- Are there lessons for incoming political leaders so they can be more effective, for example in working with career staffs?
- What are the key management challenges facing the next administration and how should these challenges be tackled?

While the seven topics outlined above frame our priorities, the Center also welcomes interesting and timely practical research and actionable recommendations in areas such as social media, human capital and workforce development, healthcare reform implementation, sustainability, and transforming the delivery of social services.

Purpose

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

Eligibility

Individuals working in universities, nonprofit organizations or journalism.

Description of Stipends

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

Size of the Stipends

\$20,000 for each report.

Submitting Applications

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

New applicants will first need to create a username, password, and profile before completing the online application.

Applicants will then fill-in a series of fields that include the proposal title, proposal summary (700 character limit), the

research report proposal (9,000 character limit) to include the (i) purpose, ii) methodology, and (iii) results of the proposed report, a category for the proposal, and a resume for each author (9,000 character limit per author).

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

Deadlines

Applications should be received by April 2, 2011 or October 1, 2012. Applicants will be informed of a decision approximately six weeks after the deadline.

Evaluation Criteria

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

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

Application

Can I apply online?

Yes, online applications are preferred. To apply online, you first need to create a profile in our system visit: <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/content/research-stipends> to learn more and to create an account.

How do I log into the systems to change my address or password, check the status of my proposal, or to submit a proposal if I already have a username and password?

Learn more by visiting our login page at: <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/content/research-stipends>

Can the proposal or resume be more than 9,000 characters (about three pages)?

No. Your proposal and resume each should be 9,000 characters or less.

Does the Center only fund reports that are addressed to federal executives and managers?

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

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

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

Can I submit more than one proposal at a time?

No. Researchers are asked to submit only one proposal per stipend cycle.

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

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

Stipends

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

No.

Does the Center pay for overhead expenses?

No.

Can the recipient’s institution receive the stipend?

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

Reports

Who is the audience for completed reports?

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

How quickly must the report be completed?

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

How will the report be reviewed?

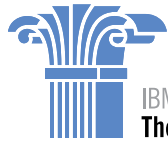
Upon receipt of the manuscript, the IBM Center reviews the draft for consistency with the recipient’s original proposal. The IBM Center may offer editorial suggestions to better address how government leaders and public managers will read and act upon the report’s contents.

How will the report be published?

The IBM Center will publish the report and distribute it to government leaders and managers.

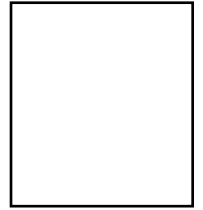
Can recipients publish the report in other publications?

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



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ABOUT THE IBM CENTER FOR THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT

About IBM Global Business Services

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

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