

# The Civic Research Agenda

A NATIONAL STUDY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
RESEARCH NEEDS AND ROADMAP FOR UNIVERSITY  
COLLABORATION



## About Us

### Lead author

↳ **Kate Burns**, Director, State and Local Innovation, Federation of American Scientists

### Contributing authors

↳ **Andy Gordon**, Associate Director, State and Local Innovation, Federation of American Scientists

↳ **Rose Mische Commins**, Senior Manager, State and Local Innovation, Federation of American Scientists

↳ **Stefania Di Mauro-Nava**, Consultant, State and Local Innovation, Federation of American Scientists

## About the Federation of American Scientists

The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) works to advance progress on a broad suite of contemporary issues where science, technology, and innovation policy can deliver transformative impact, and seeks to ensure that scientific and technical expertise have a seat at the policymaking table. Established in 1945 by scientists in response to the atomic bomb, FAS continues to bring scientific rigor and analysis to address national challenges. More information about FAS's work at [fas.org](https://fas.org).

The State and Local Innovation (formerly MetroLab) team within FAS aims to take good ideas from the lab to local governments through intentional, regular and impact-driven policy alignment. This mission is twofold: to put science in cities and to understand, support, and enable transformative partnerships between cities and universities. More information about the State and Local Innovation team's work at <https://fas.org/issue/metrolab/>.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the Author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Schmidt Futures, our Steering Committee, nor the entirety of the Federation of American Scientists.

FAS can be reached at 1150 18th St. NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC, 20036, [fas@fas.org](mailto:fas@fas.org), or through [fas.org](https://fas.org).

COPYRIGHT © FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

## Contents

---

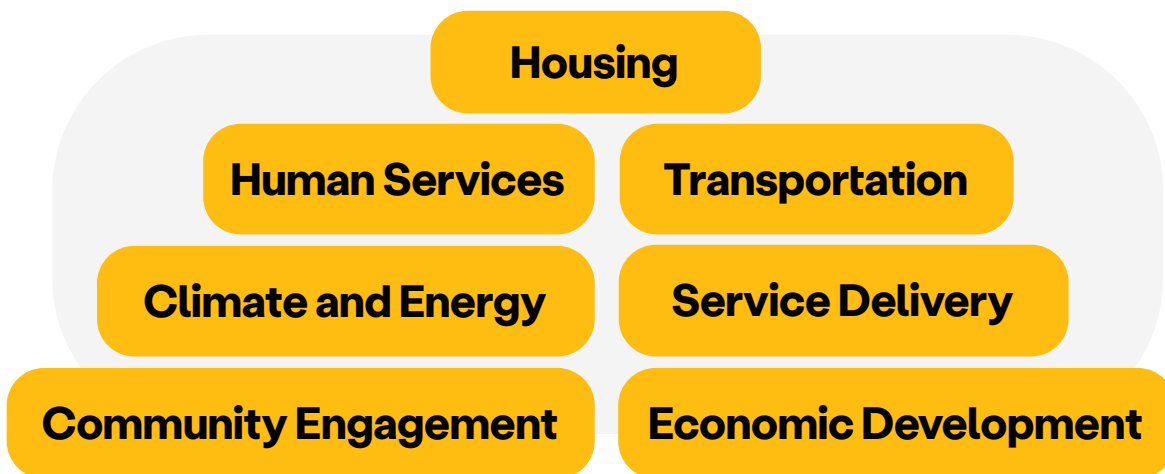
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION BY DR. JEDIDAH ISLER, FAS CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICER.....	3
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION BY KATE GARMAN BURNS, FAS DIRECTOR OF STATE AND LOCAL INNOVATION .....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
METHODOLOGIES.....	6
PRIORITY RESEARCH NEEDS FOR CITIES AND COUNTIES.....	11
RESEARCH NEEDS AND DOMAIN-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.....	14
HOUSING .....	15
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....	20
HUMAN SERVICES .....	23
CLIMATE AND ENERGY .....	28
TRANSPORTATION .....	31
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....	34
SERVICE DELIVERY .....	36
THE RESEARCH-TO-IMPACT ECOSYSTEM: PERCEPTIONS, BARRIERS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	43
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	55
APPENDICES.....	58

## Executive Summary

---

The Civic Research Agenda is a culmination of several years of study, partnerships, and intelligence gathering that is the first comprehensive reporting on the priority research needs of American cities and counties. It considers the demand and supply of research: what are the research needs of local governments, and how can research outputs improve to “supply” or provide answers to better serve that audience?

The priority research needs for U.S. local governments are the following:



Beyond any specific policy domain, local governments expressed the desire for support from the research community in three overarching areas: 1) **evaluation**; how can the research community measure and provide evidence that a policy intervention has achieved desired (or negative) impacts; 2) **efficiency**; how can the research community help local governments do more with less; and 3) **data generation**; how can the research community create and provide access to useful data that do not currently exist.

This report also focuses on the ecosystem itself; what are the current perceptions, barriers, and recommendations that can inform and improve how local governments and universities work together? Findings show that issues include:

- ↳ **Perceptions:** Incorrect perceptions are stalling trust between these institutions. University faculty and staff fear being seen as too intellectual and disconnected. Local government staff fear being seen as not intellectual enough.
- ↳ **Barriers:** The importance of relationship building and lack of networking: there are clear structural discovery systems on either side. Both are operating informally, and often, only by individual relationships. This report also provides evidence that the research demand/supply

ecosystem is deeply relationship-dependent, creating high barriers for newcomers, inequity of access, and bottlenecks around well-connected individuals.

↳ **Recommendations:** The best way for research outcomes and publications to become actionable are:

- Make the research and findings as specific to a jurisdiction as possible
- Reduce paywalls
- Provide executive summaries with no technical jargon
- Provide peer-city or peer-county comparative analysis
- Go beyond observation and make recommendations

Finally, this report provides specific recommendations for local governments and universities to improve and grow the research-to-impact pipeline for one simple purpose: make research actionable, understandable, and accessible to communities across the country.

The singular recommendation that can strengthen the research-to-impact pipeline is this: research should have an audience that lives outside of the peer-to-peer review system.

## Letter of Introduction by Dr. Jedidah Isler, FAS Chief Science Officer

When I joined the Federation of American Scientists as the organization's inaugural Chief Science Officer, one of my top priorities was increasing access and engagement across the science and technology ecosystem. The entry points to, and engagement with, the science ecosystem are too often hidden or neglected – with many people and their communities, more broadly, left wondering where the tangible benefits from science and technology lie. There is, however, one clear way to better connect people and the places they live to science, technology, innovation and all the positive impacts they can deliver: by bringing people together to name their needs through collaboration between universities and local governments.

At FAS, we focus on complex issues with a north star of using science, technology, and innovation policy to deliver dramatic progress that benefits humanity. Local governments are a juggernaut of policy delivery. The Civic Research Agenda (“CRA”) underscores that giving cities and counties more ways to access the best and most relevant research produced by technical experts is crucial to driving that progress. Deeper connections between universities and local governments can unlock innovations from the mundane to the monumental. It can bring capacity to under-resourced efforts and heft to lofty aspirations for progress.



Imagine if the research community answered even a small percentage of the 432 research questions posed by local governments in this report: we would unlock ways to ensure all demographics are included in data analysis; we would fast-track housing supply in places where we need it most; we would make roads safer and more responsive – and the list goes on. This report covers a spectrum of considerations. At its most nuanced, it considers detailed research questions covering seven policy domains, and at its most wide-ranging, it explores how to bring science and technology into a community. The recommendations included here run the gamut from small nudges (like urging researchers to include executive summaries in their reports), to broader considerations (such as calling for a clearer definition of “scientifically novel” at our nation’s research funding agencies).

As you read through this unprecedented attempt to quantify the research needs of communities around the country, I hope our first Civic Research Agenda inspires you to think more deeply about those often underutilized intersections between local government and the science and technology ecosystem in your own community. Think of how many more lives could be positively impacted if research institutions could shift even a bit more of their focus to solving the challenges faced by their local governments. Think, too, about how much more progress could be made if local leaders could quickly and effectively unlock the scientific expertise and innovation that has been the backbone of American prosperity since WWII and, for many communities, is right in their own backyard. As a former academic, I know first-hand that the possibilities for progress are – much like our glorious Universe – vast and ever-expanding.

I sincerely hope this is the first of many Civic Research Agendas. Our State and Local Innovation team, anchored by the fearless Kate Garman Burns, has produced an amazing report. We are truly grateful for their efforts. Thanks also to the generous funders and donors, researchers, community members, local leaders, and the vast network of contributors that made this happen. I hope you’ll join me in sharing it widely and acting on its clarion call to revitalize these important connections so that each and every community can reap all of the benefits that science and technology has to offer.

Ad Astra,

Jedidah Isler, PhD

## Letter of Introduction by Kate Garman Burns, FAS Director of State and Local Innovation

---

Before joining MetroLab, I was a part of “the network” as a city staffer. I worked inside a city hall and went to MetroLab conferences because I believed in its work. Today, the mission of bringing research and science to local policymaking is as important as ever.

Core to that mission is the work of building a Civic Research Agenda.

In 2023, MetroLab received a philanthropic grant to develop a local government R&D agenda. Inspired by the annual Administration Research and Development Budget Priorities issued by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, MetroLab envisioned an opportunity for a priority research needs document that is informed by, and in the service of, local governments.

This effort came with ambitious goals. First, it needed to represent local governments across the country. To do this, we knew we had to have a breadth of scale: we needed to talk to folks inside local governments that “live in the weeds.” We knew that it was important to get the perspective of local governments across all geographies with varying priority concerns and varying levels of resources. In-person workshops were a must to meet the community where they are.

Next, it needed to make sense to the research community. Each in-person workshop was hosted on a university campus. Every single research question that resulted from the workshops or the surveys has been reviewed to be presented in a way that can easily shape a research project or program.

Finally, it has to be credible. We wanted to ensure that key research and local government institutions were involved from the beginning to provide guidance and feedback. The first thing we did was establish the steering committee – a group of individuals I am incredibly thankful for in shaping our approach and providing exceptional guidance along the way.

In June 2025, MetroLab was acquired by FAS. MetroLab’s team and projects moved forward uninterrupted, and were bolstered by the wisdom, network, and expertise of FAS staff. And our circle of partners, including Kate Bender from Porchlight Insights and Christine Baker Smith at the National League of Cities, made the Civic Research Agenda possible.

It is my distinct privilege to be a part of this multi-year, multi-partner endeavor. What an opportunity to be in the room, talking with faculty who care deeply about their communities. And to my local government colleagues, I leave you with my favorite quote from this project, “not all experts have degrees.”

May researchers be seen as doers.

And may local government staff be seen as experts.

Let’s do some good.



Kate Garman Burns

## Introduction

---

“Government is best which is closest to the people” – Lyndon B. Johnson

Science is one of the most impactful tools humanity has in addressing complex, important problems. The federal government remains the main driver of academic R&D, funding 55% (\$59.7 billion of the total \$108.8 billion) of expenditures in 2023.<sup>1</sup> These investments have resulted in some of the greatest inventions of our time, including Global Positioning System (GPS), cell phones, Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR) technology, MRIs, the internet, and artificial intelligence (AI).

Meanwhile, local governments – or cities and counties for the purpose of this report – are the very laboratories that serve as a key partner to deliver solutions. The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) holds an evidence-based theory of change that by bringing academic and local government institutions together in a meaningful and intentional way, solutions abound.

For many reasons which this report will address, this intentional pairing is difficult. Two key reasons stand out. First, research is often given to local governments without request, lacking a process to understand the need (or demand). Second, research output doesn't necessarily align with how cities and counties work, and it's difficult to adopt. In other words, the **demand and supply** of research needs to be intentionally considered for local governments.

The Civic Research Agenda is a culmination of several years of study, partnerships, and intelligence gathering that is the first comprehensive reporting on the priority research needs of U.S. cities and counties. Note the emphasis on priority research needs. Research of all types and science backgrounds are likely very applicable and helpful to local governments. The unique nature of this list is that it is grassroots based. FAS has asked local governments directly about their research needs and pressing knowledge gaps that, if addressed, would help address their priority challenges and goals. It also provides an analysis of the supply side barriers (and recommendations) that will connect research to impact.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gibbons. MT: National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES). 2024. Higher Education R&D Expenditures Increased 11.2%. Exceeded \$108 Billion in FY 2023. NSF 25-313. Alexandria, VA: U.S. National Science Foundation. Available at <https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf25313>.

## Methodologies

---

In 2024, the Civic Research Agenda project created a steering committee to support this endeavor. The purpose of this committee was multifaceted: 1) to provide guidance and assist MetroLab in selecting cities in which to conduct workshops; 2) ensure the agenda is representative of the diverse and dynamic needs of local governments across the country; 3) ensure that the agenda is appropriate in scope; an exhaustive research list doesn't necessarily reflect the priorities and urgency of local government research needs; and 4) review the final R&D agenda to ensure it is an actionable document that translates to the scientific ecosystem. The Steering Committee included the following individuals:

- ↳ **Hana Passen** | Director of Innovation & Partnerships, Stanford Impact Labs
- ↳ **Terri Matthews** | Director of Town+Gown:NYC @ NYC DCC
- ↳ **Joda Thongnopnua** | Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP), National Science Foundation
- ↳ **Justin Kits** | Assistant Vice President for Economic Development, The University of Tulsa (formerly Tulsa Innovation Lab)
- ↳ **Kevin Cooke** | Assistant Vice President, Research Policy, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
- ↳ **Alvaro J. Muñoz** | Director, International, Community, and Economic Engagement, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
- ↳ **Mark Ritacco** | Senior Advisor, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP (formerly Chief Government Affairs Officer, National Association of Counties)

Acknowledgement of these individuals demonstrates the collaborative and comprehensive nature of this effort. It does not, in any way, indicate that these individuals or their organizations condone this report and should not be taken as “sponsorship,” legal advice, or approval of its contents.

For the purpose of this report, “local government” is considered to include U.S. cities and counties, and “research” refers to the use of data, analysis, and evidence to inform local government decisions, policies, and implementation.

The Civic Research Agenda is informed by three primary sources, as described in detail below:

- ↳ A MetroLab-produced digital survey
- ↳ In partnership with the National League of Cities (NLC), a MetroLab-NLC digital survey
- ↳ In-person workshops hosted at nine locations

## **MetroLab Survey**

The Civic Research Agenda Survey was developed in order to gather feedback from a broader range of cities. MetroLab contracted with PorchLight Insights, a local government consulting firm based in Kansas City, MO, to manage survey development, administration, and analysis.

The survey instrument was developed with feedback from the Steering Committee, and sought to gather information about: 1) cities' experiences with research collaboration with university/college partners, including frequency and barriers; 2) priorities for research collaborations with university/college partners and feedback on specific ideas; 3) preferences for research reporting/communications; and 4) basic demographics about jurisdictions to allow for comparison (type, name, state, population). The survey was designed to primarily consist of multiple-choice or ranking questions to support a high rate of completion, with a few key open-ended questions. The survey was built in the Survey Monkey platform and tested for ease of use and readability with select local government staff.

While contact information was gathered in the survey to ascertain survey completion (particularly if multiple people from the same city or county took the survey), survey participants were informed that all individual responses would be kept confidential and not included in any reporting. Survey reporting was at the aggregate level, and any information that is attributable to individual answers was anonymized to exclude the participant name and the name of the jurisdiction.

The target survey audience was cities and counties across a range of population sizes and geographies that had some experience or opinion about local government research. To reach this audience, we partnered with other organizations that support local government research and innovation, including Results for America, the Alliance for Innovation, the Bloomberg Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University, and state municipal leagues. MetroLab and PorchLight Insights also distributed the survey through their respective contact channels. Outreach began in early April 2025 and continued through early July 2025 and each partner used their own distinct URL to allow targeted tracking of outreach. As this invite was sent to a network of local government representatives over several channels and over the course of several months, the total number of surveys "sent" are unknown. After cleaning the data, a total of 47 responses from local government staff were received through this survey outreach.

## **MetroLab-NLC Survey**

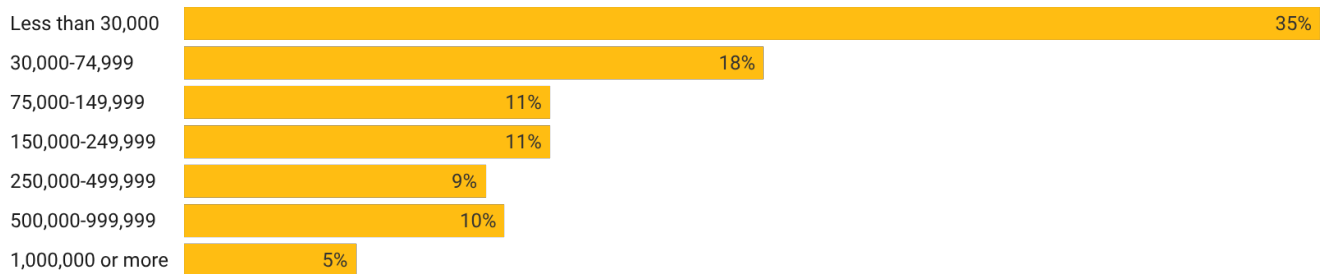
In an effort to further broaden outreach to cities, in June 2025 MetroLab partnered with NLC, which routinely sends "pulse" surveys via their platform to their network of municipalities to gather information about operations and best practices. To align with NLC's pulse survey structure, the Civic Research Agenda Survey was modified to include just five key questions, in addition to collecting basic demographic information. These questions all aligned with questions from the full survey and included: 1) frequency of collaboration with university/college

partners on research projects; 2) barriers to collaboration (open-ended); 3) priorities for research collaborations with university/college partners; 4) feedback on specific ideas for collaboration; and 5) research they would like to get from a college/university (open-ended).

NLC cleaned and provided the data to the project team, after which it was integrated into the previous survey with cross-cutting results reported. A total of 120 survey responses were received through the NLC survey process.

**In total, combining the MetroLab-NLC survey and the MetroLab survey**, this analysis includes a total of 167 survey responses. These responses represented 152 distinct jurisdictions and 37 states (plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico). The results primarily came from cities and towns (92%), representing a broad range of population sizes.

### Share of MetroLab-NLC Local Government R&D Survey responses by city population



### In-person Workshops

This initiative also included in-depth workshops with nine communities. MetroLab aimed to target cities and counties that represented a wide range of compositions. Ultimately, the nine workshops that were hosted showcase a mix of urban vs. rural, small vs. medium vs. large population, strong university partnerships vs. virtually non-existent, and geographic diversity.



Working collaboratively with mayors, county leaders, and university partners, these workshops allowed us to better understand best practices in creating actionable research, identify existing barriers, and to locally grow these ecosystems. The audience consisted of local government department leaders and staff, university faculty, and key community partner organizations (i.e., local community foundations, housing groups, and chambers of commerce).

TOTAL WORKSHOP ATTENDEES	
TOTAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS AT THE IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS	366
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS	81
TOTAL NUMBER OF LOCAL GOV REPRESENTATIVES	139
TOTAL NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES	146
TOTAL NUMBER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTED	12
TOTAL NUMBER OF UNIQUE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS REPRESENTED	85
TOTAL NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED	42
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED	59

The “bucketing” of policy domains and sub policy domains were based on the following:

- ↳ Survey results
- ↳ Confirmation received across the workshops of including specific research questions were grouped with suggested policy domains

- ↳ The discretion and expertise of the FAS State and Local Innovation team. The policy domains align more closely with how local governments are structured (i.e. typical departments that sit within a local government, Department of Housing, Public Works, etc), versus typical academic structures (i.e. School of Engineering, Geography and Environment, Public Policy, etc).



## Priority Research Needs for Cities and Counties

---

### Priority Research Questions

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties are:

#### Housing

- ↳ How can local governments improve housing affordability for those that are cost burdened?
- ↳ What are the long-term effects of affordable housing and permanent housing interventions on household stability, economic mobility, and community well-being?
- ↳ What structural, market, and policy factors most strongly drive housing affordability and shape economic mobility for individuals and families?

#### Economic Development

- ↳ What is the right balance of tax incentive programs to attract talent vs. ensuring a healthy tax base to provide needed and desirable services?
- ↳ How can cities optimize land use planning to balance sustainability, resiliency, and economic competitiveness?
- ↳ What indicators or methods can help evaluate whether workforce development programs are reducing poverty and producing lasting economic mobility for city residents?
- ↳ What do residents experiencing poverty see as the real levers for improving opportunity? What barriers affect access to jobs, higher education, or skill-building programs?
- ↳ What is the lifecycle cost of growth across jurisdictions (infrastructure, service delivery, schools, stormwater), and how does that change under alternative land-use scenarios?
- ↳ How are residents in mid- to small-sized communities' economic mobility shaped by childcare access, safety-net reductions, disability service cuts, and changes in federal and state funding?

#### Human Services

- ↳ How can local governments better determine early childcare needs and capacity; how many families need childcare (specific to the local government generally and by neighborhood)?
- ↳ What are the non-academic, outside-of-school barriers that prevent students from getting the most out of school?
- ↳ What changes in fire prevention and response practices are needed to manage hazards associated with lithium-ion batteries and other modern power storage technologies?
- ↳ How can local governments develop tools to track and mitigate public health risks linked to extreme weather events, aging infrastructure, and other climate-related hazards?

- ↳ Which community-level barriers (transportation, language, childcare, stigma) prevent access to mental health and primary care, and where are these barriers concentrated?
- ↳ How should health and social indicators be integrated into regional planning decisions (housing, transport, energy, etc.)?

### **Climate and Energy**

- ↳ Support in creating a climate vulnerability assessment to city assets; that is, how can a local government generate and use localized climate data on flooding, heat islands, and air quality to inform infrastructure design and adaptation planning?
- ↳ How do disaster and flooding policies affect housing stability and displacement?
- ↳ What smart systems, maintenance strategies, or predictive technologies can strengthen infrastructure resilience and reduce vulnerability to severe weather events?
- ↳ How should environmental hazards in locations where a cluster of hazards are present be prioritized for mitigation?

### **Transportation**

- ↳ Which infrastructure design strategies (e.g., complete streets, traffic patterns, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and accessibility design, trees, litter controls) most influence resident behavior and safety?
- ↳ How can a local government better understand the economic return on investment (ROI) and social health ROI for active transit and transportation networks? What data is needed to do this?
- ↳ How will artificial intelligence (AI) impact transit authorities? How will local operations be impacted, and how will users be impacted?
- ↳ What transportation and infrastructure investments and technologies are best suited for unique challenges to [a specific local government], rather than generalized best practices?
- ↳ What data should be prioritized when creating policy to improve sustainability and efficiency (across all modes of transportation)?
- ↳ How can infrastructure planning better coordinate across agencies, utilities, and capital timelines, including balancing of competing capital priorities across agencies and departments?

### **Community Engagement**

- ↳ How do different populations, including non-English-speaking and historically underserved residents, receive and respond to City communications, and which outreach methods most effectively reach each group and allow for two-way communication?
- ↳ Are there ways to show city government values and effectiveness in order to build trust in our communities and increase civic engagement in our city?

- ↳ What strategies most effectively build and maintain public trust in government, particularly when communicating the need for increased costs of services or policy changes that require trade-offs?
- ↳ What does effective community engagement look like in under-resourced neighborhoods, and how can engagement be sustained over time?
- ↳ How do residents define “well-being” and what indicators (subjective and objective) best capture those definitions across neighborhoods?

### **Service Delivery**

- ↳ How can a local government understand who is missing from data collection which causes biases in the output, and then how do they correct for this?
- ↳ How can a local government develop a comparative benchmarking framework that uses peer city data to assess return on investment, staffing levels, and service efficiency across departments?
- ↳ What innovative approaches have other cities adopted to attract and retain skilled municipal employees, particularly non-salary strategies that improve things like workplace culture, flexibility, and professional development?
- ↳ How can the city measure whether key services (e.g., public works, code enforcement, permitting, health, data operations) are effective and equitable?
- ↳ How can a local government evaluate government performance, track return on investment, and adopt continuous improvement practices?
- ↳ How can the region better understand the ecosystem and flow of resources and collaborations (government, not-for-profits, for-profits, etc.) and make services more efficient through that understanding?
- ↳ How can cities stabilize revenue while accounting for resident financial hardship?

### **Cross-Cutting Research Needs**

Beyond domain-specific research questions, local governments consistently expressed demand for support from the research community in three cross-cutting areas:

- ↳ Evaluation: how can the research community measure and provide evidence that a policy intervention has achieved desired (or negative) impacts;
- ↳ Efficiency: how can the research community help local governments do more with limited resources; and
- ↳ Data generation: how can the research community create and provide access to useful data that do not currently exist.

These needs reflect how research is ultimately used by local governments and cut across all policy domains identified in this report.

## Research Needs and Domain-Specific Questions

The priority research policy domains presented below are informed by both quantitative survey data and qualitative insights gathered through in-person workshops. Across these inputs, housing consistently emerged as the top priority for cities and counties. The remaining domains were also repeatedly identified as high-importance areas, forming a clear second tier of priorities.

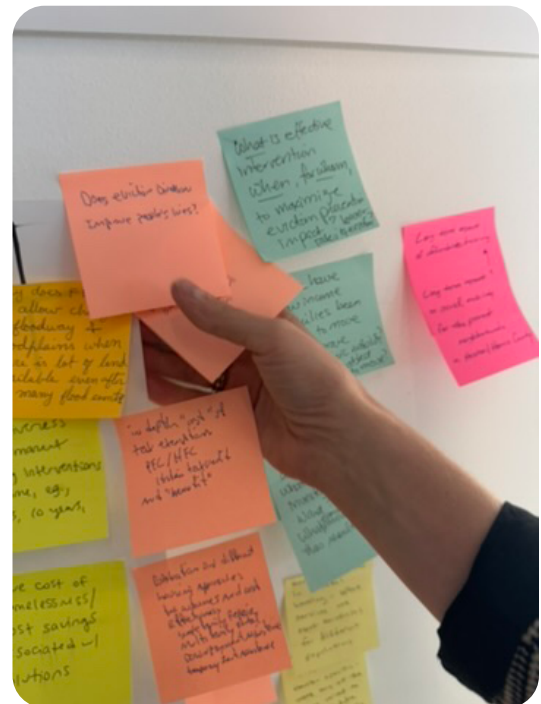
The priority research policy domains for U.S. local governments are:

- ↳ **Housing**
- ↳ **Economic Development**
- ↳ **Human Services**
- ↳ **Climate and Energy**
- ↳ **Transportation**
- ↳ **Community Engagement**
- ↳ **Service Delivery**

This list of priority research policy domains and the specific research questions to follow are more than a catalog of wants from local government. They are a demand-side signal from the largest implementers of public policy in the United States. Cities and counties are responsible for translating federally funded research into real-world outcomes. When their priority knowledge gaps are not reflected in funding priorities, research remains upstream from impact.

Why is it important to identify priority research policy domains? For federal agencies and philanthropic funders, this demand-side signal can inform where research dollars are likely to generate stronger returns. When research addresses clearly identified operational gaps and citizen needs, it increases the probability of adoption and replication at scale. That, in turn, can improve the return on public and philanthropic R&D spending.

When it comes to financial returns by way of efficacy and cost savings, research that informs infrastructure design, service delivery models, prevention strategies, or procurement decisions can reduce downstream public expenditures, avoid duplicative efforts, and



improve capital allocation. Even marginal improvements in large local spending categories can translate into significant savings. More importantly, research based on these signals can produce outsized impact because when research is designed around documented local needs, it is more likely to influence policy decisions and produce measurable outcomes for residents. Aligning research investments with local demand increases the likelihood that research moves beyond publication and into real-world implementation.

Ultimately, treating these priorities as a key input to the national R&D conversation strengthens the connection between federal and philanthropically funded research and the communities it intends to serve.

## Housing

Housing, as defined for purposes of this report, refers to **the policies, market forces, financing tools, and service systems that shape the availability, affordability, quality, and stability of homes within a community**. Housing, as a policy area, brings together a significant amount of cross-policy considerations including economic well-being, zoning, supply chain, and more. Thus, this topic covers a wide range of expertise that might need to be brought into the conversation.

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top three research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties in this domain are:

- ↳ **How can local governments improve housing affordability for those that are cost burdened?**
- ↳ **What are the long-term effects of affordable housing and permanent housing interventions on household stability, economic mobility, and community well-being?**
- ↳ **What structural, market, and policy factors most strongly drive housing affordability and shape economic mobility for individuals and families?**

Building on this set of priority questions, the following additional research needs and knowledge gaps were raised during in-person workshops. These do not include the top research questions identified above.

### Economic Development

- ↳ How have prior capital improvement plan investments and funding trends varied by neighborhood?
- ↳ What are the comparative public costs of homelessness interventions vs. leaving individuals unsheltered or incarcerated?
- ↳ What are recommended policies to have downtown residencies absorb people who have been displaced in adjacent neighborhoods?

- ↳ What are the community costs of tax exemptions?
- ↳ What are the long-term impacts of affordable housing?
- ↳ Within a specific jurisdiction, were any of the fears voiced in opposition to affordable housing realized? What can a “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) response tool tell us?
- ↳ What are the trackable impacts following shifts in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding?
- ↳ How can modeling of zoning reforms, displacement trends, and predictive analytics inform real-time equitable development policies, particularly in historically underserved neighborhoods?
- ↳ How do demographic shifts and policy changes influence neighborhood-to-neighborhood migration patterns, and what strategies most effectively stabilize legacy communities during periods of transformation?
- ↳ What is the impact on economic development and individual economic mobility due to increasing housing prices?
- ↳ What factors drive community opposition to affordable or supportive housing, and what are the measurable outcomes for neighborhoods where such developments are introduced?
- ↳ How do market forces and investor behavior affect neighborhood stability and health?
- ↳ How do housing investments affect health, safety, and education outcomes at the neighborhood and block levels?

### **Eviction**

- ↳ How to best evaluate if policies and programs are mitigating unnecessary displacement?
- ↳ Does eviction diversion improve people’s lives?
- ↳ Does temporary rent assistance work, and is it a question of housing stability? Is it effective at eviction prevention, and for how long?
- ↳ What is the eviction cost to a local government and savings related to eviction diversion?
- ↳ What are the true public-sector costs of eviction, including impacts on healthcare, education, homelessness services, and the legal system?
- ↳ What is the most effective eviction intervention? When and for whom will maximize those interventions?
- ↳ What is the impact of delaying eviction?
- ↳ What is the monthly data on evictions neighborhood by neighborhood?
- ↳ What are the costs-savings to society of eviction prevention?
- ↳ What are the long-term needs of households facing housing instability, and what enduring impacts do various housing and economic-support interventions have on individual and community outcomes?
- ↳ How effective are eviction-prevention strategies in reducing eviction filings, housing displacement, and downstream social and economic harms?

- ↳ Does temporary rent assistance work in providing actual housing stability? Is eviction prevention effective and for how long?
- ↳ What are the financial, social, and health impacts of eviction diversion programs and the long-term benefit of funding legal aid?

### **Homelessness**

- ↳ What are the outcomes of providing persons experiencing homelessness direct financial assistance versus providing permanent supporting housing? Which support is more impactful?
- ↳ What is the effectiveness of permanent housing interventions over time, i.e. two years, ten years, etc?
- ↳ What data are available to demonstrate the qualitative and quantitative impacts on a city's homelessness response? What is the system's programmatic efficacy?
- ↳ What is the cost of leaving a person homeless to a specific jurisdiction?
- ↳ What are the cost savings from alleviating someone from being unhoused?
- ↳ What is the cost in cities due to hospital visits by the homelessness population of a jurisdiction?
- ↳ What are the true social, economic, and public-sector costs of homelessness compared with the costs of alternative interventions (e.g., permanent supportive housing, prevention, or rapid rehousing)?
- ↳ How effective are different homelessness-response strategies in reducing homelessness, improving individual outcomes, and lowering system-level costs?
- ↳ What housing solutions are most preferred by both residents and program participants experiencing homelessness, and how do these preferences affect housing stability and well-being?
- ↳ What are the long-term impacts of homelessness-response strategies on individuals' health, economic stability, and social integration, as well as on public systems such as healthcare, criminal justice, and housing?

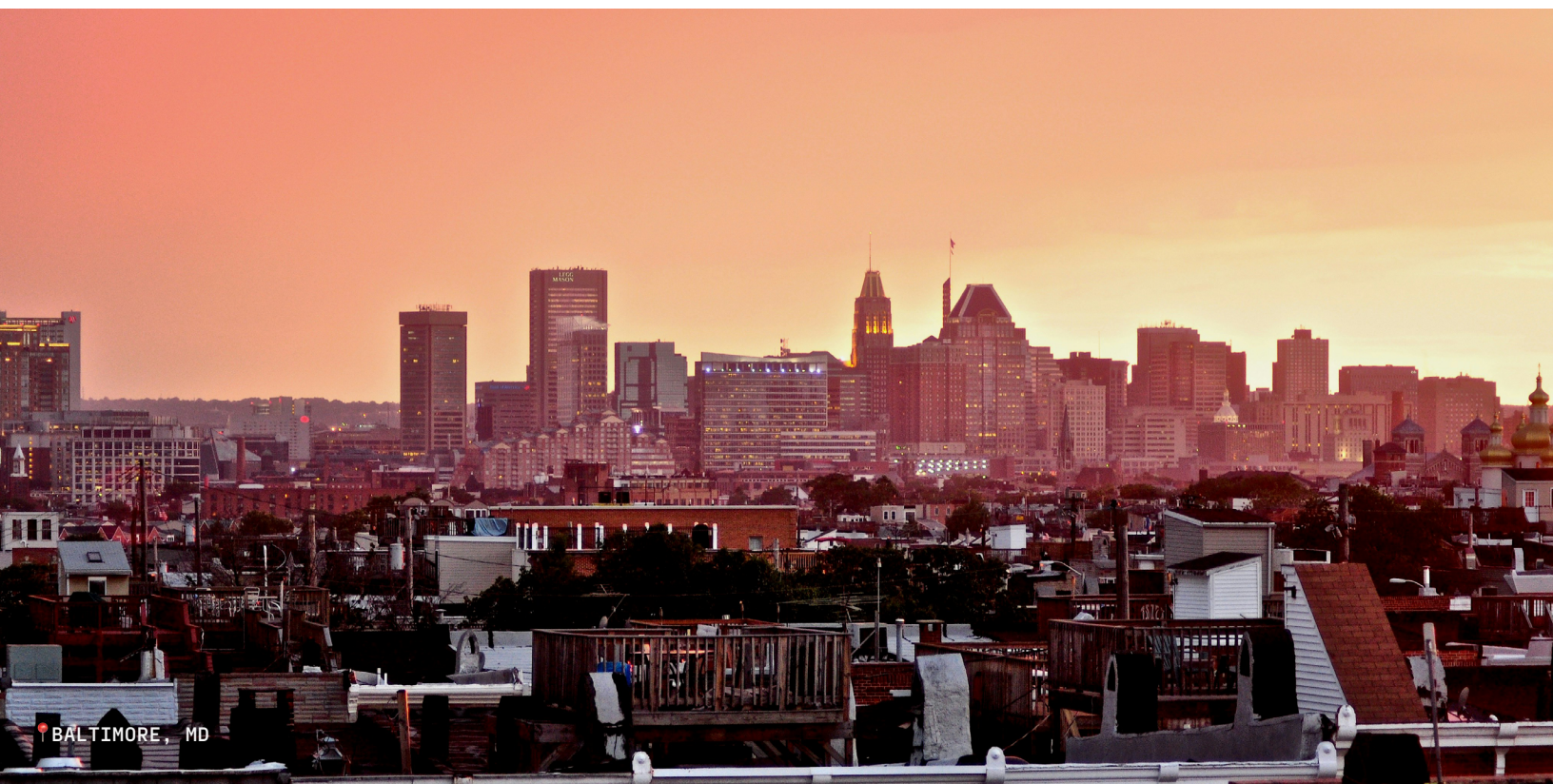
### **Housing Inventory**

- ↳ How can a university gather data on the housing conditions and quality of privately owned housing stock, and provide this data to a local government?
- ↳ What are the current and projected housing needs for capacity?
- ↳ What is demand for smaller units (1500 sq ft or less)?
- ↳ What is the impact of housing conditions on a resident's life span? What is the impact of housing conditions on children?
- ↳ What are residents experiencing with respect to various increases in housing costs (owners vs. renters)?
- ↳ Have various changes in federal policies impacted the ability to build new housing stock?

- ↳ What development of policies would lead to a framework for affordable housing?
- ↳ How do variations in the quality and availability of affordable housing affect housing stability, resident well-being, and local housing market dynamics?
- ↳ How could updates to land use policy and streamlining permitting processes help meet the needs of the future, and facilitate housing across urban, suburban, and rural jurisdictions?
- ↳ How can a local government use existing mechanisms or innovate to better measure housing conditions, vacancy risk, and building quality?

### **Individual Economic Wellbeing**

- ↳ What are the drivers that are making housing unaffordable for individual residents or families?
- ↳ Disregarding local politics, how can tax increment financing funds be equitably used to ensure that underserved neighborhoods have access to housing resources?
- ↳ What are the results of evaluation on different housing approaches for outcomes and cost-effectiveness: single-family repair, multifamily rental, down payment, assistance, temporary rent assistance?
- ↳ What are the financial incentives to ownership?
- ↳ What type of housing assistance is most useful for those struggling with mental health, both in the short-term and for long-term success?
- ↳ Data request: regular data on housing affordability?
- ↳ What is the relationship between specific income levels and access to housing?
- ↳ What are recommended policy interventions to make housing more equitable across the city and reduce segregation in specific areas?
- ↳ What are the best ways to jointly address workforce development and housing development?
- ↳ What are the long-term impacts for interventions such as rental assistance, legal aid, etc?



- ↳ Evaluation request: what are the qualitative impacts of our housing programs and affordable housing policies?
- ↳ What does quantifiable data say about the value of affordable housing on life outcomes: education, employment, etc?
- ↳ Are there connections with community engagement and neighborhood outcomes regarding social isolation? Does this lead to better housing?
- ↳ What impact does transportation proximity to grocery stores and other daily services have on what is considered affordable housing? How do these impact monthly housing budgets?
- ↳ What housing programs do residents want? For example, is it building more housing, downpayment assistance, legal aid, homeowner education, etc.?
- ↳ How can you improve housing affordability for those that are cost burdened?
- ↳ How often do residents move within a specific jurisdiction and why?
- ↳ What are the true costs and relative cost-effectiveness of different housing strategies—including permanent supportive housing—when evaluated against resident outcomes and long-term public expenditures?
- ↳ What are current institutional ownership trends and how can alternatives like Community Land Trusts permanently address affordability as an intermediary between renting and owning?
- ↳ What are the economic, social, and community-level impacts of different housing patterns and development models?
- ↳ Can we better identify affordability drivers such as data on market factors making housing unaffordable (e.g., property taxes, insurance costs) and the impact of non-housing costs (e.g., transportation, groceries) on the affordable housing budget?
- ↳ How do different models of housing investment influence equitable wealth distribution across racial, socioeconomic, and geographic groups?
- ↳ How do families' and communities' economic trajectories evolve over time in relation to housing stability, neighborhood conditions, and access to opportunity?

### **Permitting**

- ↳ What is the most effective way to analyze the cost-benefit of local building codes?
- ↳ What changes could a jurisdiction make, including design standards, to reduce development costs and improve affordability, while still meeting the goals of livability and climate resilience?
- ↳ How can predictability be injected into the housing system (policy timelines, funding pipelines, consolidated incentives) so municipal governments and developers can plan?
- ↳ What are the costs and benefits of building codes and how might reimagining building code development and governance impact them?

## **Renters/Tenants**

- ↳ What is the disaggregated data on age, location, and affordability for rental housing?
- ↳ What incentives will motivate landlords to maintain properties well?
- ↳ What is the inventory of rental properties, rent costs, and landlord profits?
- ↳ What residence and rental housing services are most beneficial for different populations?
- ↳ What are tenant experiences beyond affordability, especially regarding prevalence of habitability issues, fair housing/discrimination, landlord/tenant disputes, leasing, etc?
- ↳ What is the true cost of permanent supportive housing (PSM), including the increase in cost to the landlord?

## **Zoning**

- ↳ In the densest part of the city, where no- to minimal-parking regulations exist, how many housing units should be built in the next 10 years?
- ↳ What are suggestions to overcome resident opposition and support density?
- ↳ What evidence-based strategies can be identified for building public support for housing expansion in face of active opposition?
- ↳ What effect does zoning have on housing production in smaller cities?
- ↳ What is the fiscal cost of single family zoning to infrastructure?
- ↳ How do public engagement approaches and policy strategies influence the design, adoption, and effectiveness of housing and growth-related policies?
- ↳ What impacts do zoning reforms and upzoning have on small-city housing production, especially given the city's persistent unit shortage?
- ↳ Which zoning or regulatory reforms most directly unlock affordable housing production while protecting neighborhood stability?
- ↳ What communication and engagement strategies build early community buy-in for new housing so there are "no gotcha moments"?

## **Blight**

- ↳ What are changes in property conditions and maintenance?
- ↳ What does optimal and strategic use or under-utilized land look like?
- ↳ What are the monthly foreclosures on properties under \$250,000?

## **Economic Development**

Economic development, for purposes of this report, can be defined as **the policies and strategies local governments use to strengthen economic opportunity, fiscal health, and long-term community prosperity.**

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top six research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties in this domain are:

- ↳ **What is the right balance of tax incentive programs to attract talent (tax incentives) vs. ensuring a healthy tax base to provide needed and desirable services?**
- ↳ **How can cities optimize land use planning to balance sustainability, resiliency, and economic competitiveness?**
- ↳ **What indicators or methods can help evaluate whether workforce development programs are reducing poverty and producing lasting economic mobility for city residents?**
- ↳ **What do residents experiencing poverty see as the real levers for improving opportunity? What barriers affect access to jobs, higher education, or skill-building programs?**
- ↳ **What is the lifecycle cost of growth across jurisdictions (infrastructure, service delivery, schools, stormwater), and how does that change under alternative land-use scenarios?**
- ↳ **How are residents in mid- to small-sized communities' economic mobility shaped by childcare access, safety-net reductions, disability service cuts, and changes in federal and state funding?**

Building on this set of priority questions, the following additional research needs and knowledge gaps were raised during in-person workshops. These do not include the top research questions identified above.

### **Attracting Talent and Business**

- ↳ What gaps exist in the local innovation ecosystem and how can they be addressed?
- ↳ How can urban design and infrastructure planning support new economic centers and business growth?
- ↳ What strategies most effectively support small businesses and entrepreneurs?
- ↳ What procurement, capital access, and support strategies strengthen inclusive small business ecosystems?

### **Cross Policy**

- ↳ What are the local economic impacts of reductions in safety net support by state and federal programs?
- ↳ What policies create fiscally sustainable communities?
- ↳ What do investments in public education contribute to long-term economic development?
- ↳ What can cultural assets and historic preservation do to support tourism and creative economy growth?
- ↳ What branding and competitiveness strategies most effectively position regions for economic growth?

- ↳ What data on consumer spending, preferences, and retail leakage should inform local economic strategy?

### **Economic Tools**

- ↳ What are the most effective levers of local government to drive economic development?
- ↳ What are the most effective place-based economic development strategies?
- ↳ How should local governments prioritize projects for funding based on projected return on investment?
- ↳ How can the effectiveness of specific economic development districts be evaluated against intended outcomes?
- ↳ How can public investments in parks and placemaking support economic development and build public support?
- ↳ How do mobility-focused strategies compare to place-based strategies in improving economic outcomes?
- ↳ What are best practices for economic development that are most transferable to similar communities?

### **Vacancies, Blight and Displacement**

- ↳ What strategies most effectively address vacant storefronts in downtown and neighborhood commercial districts?
- ↳ Which community ownership models have successfully mitigated displacement and built wealth for existing residents?
- ↳ What are the economic development implications of land restitution and land back policies?



- ↳ What policy barriers limit economic mobility and how can they be reformed?
- ↳ What is the current state of economic mobility in low-income communities, and what trends are emerging?
- ↳ What role can local government play in addressing systemic and generational poverty?
- ↳ What interventions most effectively improve economic outcomes for low-income individuals?
- ↳ What economic factors influence household decisions about where to live and where to invest?
- ↳ What are the economic outcomes associated with past public and private investments in targeted neighborhoods?
- ↳ What factors most strongly influence upward economic mobility?
- ↳ What conditions enable low-income families to relocate to areas with greater opportunity?

### **Workforce**

- ↳ How can career ladder pathways be designed to support long-term advancement?
- ↳ How can AI support career planning and job matching?
- ↳ What is the scale and impact of the informal economy, defined as income-generating activity that is unregistered, untaxed, or outside formal labor protections, on employment and income?
- ↳ What workforce development strategies are most effective?
- ↳ What strategies most effectively close wealth gaps?
- ↳ How should workforce development systems adapt to AI, automation, and the future of work?
- ↳ What factors influence post-secondary students' interest in entrepreneurship?
- ↳ How should economic development spending be aligned with demographic trends and emerging industries?

### **Human Services**

Human services, as defined for purposes of this report, includes **the policy domains that shape residents' health, development, stability, and safety**. These include childcare and youth development, education, senior population support, food access and public health, mental health, poverty interventions, and public safety.

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top six research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties in this domain are:

- ↳ **How can local governments better determine early childcare needs and capacity? How many families need childcare (specific to the local government generally and by neighborhood)?**

- ↳ **What are the non-academic, outside-of-school barriers that prevent students from getting the most out of school?**
- ↳ **What changes in fire prevention and response practices are needed to manage hazards associated with lithium-ion batteries and other modern power storage technologies?**
- ↳ **How can local governments develop tools to track and mitigate public health risks linked to extreme weather events, aging infrastructure, and other climate-related hazards?**
- ↳ **Which community-level barriers (transportation, language, childcare, stigma) prevent access to mental health and primary care, and where are these barriers concentrated?**
- ↳ **How should health and social indicators be integrated into regional planning decisions (housing, transport, energy, etc.)?**

Building on this set of priority questions, the following additional research needs and knowledge gaps were raised during in-person workshops. These do not include the top research questions identified above.

### **Childcare/Child-Specific**

- ↳ What strategies most effectively reduce child poverty and hunger?
- ↳ What playground designs and equipment most effectively increase physical activity among children?
- ↳ What are the impacts of reduced state or federal funding on rapid response in early childcare services?
- ↳ What is the true demand for high-quality early childhood services, and what sustainable funding models can support it?
- ↳ What are the health, workforce, and quality-of-life savings associated with early disease screening and intervention?
- ↳ What cradle-to-career education and youth development strategies most effectively improve long-term outcomes?



- ↳ What are the childcare needs of local industries, and how do they affect workforce participation?
- ↳ What are peer cities with similar populations and disparities doing with respect to systems-level interventions they have done with respect to infant mortality?
- ↳ How best can a local government improve school readiness for children not in formal/early childhood systems?
- ↳ What cross-sector strategies are most effective in reducing child poverty and household instability, and how can a local government measure progress toward these goals over time?
- ↳ What factors drive youth violence, and how do school indicators, social stressors, or online influences contribute?

### **Education**

- ↳ What strategies can state and local governments use to strengthen education systems amid reduced federal oversight?
- ↳ What policies and case studies demonstrate improved educational outcomes?
- ↳ How do school performance indicators correlate with youth offenses?
- ↳ What targeted support strategies improve outcomes in underperforming school environments?
- ↳ What partnership models most effectively strengthen youth and education systems?
- ↳ What cross-sector best practices improve outcomes in youth development, education, and early childhood?
- ↳ Why has absenteeism risen since COVID and what targeted interventions reduce chronic absenteeism?

### **Senior Population**

- ↳ What data on older adults, including Social Security reliance, Medicare participation, hospital admissions, and mortality, should inform local planning?
- ↳ What comprehensive data on older adults, including diagnoses, disability, and limitations in activities of daily living, should guide service planning?

### **Health**

- ↳ What are the impacts of SNAP benefit changes on residents, food pantries, grocery retailers, and local food systems?
- ↳ What level of nutritional insecurity exists among residents age 60 and older, and what interventions are most effective?
- ↳ How can local governments improve health literacy among English and non-English speakers?
- ↳ What is the landscape and prevalence of ADA-related barriers across mobility, transportation, health, housing, social and digital systems?

- ↳ What are the lived experiences of residences participating in safety net programs, and where do they identify opportunities for improvement?
- ↳ What are the impacts of decreased state or federal funding for disability services?
- ↳ What supports growing public trust in local public health institutions?
- ↳ Data request: what are the most common health conditions among residents neighborhood by neighborhood?
- ↳ What is the biggest return on investment in local government policy intervention to improve overall population health most effectively?
- ↳ What strategies most effectively reduce overdose risk following incarceration?
- ↳ What wellness and health indicators should local governments track to measure positive outcomes rather than solely morbidity?
- ↳ How do we engage the community as a member of the process of health related research?
- ↳ How do insurance limitations, transportation, language access, and stigma shape public health outcomes?
- ↳ Which environmental exposures (air quality, asthma drivers, chronic disease factors) are most affecting a local government's residents, and where are high-risk clusters?
- ↳ How can city and regional health partners develop shared data systems to understand needs across hospitals, schools, and service providers?
- ↳ How can a local government improve public trust in health and science, especially around vaccines, prevention, and emerging health threats?
- ↳ What are proven methods for reducing overdose risk, particularly for post-incarceration?
- ↳ How do food insecurity, childcare gaps, and safety-net funding cuts influence household health and stability?
- ↳ How can recreation programs, park access, and youth engagement interventions reduce crime and improve wellbeing?

## **Mental Health**

- ↳ How can a local government improve access to mental health care?
- ↳ How do outcomes compare when individuals with mental health conditions are diverted from jail to alternative interventions?
- ↳ How can subclinical mental health conditions be identified and addressed?
- ↳ What neighborhood-level interventions most effectively improve mental health outcomes?
- ↳ What strategies improve health equity and access to mental wellness services?
- ↳ What mental health indicators should a local government track to guide policy decisions?  
What are recommended partnerships to ensure specific data is available while protecting privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements?
- ↳ What community-level barriers prevent residents from accessing mental health, substance use, and primary care services?

## **Poverty**

- ↳ How can a local government reduce poverty while minimizing displacement?
- ↳ What sustainable and equitable human development strategies most effectively mitigate the long-term impacts of poverty?
- ↳ How can a local government strengthen family stability as part of poverty reduction efforts?
- ↳ What outcomes do individuals experience after exiting homeless assistance programs?
- ↳ What factors contribute to system poverty at the hyper-local level?
- ↳ What integrated strategies most effectively break cycles of poverty linked to rising costs of living, housing stability, and homelessness?

## **Public Safety**

- ↳ What are helpful community-led strategies to prevent violence?
- ↳ Generally, what are evidence-based strategies to prevent violence?
- ↳ What technologies or specific data sets enable early detection and prevention of fires?
- ↳ What is the relationship between public safety outcomes and quality of life? What are specific metrics or data to look to that can support causal analysis?
- ↳ What data can show more information with respect to the relationship between investing in recreation programs and crime reduction?
- ↳ How does school time relate to youth violence?
- ↳ What factors influence crime rates in communities where basic resource needs are met?
- ↳ What factors most influence residents' perceptions of safety?
- ↳ How can AI enhance public safety service delivery?
- ↳ What crime prevention models, including focused deterrence and behavioral health integration, most effectively reduce violence?
- ↳ What are "broken window" strategies to reduce public disorder?
- ↳ What are new interventions to reduce youth violence?
- ↳ What public safety programs are proven to be most effective outside of police department activities?
- ↳ How can a local government modernize its fire suppression methods to better address emerging risks from new building materials, energy systems, and dense urban environments?
- ↳ How can predictive modeling, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, and sensor technology be used for early detection and faster response to fires and other public safety incidents?
- ↳ What alternatives to enforcement and arrest can reduce violence and improve safety?
- ↳ How can data systems across police, health, schools, and nonprofits be connected to understand root causes of violence?
- ↳ What do residents perceive as making them feel unsafe, and how can those perceptions inform prevention strategies?

- ↳ How can the city systematically evaluate whether policing strategies, data practices, and community engagement approaches are effective?

## Climate and Energy

Climate and energy, as defined for purposes of this report, refers to **the local government policies, tools, and strategies that address climate mitigation, climate adaptation, environmental quality, and energy systems**. This includes city staff tools and implementation supports; emissions reduction; financing and economic impacts; flooding; forecasting and climate modeling; grid and infrastructure systems; mitigation strategies; and water systems and management.

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top four research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties in this domain are:

- ↳ **Support in creating a climate vulnerability assessment to city assets; that is, how can a local government generate and use localized climate data on flooding, heat islands, and air quality to inform infrastructure design and adaptation planning?**
- ↳ **How do disaster and flooding policies affect housing stability and displacement?**
- ↳ **What smart systems, maintenance strategies, or predictive technologies can strengthen infrastructure resilience and reduce vulnerability to severe weather events?**
- ↳ **How should environmental hazards in locations where a cluster of hazards are present be prioritized for mitigation?**

Building on this set of priority questions, the following additional research needs and knowledge gaps were raised during in-person workshops. These do not include the top research questions identified above.

### City Staff Tools

- ↳ How can cities significantly increase efficiency in buildings to achieve local climate goals?
- ↳ What data, partnerships, and best practices exist when building regional energy strategies?
- ↳ What utility management policies best support expansion and maintenance of broadband?
- ↳ What are procurement policies that should be considered across requests for proposals to further climate goals?
- ↳ What do local governments need to create climate tools that guide decision making across departments (particularly those that are NOT leading the charge for climate endeavors)?
- ↳ How can local governments accurately assess climate vulnerability at the local level?
- ↳ What turf and parkland management practices reduce chemical and water inputs while maintaining performance?

- ↳ Research request: research investigating cumulative pollution, water quality, and air disparities in historically underserved neighborhoods and how a local government can use that to prioritize targeted cleanup efforts and policy form.
- ↳ Research request: implementation support for a published/completed sustainability plan.
- ↳ What sustainable land management practices support small-scale and urban agriculture?
- ↳ What are use cases and best policies to reduce food waste?
- ↳ What data should local governments be collecting to improve solid waste and landfill management performance?
- ↳ What waste audit methodologies most effectively inform landfill diversion strategies?
- ↳ What is the relationship between community resilience strategies and housing affordability, particularly in areas vulnerable to climate-related disasters?
- ↳ How can a local government develop decision-support tools that visualize climate trajectories and policy trade-offs, helping planners and elected officials balance mitigation goals with fiscal and operational realities?

### **Emissions**

- ↳ How do local governments better collect specific data on climate emissions?
- ↳ What is the feasibility and impact of applying carbon capture and storage to natural gas power generation?
- ↳ What infrastructure changes enable rapid reductions in greenhouse gas emissions?
- ↳ What is the carbon sequestration potential of prairie grass and other native landscapes?
- ↳ What are the most effective methods for eliminating PFAS in water, wastewater, landfill, and environmental systems?
- ↳ How do residents working from home impact greenhouse gas emissions? How do you measure this?
- ↳ What strategies are most effective for reducing transportation-related emissions at the local level?

### **Financing and Economic Impacts**

- ↳ What are the economic implications of sustainability efforts (i.e., given a local government's specific size, budget and organizational complexity, what initiatives make the most sense)?
- ↳ What financing mechanisms, including green banks and endowment models, can support sustainability projects?
- ↳ How can a local government leverage green financing tools to advance resilience and sustainability projects?
- ↳ What are the long-term household-level economic impacts of major climate-related disasters?
- ↳ How might climate change influence migration patterns and population growth at the local level?

- ↳ How do federal floodplain and floodway policies influence local development patterns?

### **Flooding**

- ↳ How many lots were created after [a particular hurricane or flooding event] in a [specific city or county]?
- ↳ Evaluation request: What are the measurable benefits of flood mitigation infrastructure before and after major storm events?
- ↳ How can AI support better flood forecasting models?

### **Forecasting**

- ↳ How can climate models be applied to local government decision making (budgets, zoning, permits)?
- ↳ What is the effect of climate change on a city/county's water, land, animals, and people population?
- ↳ What are the environmental impacts of data centers on energy, water, and land use systems?
- ↳ How can a local government accurately assess climate vulnerability at the neighborhood level?
- ↳ How can disaster-prone cities work smarter on leveraging resilient infrastructure to offset high insurance costs for housing? What are specific examples?
- ↳ What should be included in a standardized decision process for energy deployment, specifically location and type of energy? What factors should be considered when choosing an approach for deployment?

### **Grid + Infrastructure**

- ↳ What are the best nature-based solutions for stormwater management?
- ↳ Research request: provide a tree-inventory analysis to demonstrate the value of tree canopy on the local economy and environment.
- ↳ What resilience benefits are provided by battery storage systems?
- ↳ What are the impacts of lithium-ion battery waste on solid waste management systems?
- ↳ How can distribution system planning increase adoption of distributed solar without shifting costs to non-solar customers?
- ↳ What evidence-based arguments most effectively build support for renewable energy?
- ↳ What are options for renewable energy in multi-family structures?
- ↳ How does road infrastructure impact housing and neighborhood issues, including the impact of flooding, heat, air pollution, and pedestrian fatalities? What are solutions to these issues?
- ↳ How should a regional energy strategy be designed to equitably distribute energy resources, encourage clean transitions, and avoid disproportionate burdens?

## Mitigation

- ↳ Research request: create a climate vulnerability assessment and adoption plan.
- ↳ What intermediate metrics can track the progress of climate interventions?
- ↳ How can mitigation measures be integrated into a single, user-friendly planning tool?
- ↳ What are use cases/best in class examples for climate mitigation?
- ↳ Do green space and health outcomes correlate?
- ↳ What do people litter? What policies best reduce litter occurrences?
- ↳ What strategies most effectively improve urban flood mitigation and heat island reduction?
- ↳ What natural treatment processes are most effective for land application of treated effluent?
- ↳ What is the value of green space, cooling centers, and aquatic facilities in reducing heat-related risk?
- ↳ What social factors should be explored when identifying high-risk communities for sensor deployment? How can this be done to inform interventions? Ex: research found LGBTQ community members faced higher risks of environmental hazards.

## Water

- ↳ What are best practices and policies to reduce water reuse?
- ↳ Throughout our water distribution system, where are water leaks before the water meter?
- ↳ What is the optimal structure for a local stormwater utility?

## Transportation

Transportation, for purposes of this report, is defined as **the local government systems, infrastructure, technologies, and policies that shape how people and goods move within and across communities**. This includes emerging transportation technology development and deployment, human behavior's influence on transportation systems and vice versa, traffic congestion, curbside management, micromobility, and safety.

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top six research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties in this domain are:

- ↳ **Which infrastructure design strategies (e.g., complete streets, traffic patterns, ADA standards and accessibility design, trees, litter controls) most influence resident behavior and safety?**
- ↳ **How can a local government better understand the economic ROI and social health ROI for active transit and transportation networks? What data is needed to do this?**
- ↳ **How will AI impact transit authorities? How will local operations be impacted, and how will users be impacted?**

- ↳ **What transportation and infrastructure investments and technologies are best suited for unique challenges to [a specific local government], rather than generalized best practices?**
- ↳ **What data should be prioritized when creating policy to improve sustainability and efficiency (across all modes of transportation)?**
- ↳ **How can infrastructure planning better coordinate across agencies, utilities, and capital timelines, including balancing of competing capital priorities across agencies and departments?**

Building on this set of priority questions, the following additional research needs and knowledge gaps were raised during in-person workshops. These do not include the top research questions identified above.

### Emerging Technology

- ↳ What are best in class automated mobility solutions that are especially focused on low-income users?
- ↳ How can AI be used to integrate infrastructure, street, and utility data to prioritize projects more effectively?
- ↳ How can a local government leverage broadband access, sensor-based safety systems, and data sharing protocols to build an equitable smart city transportation framework?
- ↳ What are the critical systems and infrastructure needed for security and sustainability?
- ↳ What are the most effective technologies and best practices for local government in managing curbside space, including on-street EV charging?
- ↳ What foundational investments are required for a local government to take advantage of smart infrastructure and data-driven transportation systems, going from “-1 to 0” to prepare for future deployment of these technologies?



HOUSTON, TX

- ↳ How can a local government modernize traffic operations and safety systems given fragmented and disconnected infrastructure?
- ↳ How can advanced technologies improve specific transportation and infrastructure issues like trash and recycling truck routing optimization, identification of issues like water leak recognition, traffic and crash troublespot identification?
- ↳ What technologies and data management practices can strengthen the security and resilience of the City's critical infrastructure systems?

### **Behavioral Influence + Behavior**

- ↳ How can a local government use their infrastructure to control behavior, including speeding, littering, and waste management practices?
- ↳ What are the impacts of trail development based on user counts, and what proportion of usage is recreational versus transportation-related?
- ↳ What factors influence individual transportation mode choice preferences?
- ↳ How do transportation investments affect equity, access, school absenteeism, and daily life across neighborhoods?

### **Congestion**

- ↳ What are the critical programmatic elements when considering how to increase participation in new transportation offerings that reduce congestion?
- ↳ What traffic patterns are most effective for mobility and urban planning?
- ↳ How can a local government provide mobility options in the most energy-efficient and cost-effective manner?
- ↳ What strategies most effectively improve traffic flow?
- ↳ What is the impact of drive time and congestion on the local economy?
- ↳ How can a local government or region better understand how people travel, in order to accommodate the increase in air traffic?
- ↳ What transportation needs and mobility preferences define different populations in the city?

### **Micromobility**

- ↳ What does data show about the safety of e-bikes and trails, and what interventions most effectively reduce injuries?
- ↳ What are micromobility usage patterns, destination trends, and unmet mobility needs across different neighborhoods?
- ↳ What are effective models for implementing multimodal transportation systems?

## Safety

- ↳ What national metrics can be used to evaluate and score local governments on a spectrum from transit-oriented to auto-oriented systems, including safety performance and best-in-class benchmarks?
- ↳ How can machine learning and predictive analytics improve crash prevention and traffic mitigation strategies?
- ↳ What are the quantified predictive safety benefits of specific transportation infrastructure projects?
- ↳ Data request: Real time traffic analytics to promote pedestrian and cyclist safety.
- ↳ What are the impacts of reduced traffic enforcement?

## Community Engagement

Community engagement, as defined for purposes of this report, refers to **the local government policies, practices, tools, and partnerships used to communicate with residents, build trust, gather representative input, and incorporate community perspectives into decision-making.** This includes city tools for community engagement, methods for increasing engagement, strategies for messaging and storytelling, and methods for gathering resident feedback.

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top five research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties in this domain are:

- ↳ **How do different populations, including non-English-speaking and historically underserved residents, receive and respond to City communications, and which outreach methods most effectively reach each group and allow for two-way communication?**
- ↳ **Are there ways to show city government values and effectiveness in order to build trust in our communities and increase civic engagement in our city?**
- ↳ **What strategies most effectively build and maintain public trust in government, particularly when communicating the need for increased costs of services or policy changes that require trade-offs?**
- ↳ **What does effective community engagement look like in under-resourced neighborhoods, and how can engagement be sustained over time?**
- ↳ **How do residents define “well-being” and what indicators (subjective and objective) best capture those definitions across neighborhoods?**

Building on this set of priority questions, the following additional research needs and knowledge gaps were raised during in-person workshops. These do not include the top research questions identified above.

**City Staff Tools**

- ↳ What capacity, skills, and training does a local government need to effectively understand and engage its community?
- ↳ What behavioral strategies improve compliance with municipal billing and collections policies?
- ↳ What can a local government learn from other cities that have developed durable engagement structures to keep communities involved beyond one-time consultations or public meetings?
- ↳ How can the city better understand resident expectations for services and their perceptions of safety, quality of life, and neighborhood belonging?

**Increasing Engagement**

- ↳ How can the research community help a local government in furthering their efforts to understand and address community needs?
- ↳ How can a local government increase the diversity of respondents while collecting feedback? How can a local government use diverse models in collecting and analyzing data?
- ↳ How do we get the community bought into the new policies and programs?
- ↳ Partnership request: strengthening civic engagement courses in school so that public engagement can improve.
- ↳ What community engagement strategies reduce negative behaviors and promote collective responsibility?
- ↳ What are ways to get non-English-speaking residents access to city government services (where do they get information and what misconceptions exist?)
- ↳ How to sustain neighborhood associations OR - how to get or keep people involved in neighborhood associations?
- ↳ Models for incentivizing and enabling community engagement?



- ↳ How do we build common ground across differences to achieve common goals? What levers need to be pulled locally?
- ↳ How can a local government design engagement models that sustain participation over time, ensuring residents remain involved throughout multi-year planning processes such as the Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Plan?

**Messaging and Storytelling**

- ↳ What communication strategies most effectively build public support for taxes that result in better safety nets?

- ↳ What are the most effective ways to reach constituents where they are?
- ↳ What are the least burdensome and most effective approaches to public priority setting?
- ↳ What drives civic apathy, disengagement, or distrust, and how can the city rebuild civic identity and pride?

### **Resident Feedback**

- ↳ What single thing should a city address that would make you more proud to live here?
- ↳ How can the city better involve community members in government decision making to improve the services we offer and improve our community?
- ↳ How to listen: what are insights from communities about what they think needs to be fixed and collaboration with communities to address them sustainably?
- ↳ How can community-driven research models be structured to ensure accountability and relevance?
- ↳ Research on residents/community members satisfaction and needs, what do they want from their community?
- ↳ What methods most effectively produce representative and actionable community input?
- ↳ What do residents expect of their local government?
- ↳ What makes someone identify with a city beyond “This is where I live?”
- ↳ How do residents currently receive city information, and which communication methods best reach multilingual and digitally disconnected communities?
- ↳ How can community engagement be improved around infrastructure projects to build trust and improve outcomes?
- ↳ What core services are most important to residents and contribute to resident attraction and retention?

### **Service Delivery**

Service delivery, as defined for purposes of this report, refers to **the systems, workforce, data infrastructure, technology, financial management, and operational practices through which local governments administer public services**. This includes data needs and uses, application of AI and other technologies, attracting and retaining a skilled city workforce, evaluation, operations, partnerships, and taxes and finances.

Based on demonstrated demand across national survey responses and in-person workshops, the top seven research questions representing priority needs from cities and counties in this domain are:

- ↳ **How do we understand who is missing from the data collection which causes biases in the output, and then how can we correct for this?**

- ↳ **How can a local government develop a comparative benchmarking framework that uses peer city data to assess return on investment, staffing levels, and service efficiency across departments?**
- ↳ **What innovative approaches have other cities adopted to attract and retain skilled municipal employees, particularly non-salary strategies that improve things like workplace culture, flexibility, and professional development?**
- ↳ **How can the city measure whether key services (e.g., public works, code enforcement, permitting, health, data operations) are effective and equitable?**
- ↳ **How can a local government evaluate government performance, track return on investment, and adopt continuous improvement practices?**
- ↳ **How can the region better understand the ecosystem and flow of resources and collaborations (government, not-for-profits, for-profits, etc.) and make services more efficient through that understanding?**
- ↳ **How can cities stabilize revenue while accounting for resident financial hardship?**

Building on this set of priority questions, the following additional research needs and knowledge gaps were raised during in-person workshops. These do not include the top research questions identified above.

### **Data Needs**

- ↳ What does data analysis look like when coupled with specific strategies developed in collaboration with local governments?
- ↳ What are best practices for data management? What are best practices for data use and privacy?
- ↳ How can data drive human issues?
- ↳ How do local governments use data to make decisions under uncertainty?
- ↳ What are incentives for data-driven decision making in a political environment (best in class examples showing ROI)?
- ↳ What metrics can demonstrate the effectiveness of local government to the community (in an informative & persuasive way)?
- ↳ Is there a single authority for address data?
- ↳ What is the best way and formats to share data with partners and promote interoperability?
- ↳ What are innovation frameworks for local governments, and how can we build a culture that embraces innovation, data-driven decision-making, and ultimately creates lots of change champions in our organization?
- ↳ What are regionally accurate resident demographics?
- ↳ How do we understand who is missing from the data collection which causes biases in the output, and then can and how do we correct for this?
- ↳ How do resident perceptions of service quality compare to administrative data and where do gaps emerge (e.g., 311 complaints vs. resolutions, perceptions on crime vs. crime data)?

- ↳ What alternative data sources can supplement census data for planning purposes?
- ↳ What can data tell us about parks usage? Who is using parks?

## **AI and Technology**

- ↳ How can AI support municipal legal departments?
- ↳ How can local governments best develop internal capacity to execute projects, develop technology solutions, etc. rather than relying extensively on contractors?
- ↳ How can technology address the human condition?
- ↳ How can a local government establish a cross-departmental data dashboard auto populated from multiple software systems?
- ↳ How can modeling tools, prototypes, and pilots be used to improve service design?
- ↳ What are peer city results or frameworks for technology adoption?
- ↳ What are guidelines for providing comps for large change management efforts like payroll modernization?
- ↳ What are the resilient and fragile aspects of systems audits, and what are recommendations to approach them?
- ↳ What are safe uses of AI for cities, specifically when addressing policy issues and risk management? What are the most effective ways to build internal capacity for AI understanding? How can AI be utilized across all City departments?
- ↳ What technical research and data systems most effectively support municipal asset management?
- ↳ What are AI applications on land use planning? Can it be used for fiscal impact analysis for rural communities?



- ↳ What data governance frameworks are required to responsibly deploy AI in local government?
- ↳ What are the ethical, equity, and operational implications of AI adoption, and how can data-driven approaches using AI to reduce access disparities and inform poverty-related policy interventions?
- ↳ Are there 3D renderings that could be easily accessible at a command post or emergency scene that could benefit scene management?
- ↳ Which technology modernization strategies have demonstrated strong returns in comparable cities, and how could a trusted third-party validation process help a local government strengthen legislative and public confidence in these investments?
- ↳ What strategies help modernize city systems, speed up government processes, and improve resident experience?
- ↳ How can shared data systems allow departments to collaborate more efficiently and avoid duplication?
- ↳ How can a local government train large language models (LLMs) to surface trends and best use cases for policy interventions in other communities?

### **City Workforce**

- ↳ What supports effective change management in a highly unionized workforce?
- ↳ How do you successfully change culture within an organization?
- ↳ What are the best ways local governments can recruit new talent?
- ↳ What are ways to effectively staff an agency?
- ↳ What are best practices for job retention and employee satisfaction for local governments given budget constraints?
- ↳ What innovative approaches have other cities adopted to attract and retain skilled municipal employees, particularly non-salary strategies that improve things like workplace culture, flexibility, and professional development?
- ↳ How can workload analysis improve staffing models and service delivery?
- ↳ What studies are available that focus on city workforce management?
- ↳ What labor market trends and graduate employment preferences should inform local economic development strategy for attracting and supporting employers that align with those preferences?
- ↳ What organizational culture, staffing, or recruitment barriers limit the city's ability to deliver services effectively?

### **Evaluation Support**

- ↳ What is the actual dollar impact of changing regulatory decisions?
- ↳ In what ways does racism (structural/systemic) continue to perpetuate the very disparities we claim/seek to address?

- ↳ Which programs are most effective? Which programs can be merged, streamlined, etc.?
- ↳ How can a local government evaluate service delivery performance across departments to identify improvement opportunities?
- ↳ How do waste contracts compare across peer-cities or peer-counties?
- ↳ What process improvement methodologies most effectively increase operational efficiency in local government?
- ↳ What is the cost/benefit analysis on “overhead” departments? Is there a way to capture investing in these functions as key operational services or efficiency services?
- ↳ How can we be more effective as a government?
- ↳ How can the city measure whether key services (public works, code enforcement, permitting, health, data operations) are effective and equitable?
- ↳ How can a local government evaluate government performance, track return on investment, and adopt continuous improvement practices? What organizational or process barriers limit effective service delivery?
- ↳ How can a local government design evaluation frameworks that support faster and more sustainable operational decisions, including using university involvement for evaluation plan development before implementation?
- ↳ What services and resources do residents prioritize, and how do they value trade-offs (e.g., increased services vs. tax/investment costs)?

## **Operations**

- ↳ What do cost-benefit analyses reveal about the benefits of maintaining old IT systems versus investing in modernization?
- ↳ What cost-benefit approaches can simplify approval processes and reduce state and federal regulations?
- ↳ What can be done to avoid funding stupid stuff?
- ↳ How can a local government evaluate and balance policy tradeoffs in a transparent, inclusive, and democratic way?
- ↳ What are best practices for organization structures and inter-department communication? What are best practices for organizational theory that fosters cross department collaborations?
- ↳ What should be done to improve decision making processes?
- ↳ What does research on 311 data say about complaints vs. resolution?
- ↳ What programs should we fund at higher levels?
- ↳ What coordination and governance structures most effectively support long-term capital planning?
- ↳ What public sector innovation strategies most effectively improve operational efficiency, interagency collaboration, and transparency?

- ↳ What data systems and governance frameworks are needed to support effective service delivery in a unique multi-jurisdictional or regional context?
- ↳ How can a local government develop a comparative benchmarking framework that uses peer city data to assess return on investment, staffing levels, and service efficiency across departments?

### **Partnerships**

- ↳ What approaches can be used to map capacity and expertise for partnership development?
- ↳ What does a cost-benefit analysis say about rapidly growing nonprofit (NPO) sectors?
- ↳ How to distill research into compelling stories that policymakers and the public believe?
- ↳ What frameworks are most effective at measuring outcomes with external partners?
- ↳ What procurement and partnership models most effectively facilitate collaboration between local government and universities?
- ↳ How can peer city working groups accelerate policy adoption and knowledge sharing?
- ↳ What are quick/best practices to build out relevant literature reviews when needed?
- ↳ How can a local government facilitate scientifically rigorous and unbiased evaluations of potential solutions?
- ↳ What are ways that local philanthropy has made a difference?
- ↳ What impacts do international relations and global relationships have on local governments?
- ↳ Where can higher education institutions support data collection, program evaluation, and grant management to fill capacity gaps?
- ↳ How can the region better understand the ecosystem and flow of resources and collaborations (government, not-for-profits, for-profits, etc.) and make services more efficient through that understanding?
- ↳ How can research outputs be better translated into implementable tools for city staff, or even include researchers through the implementation of recommendations from research outputs?

### **Taxes and Finances**

- ↳ What methods can effectively collect tax revenue without relying on tax sales? What alternatives to tax sale can address delinquency without displacement and what are peer cities doing that has worked to address tax delinquency?
- ↳ How are debt and other metrics for peer cities reflected (or not) in credit ratings?
- ↳ How does subsidized development affect municipal fiscal health and budget performance?
- ↳ How do land value tax-based jurisdictions in the US and around the world fare?
- ↳ How do property tax heavy jurisdictions vs. income tax heavy jurisdictions compare in outcomes?
- ↳ What are politically possible investments that strengthen the tax base?

- ↳ What private funding models can support public assets that are difficult to finance through traditional means?
- ↳ What does research on comparative fees for common services across cities reveal?
- ↳ What are best practices for approaching property tax parity in a community with so much tax exempt property?
- ↳ What is the comparative tax burden across cities?
- ↳ What are new innovative income generating streams for local municipalities?
- ↳ What additional funding resources can be used to support capital investment needs? What funding resources can support operations and maintenance?
- ↳ What do different cities do for their reserve funds?
- ↳ How can behavioral science improve compliance with delinquent water bill payments?
- ↳ How can cities stabilize revenue while accounting for resident financial hardship?
- ↳ What are the avoided public costs associated with coordinated investments in public health, housing, transportation, and environmental systems?

## Next Steps

| “So you have a research agenda... now what?”

As mentioned above, it’s imperative to identify research “demands” - or as phrased in the workshops, “if you could get research on [blank], what would you want?”. The publication of these research questions is the vital first step. But, it is insufficient to simply publish a report on research needs. What comes next is equally important; ensuring that these questions are answered and bringing those recommendations to the right audience to effectuate it.



This report considers each of these steps. In both the surveys and at the in-person workshops, we included questions to not only identify research needs, but to gather information on the ecosystem between universities and local governments. Questions were designed to surface points of friction for partnership, understand how local governments and the academic community network together, and ask for recommendations to catalyze the research-to-impact pipeline. The next section of the report provides evidence as to how these institutions view each other, and key friction points to starting and maintaining transformative research partnerships.

If you are in the research community and have a report or publication addressing a specific question listed that has been published after March 2025, please fill out [this form](#). FAS aims to support this community and support the responses/answers to this report will include it in a repository.

## The Research-to-Impact Ecosystem: Perceptions, Barriers, and Recommendations

---

In addition to studying the specific policy domains and priority research needs of local governments, the survey and in-person workshops included questions that studied the current relationship of local government and university partnerships. In many ways, a research agenda is just a starting point; what impact can come from a list of priority knowledge gaps if no action is taken, or if the research is conducted but is not given to an individual or institution who can use it?

To answer these questions, it was critical to understand how local governments and universities feel they are perceived, identify barriers to trust building, and understand more deeply the points of friction that are preventing research from better shaping local policy decisions and programs.

### Perceptions and Myths to Bust

At each workshop, we asked local governments to provide one word to describe “research,” and we asked the university community to provide one word to describe “public policy.”

Local Governments’ Description of Research:

- ↳ Words related to data and statistics appeared most frequently (18%); suggesting a perception of quantitative information
- ↳ Trends of academic framing (12%) including mentions of terms such as “white paper,” and “abstract”
- ↳ Words describing efforts that are time intensive and slow (9%)
- ↳ Descriptions of high costs were also included (4%), such as “money,” “expensive,” and “grant funding”
- ↳ Positive descriptions (12%) included words like “objectiveness,” “opportunity,” “impact,” and “knowledge”

Universities’ Description of Public Policy:

- ↳ The most common response to describe public policy typically had a reference to rules and lawmaking (30%), including words such as “laws,” “government,” and “structure”
- ↳ University attendees also described public policy by highlighting challenges, mostly in recognizing the political nature of it (18%) with words like “politics,” “one-sided,” or “negotiation”
- ↳ Words describing efforts that are time intensive and slow (6%)
- ↳ Positive descriptions included viewing public policy as an opportunity to create change (15%), including words such as “change-maker” and “innovation”

For a complete list of answers to our questions, see [Appendix A](#).

When comparing the answers to both of these questions, ultimately, research is seen as **producing knowledge**, and public policy is seen as **exercising power**.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DESCRIBING “RESEARCH”		UNIVERSITIES DESCRIBING “PUBLIC POLICY”	
DATA-HEAVY	ACADEMIC	RULE-HEAVY	GOVERNMENTAL
SLOW AND EXPENSIVE	ABSTRACT	CONSEQUENTIAL	POLITICAL AND NEGOTIATED
OBJECTIVE (IDEALLY)	KNOWLEDGE-PRODUCING	POWER-DRIVEN	ACTION-DIRECTING

The workshops also asked both groups to identify a myth they want to bust to the alternative group.

Myths **local governments** would like to “bust” - in other words, statements they believe university communities believe but are untrue –include the following:

- ↳ [21%] that local governments have a lot of money available, are themselves adequately resourced, and have ample time to read large amounts of research
- ↳ [20%] that local government staff are uninformed, not smart, or not resourceful
- ↳ [16%] that local government staff lack motivation, are lazy or don't care, and want to preserve bureaucracy
- ↳ [13%] that local governments cannot innovate and adapt
- ↳ [13%] that local governments are hard to work with, and in particular, they resist academic insight
- ↳ [6%] that local governments are not data-driven

Generally, local governments aimed to position themselves as capable partners, and to correct structural misconceptions.

Myths **universities** would like to “bust” - in other words, statements they believe local government communities believe but are untrue include the following:

- ↳ [25%] that universities are elite; faculty live in an ivory tower
- ↳ [19%] that universities produce research that is impractical, only theoretical, or not client-driven
- ↳ [15%] that universities only care about publishability, and faculty/staff do not care about their community
- ↳ [11%] that universities are slow, research takes a long time, and they can't work quickly
- ↳ [11%] that universities have a lot of money and funding is not constrained
- ↳ [11%] that research only takes into account quantitative data

Almost half of all responses indicate that faculty and staff at a university feel they are perceived as detached, selfish, or difficult partners. University participants wanted to convey to the audience that research is indeed useful, applied work matters, and that research is impact-oriented.

When comparing the two, university staff are more concerned about relational image, whereas local governments are focused on structural misunderstanding. The research community identified words like “elitism,” “self-interest,” and “detachment” as primary concerns. Local government staff focused more on resource constraints, political realities, and authority limits. In addition to local government staff voicing concern on the perception of their intellectual capability, there is a notable status misalignment:

**University faculty and staff fear being seen as too intellectual and disconnected. Local government staff fear being seen as not intellectual enough.**

## Knowing Who To Work With

MetroLab Network was established in 2015 to serve as a third party connector between universities and local governments. Over ten years later, we wanted to understand if this type of role is needed. Specifically, we wanted to explore how these relationships were formed, and whether or not external support (such as the MetroLab Network) was helpful. At the in-person workshops, a question posed to the group included “How do you know who to work with from the other side?”

Local governments knew who to work with at universities based on the following:

- ↳ [43%] Personal networks: by way of existing relationships, word of mouth, former students, and events and convenings
- ↳ [21%] Online searches: using Google, LinkedIn, or generally looking at websites
- ↳ [13%] Reaching directly to the university institution
- ↳ [8%] No method at all: “I have no idea,” “luck,” and “we don’t” were included in these responses

Universities knew who to work with at local governments based on the following:

- ↳ [44%] Personal networks: by way of existing relationships, word of mouth, former students, and events and convenings
- ↳ [21%] Online searches: using Google, LinkedIn, or generally looking at websites
- ↳ [10%] Cold contacts and outreach
- ↳ [6%] No method at all: “I have no idea,” “luck,” and “we don’t” were included in these responses

Between the two institutions, the answers are almost identical, suggesting there is no clear structural discovery system on either side. Both are operating informally, and often, only by direct relationships. This also presents evidence that the research demand/supply ecosystem is deeply relationship-dependent, creating high barriers for newcomers, inequity of access, and bottlenecks around well-connected individuals.

## Barriers To Research Collaboration

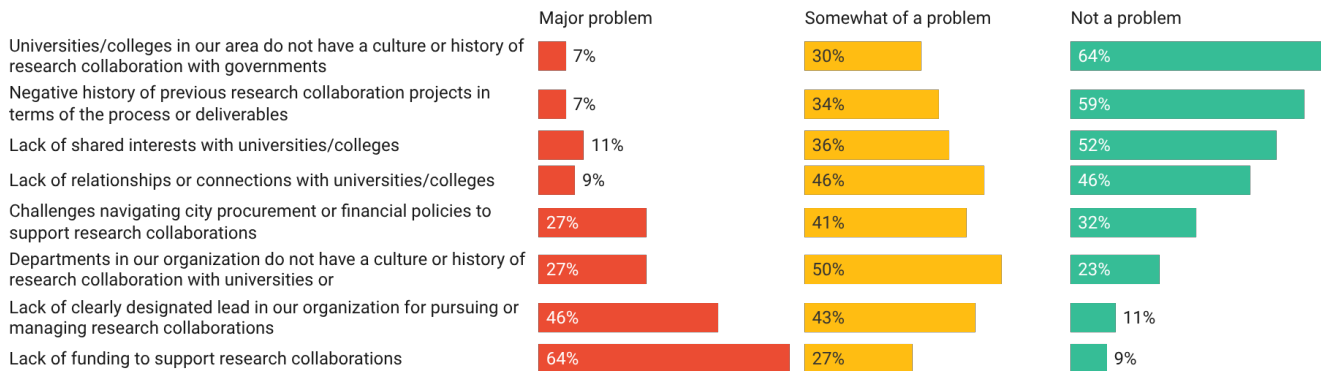
Across all methodologies, FAS ascertained the most significant points of friction between local governments and universities working together on research questions.

From the survey:

In the survey to local governments, staff cited issues that were inward facing such as lack of funding, no designated lead or central effort, and lack of relationships or connections with universities.

### Over the past three years, to what extent have the following barriers hindered research collaboration between your organization and university/college partners?

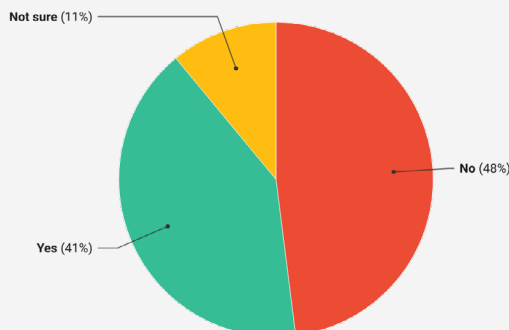
Major problem    Somewhat of a problem    Not a problem



Indeed, the survey found that only a minority of cities and counties have a central office to coordinate research activities.

#### Do you know who to coordinate with?

1. Larger population cities were not significantly more likely to say "yes" (43%) but medium and large cities were more likely to say "not sure";
2. The most common answer when asking the location of a centralized office was offering a list of multiple departments;
3. Another common answer when asking if there is a centralized office coordinating research projects was a data/innovation office, followed by an administration office or the Mayor's Office



- ↳ Larger population cities were not significantly more likely to say "yes" (43%) but medium and large cities were more likely to say "not sure"
- ↳ The most common answer when asking the location of a centralized office was offering a list of multiple departments
- ↳ Another common answer when asking if there is a centralized office coordinating research projects was a data/innovation office, followed by an administration office or the Mayor's Office

Other barriers to research collaboration that emerged from the survey to a local government audience:

- ↳ Limited staff capacity and time
- ↳ Not receiving priority in a political environment
- ↳ Location constraints
- ↳ Timelines not aligning between a city/county and a university
- ↳ Lack of collaboration with stakeholders to do regional projects or studies

Finally, the survey asked respondents to ask how important certain elements are when communicating research results, labeling various elements as either “very important,” “important,” “somewhat important, or “not important.”

**One hundred percent of respondents cited that a concise summary of results that is easy to understand is very important or important.**

Additionally, **one hundred percent of respondents cited specific recommendations about how their jurisdiction could use the results as very important or important.**

Other critical elements considered “very important” or “important” included:

- ↳ [97% of respondents] specific insights for my jurisdiction
- ↳ [97% of respondents] consideration of funding implications related to research
- ↳ [87% of respondents] infographics and impactful data visualizations
- ↳ [69% of respondents] presentation of results to elected officials

At the in-person workshop the question; “what are barriers to the research-to-impact pipeline,” was posed to the audience. Participants noted that barriers are not necessarily about research production, but more around institutional design and governance. The exercise also highlighted a clear need to define the word “impact.” Each audience had a different definition; for local governments “impact” meant something they could implement, and for universities it meant theory contribution. And importantly, local governments noted that **for research to be as actionable as possible, it needs to go beyond observational and include recommendations.**

Below are more specific takeaways and feedback identifying barriers to making research more actionable with local government partners:

- ↳ Barrier: the problem statement. Local governments and universities should define a clear problem statement and scope the projects within a manageable time horizon
- ↳ Barrier: incentives and timelines are mismatched. Political cycles move faster than peer review cycles
- ↳ Barrier: implementation is the missing middle. Outputs should include what to do next, address procurement, staffing, and budget constraints, and identify which department/ partners owns the recommendation

- ↳ Barrier: managing relationships. Clear points of contact are needed, and regular check-ins are helpful

## Motivation and Financial Support

The workshop participants also had robust discussion around institutional motivations and financial support for research that answers a call from the local government community. Challenges that were recognized:

- ↳ **Federal funding requires projects that are considered scientifically novel.** The research needs of local government decision makers are not necessarily at the frontiers of research.
- ↳ **Philanthropic funding (which is often in support of local government priorities) is not included in the “R1” point system.** It was suggested that federal agencies change policies around what may be considered in the R1 point system in furtherance of this type of work (including to add philanthropic funds to the point system, for example).
- ↳ **Tenure track requirements do not emphasize community engagement as a consideration.** How can translation research activities be better accounted for at the university/institution level?
- ↳ **Academics do not like to provide recommendations which contain degrees of certainty,** yet government decision makers desire higher levels of certainty when making a decision.

### Hiring a Consultant v. Hiring an Academic

Throughout this project, FAS inquired on the right conditions for a local government to hire a university researcher vs. hiring a consultant. Three factors stood out in tipping the balance to hire an academic instead of a consultant:

- ↳ An 18 month time horizon to start and finish a project
- ↳ Has more technical requirements than an average project
- ↳ Results from a neutral party are desired

## Research Outputs: Increasing Accessibility

Various recommendations were given over the course of the workshops to make research more accessible. In this case, “accessible” means not just having the ability to search, find, and read research publications, but to understand and comprehend findings in a way that makes science and research usable to communities. Local governments made the following recommendations:

- ↳ Provide a one-page executive summary
- ↳ No jargon, and preferably the summary is not above an 8th grade reading proficiency level
- ↳ Toolkits and program designs should be included in publications
- ↳ Eliminate research paywalls and create centralized repositories

Participants called for improvements in how data is shared. This included calling for the creation of shared knowledge infrastructure, and to create agreements that simplify governance and use of city/county datasets. Local government participants emphasized the challenge of research living behind paywalls, limiting access for city staff who do not hold academic subscriptions.

One research study<sup>2</sup> found that only 28% of all academic research articles are freely available. When findings are published exclusively in paywalled journals or institutional repositories, cities face barriers to accessing research that was often publicly funded. While there have been recent pushes for open access to scholarly research, furthering the ability of local governments and universities to directly collaborate around targeted research collaborations will further advance access and outcomes from research.

## **Recommendations for Local Governments and Universities**

The recommendations below are specific actions that will set up for successful partnerships between local governments and universities.

### **Establish a “front door” to the organization.**

Establish a visible, standardized entry point for research collaboration. The front door can be a digital site, it can be a person who holds relationships across the organization. The “front door” should be formally or informally responsible for connecting any research effort with the right person within their institution. This does not require building a new office or even a new position in every case. If possible, name this person on a website.

### **Mutually write a problem statement.**

A local government can publish its own research or learning agenda. Or a process can be developed early on that will establish the appropriate scope of work for a research project, setting up for success the expected level of specificity to the answer. This process could include the following questions:

- ↳ What specific policy problem is being addressed? And what department owns it?
- ↳ What decision or action will this research inform?
- ↳ What constraints or political realities shape the context?
- ↳ What is the appropriate timeline?

### **Make the research actionable and accessible.**

If appropriate, the researcher(s) should provide recommendations on what to do next. If possible, publish it on an accessible website and avoid using technical jargon.

---

<sup>2</sup> Piwowar H, Priem J, Larivière V, Alperin JP, Matthias L, Nortlander B, Farley A, West J, Haustein S. 2018. The state of OA: a large-scale analysis of the prevalence and impact of Open Access articles. PeerJ 6:e4375 <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.4375>

**Cut to the chase.**

Methodologies are critically important to the research and scientific process. But when presenting evidence to a local government partner, or the community, less “how” and more “what.” The executive summary and recommendations provided should start with what the problem/answer is.

Additionally:

- ↳ To the extent possible, make the research targeted to the specific jurisdiction
- ↳ Include comparisons to peer cities/counties

**Build implementation considerations into the process.**

Ownership, capacity, and alignment of decisions with political and other contextual timelines surfaced repeatedly in the workshops. These challenges all fall under the need for better implementation pathway planning up front rather than as an afterthought, if at all.

At project inception, partners should confirm:

- ↳ Which department will own adoption (which should have been determined already during joint scoping)
- ↳ Whether that department has participated in scoping
- ↳ What staff capacity is available
- ↳ Whether student fellows or interns can extend capacity
- ↳ Which policy window the research aims to influence (or if that particular decision window is always open)
- ↳ Whether interim deliverables are needed to meet that window



Templates for cover sheets and implementation briefs can be developed once and shared broadly. If widely adopted, they could become the norm for applied municipal research.

**Integrate the legal community.**

Participants noted that relevant legal statutes are often viewed as a permanent barrier to desired outcomes. A recommendation is to integrate the legal community (government and academic) into the process so that the law is viewed at worst, as a temporary obstacle, and at best a creative tool for implementing solutions.

**Establish a procurement process or a master contract to streamline paid projects for research.**

Create clearer contracting pathways and guidance for engaging universities in applied work. Standardized memoranda of understanding and defined procurement tracks for research partnerships will reduce ambiguity and shorten time to launch.

**And standardize data sharing agreements.**

Institutions should adopt standardized data use agreement templates and governance checklists. Rather than negotiating from scratch each time, partners can work from a shared model that addresses privacy, security, and compliance expectations upfront.

**Recommendations for Further Exploration**

This report also calls for recommendations outside of the direct local government and university line of sight. There are numerous barriers identified in the surveys and workshops that, if addressed, could make research more actionable. These include:

- ↳ Examining ways to include community engagement as a tenure track requirement;
- ↳ Redefine “scientifically novel” for federal grants that would bring novel ideas to a new community; and
- ↳ Bolster philanthropic support for networks as this report provides evidence that conferences and networks are the leading way these two disparate communities can better work together

But there are also two noteworthy recommendations that are high effort, and high reward:

**Establish Peer City Benchmarks**

Throughout the workshops, local leaders repeatedly asked for research to include comparisons to peer cities or counties. But when asked who they consider to be their peer, it was often a mixed response. “What city/county is my actual peer jurisdiction and what information can I

glean” is a high demand question with few answers. A more precise model of peer identification would cluster jurisdictions by policy-relevant conditions.

While this effort to strengthen the pipeline would likely require a net new effort, it would be worthwhile if local governments would no longer ask, “What are cities/counties like ours doing?” and instead could ask, “Who has already faced this exact structural challenge, and what evidence guided their decisions?”.

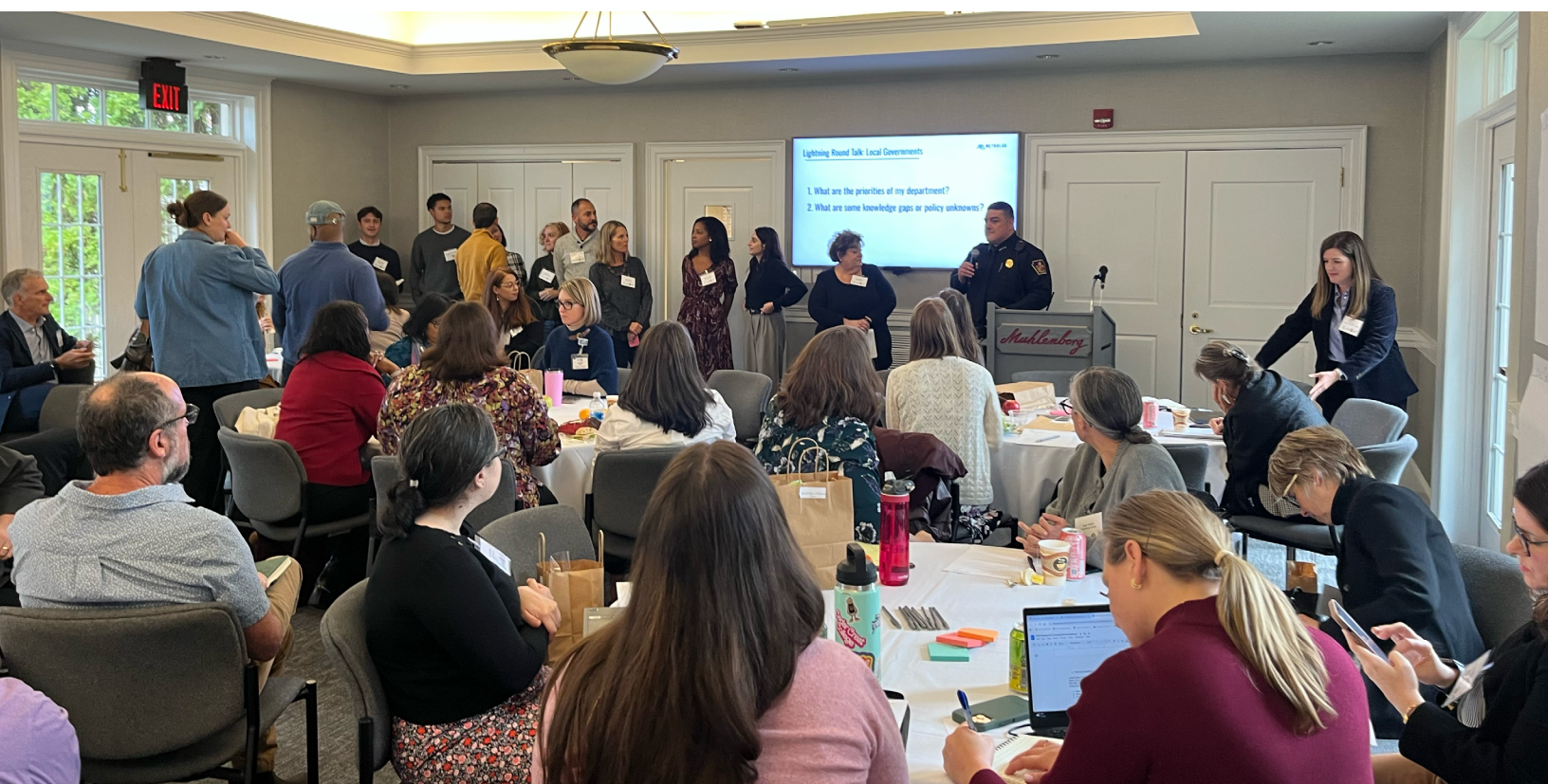
### **Treat the Research to Impact Pipeline as Civic Infrastructure**

Similar to peer benchmarking, this effort to strengthen the pipeline would be a greater lift than many of the other recommendations, but would allow for sustained infrastructure to be built. Cities invest in roads, water systems, and broadband because those systems make everything else possible. The research-to-impact pipeline should be viewed the same way.

Right now, applied research partnerships depend too much on personal relationships and informal processes. Each new project requires rebuilding intake processes, renegotiating data agreements, and redefining expectations.

Treating the pipeline as civic infrastructure means making collaboration predictable and durable. It would require:

- ↳ Standardized data systems and clear data sharing agreements
- ↳ Dedicated research partnership or translation staff
- ↳ Clear public entry points for engagement
- ↳ Shared templates for scoping, executive briefs, and implementation planning
- ↳ Recurring joint priority-setting aligned with city strategic plans



These reduce transaction costs, shorten timelines, and increase the likelihood that research will be used. When this becomes part of how a city operates, rather than something that depends on individual champions, the pipeline strengthens, research stops being episodic and becomes embedded in the ongoing governance process.

## The Why

Finally, at the in-person workshops, FAS asked the participants how these types of partnerships improve their work. In other words, why should we invest time, money, and resources into local governments and universities working together.

When asked “how can universities support policy and programmatic needs to local governments,” cities and counties offered the following:

- ↳ There is a demand for evidence-based policy and data analysis; local governments want universities to function as applied research partners, not just knowledge generators.
- ↳ Local governments asked for help with workforce support due to capacity constraints and staffing shortages. How can they be better plugged into data science projects, internships and externships, and creating workforce development pathways?
- ↳ “Provide summaries of best practices quickly,” local governments are in need of research that is usable, not just published.
- ↳ Universities should invest in ways to make collaboration ongoing, and build trust with staff to ultimately become long-term partners.
- ↳ Local governments want universities to help convene. Universities are seen as neutral conveners with access and awareness to expertise.

In the same way that universities can support local governments, local governments can support universities as critical innovation and economic development institutions. When asked “how can local governments support universities to be engines of economic growth and innovation,” university faculty said the following:

- ↳ The biggest theme in response: faculty want local governments to bring them real problems to solve. Local governments can act as problem generators, and universities truly want to know what research demand exists.
- ↳ Access to data is essential for research and innovation. Faculty asked for easier data sharing, government data sets, and partnership opportunities for data collection.
- ↳ Collaboration structures are needed, not just individual relationships. Examples cited were innovation centers, advisory boards, and structure partnerships.
- ↳ University faculty want to see their students thrive. “Hire our graduates” was a common response.

Combined, these responses suggest that the main barrier isn’t misaligned goals, but coordination and infrastructure for collaboration. These are solvable problems that if addressed,

can unlock policy innovation for communities across the country. For examples of how some jurisdictions have partnered together to solve a local issue, please see **Appendix B**.

This report is the manifestation of why MetroLab was started. It is a roadmap that will move further the theory of change that our research ecosystem has a bounty of insights and policy interventions, and when done in partnership with local innovators, catalytic impact is in our grasp.

FAS looks forward to continuing this work, and hopefully, bringing research problem statements and answers to communities across the country.

**faculty want local governments to bring them real problems to solve**

"Tell us what you need"

"Bring problems of pressing local importance"

"Provide real data and real-world problems"

"Research questions that come from real-world needs"

"Give us wicked, complex problems"

## Acknowledgements

---

We would like to thank Schmidt Futures, who provided the funding for this program. Without their support, this effort would not have been possible.

We would also like to thank Kate Bender of PorchLight Insights for her help in conceiving, developing, distributing, and analyzing the information from our national survey, as well as Christine Baker Smith at the National League of Cities for amplifying our survey in their networks to help gather the data used in this report.

Additionally, a sincere thank you to our Steering Committee, whose insights and thought leadership were helpful in framing this report, as well as tremendous gratitude to our FAS colleagues, namely Dr. Jedidah Isler for her editorial support and leadership in reaching the finish line as well as our colleagues in the communications department who helped produce this material for public consumption.

Lastly, we would like to thank the following individuals from the nine communities we were able to visit in order to host in person workshops.

### **Allentown, PA**

- ↳ The Honorable Matthew Tuerk, Mayor, City of Allentown
- ↳ Katharine Haring, Ph.D., President, Muhlenberg College
- ↳ Laura Furge, Ph.D., Provost, Muhlenberg College
- ↳ Michaela Boyer, Chief of Staff, City of Allentown

### **Baltimore, MD**

- ↳ Ralph O. Mueller, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, University of Baltimore
- ↳ Amanda Phillips de Lucas, Ph.D., Director Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance – Jacob France Institute, University of Baltimore
- ↳ Dartanion Swift-Williams, Chief Data and Performance Officer, City of Baltimore
- ↳ Jason Howard, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Analytics, Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation, City of Baltimore

### **Columbus, OH**

- ↳ Dave Dixon, Director of Data Analytics & Strategy, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
- ↳ Harvey Miller, Ph.D., Director, Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (CURA) at Ohio State University
- ↳ Jessica Kuenzli, Chief Regional Planning Officer, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

**Guilford County, NC**

- ↳ Victor Isler, County Manager, Guilford County
- ↳ Alice Mahood, Director of Integrated Services, Guilford County Manager's Office

**Houston, TX**

- ↳ Michelle Smirnova, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Housing and Neighborhoods and Associate Professor of Sociology, Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University
- ↳ Caroline Cheong, Ph.D., Associate Director of Housing and Neighborhoods, Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University
- ↳ Ruth N. López Turley, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology and Director, Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University

**Kansas City, MO**

- ↳ The Honorable Quinton Lucas, Mayor of the City of Kansas City
- ↳ C. Mauli Agrawal, Ph.D, Chancellor, University of Missouri - Kansas City
- ↳ Troy Lillebo, Associate Vice Chancellor for External Relations, University of Missouri - Kansas City
- ↳ Gavriel Schreiber, General Counsel, The Office of Mayor Lucas
- ↳ Nataniel Addington, Director of Community Engagement & Outreach, University of Missouri - Kansas City

**Lincoln, NE**

- ↳ The Honorable Leirion Gaylor Baird, Mayor of the City of Lincoln Rodney D. Bennett, Ph.D, Chancellor, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- ↳ Nathan Meier, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, Capacity and Competitiveness, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- ↳ Kim C. Morrow, Chief Sustainability Officer The Office of Mayor Gaylor Baird
- ↳ Riley M. Slezak, Senior Advisor to the Mayor, The Office of Mayor Gaylor Baird

**Little Rock, AR**

- ↳ The Honorable Frank Scott, Mayor of the City of Little Rock
- ↳ Marquis Willis, Chief Data Officer, City of Little Rock
- ↳ Emily Cox, Vice Chancellor for University Affairs, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

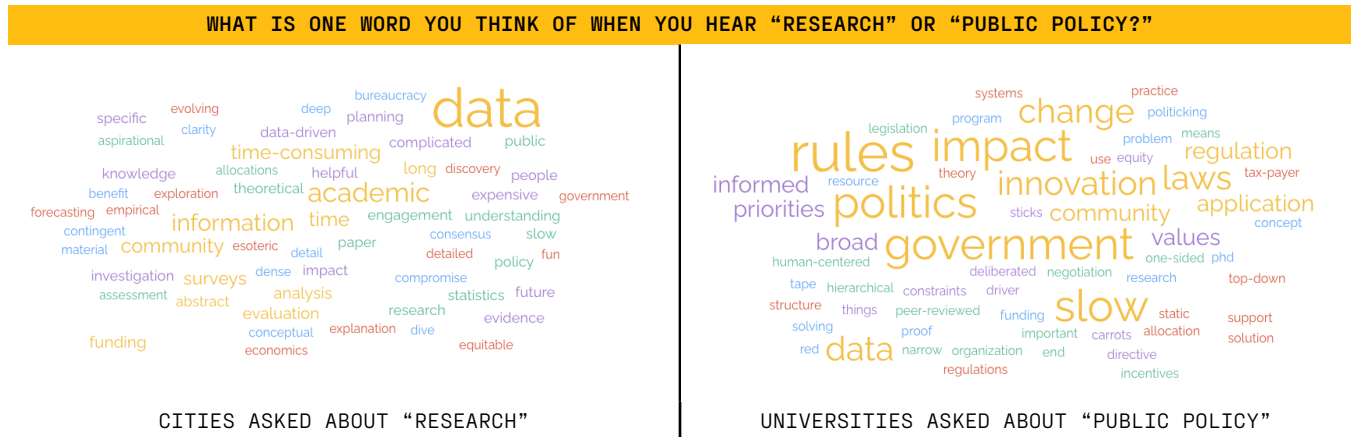
**Syracuse, NY**

- ↳ The Honorable Ben Walsh, (former) Mayor of the City of Syracuse
- ↳ Lois Agnew, Ph.D, Interim Vice Chancellor, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Syracuse University

- ↳ Katherine McDonald, Ph.D, Associate Vice President for Research, Syracuse University  
Office of Research
- ↳ Sevgi Erdogan, Ph.D, Associate Professor, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University
- ↳ Jeff Hemsley, Ph.D, Interim Dean, Associate Professor, School of Information Studies,  
Syracuse University
- ↳ Carsten Østerlund, Ph.D, Professor and Associate Dean for Research, School of Information  
Studies, Syracuse University

## Appendices

### Appendix A. Perceptions and Myths to Bust



### Appendix B. Examples of Completed Projects

JURISDICTION	STATE	IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, HAS THE PRODUCT OF A RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH A UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE BEEN USED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION TO MODIFY OR CREATE POLICIES, PROGRAMS, OR TOOLS?	POLICY DOMAIN
RALEIGH	NC	A COLLABORATION WITH NC STATE AND OTHER ENTITIES RESULTED IN AN URBAN HEAT MAP THAT HAS INFORMED A NUMBER OF SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMS	CLIMATE
PORTLAND	OR	AS THERE IS NO CENTRAL OFFICE THAT COORDINATES COLLABORATION OR RESEARCH OR DATA I DON'T HAVE A GREAT SENSE OF ALL OF THE PROGRAMS AND OUTCOMES. I KNOW THAT PORTLAND STATE ASSISTS WITH THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF THE ANNUAL PORTLAND INSIGHT SURVEY WHICH COMES OUT OF THE CITY BUDGET OFFICE, AND AN EVERY 5 YEAR SURVEY THE PARKS BUREAU HAS THAT HELPS SHAPE THEIR PROGRAMS. PSU AND THE POLICE BUREAU HAVE ALSO COLLABORATED.	PUBLIC SAFETY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
CHARLOTTE	NC	ASSESSMENT OF EARLY INTERVENTION ON VIOLENCE REDUCTION (CURE VIOLENCE) - PROVED VALUE OF THIS WORK	PUBLIC SAFETY
UNIFIED GOV'T OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY	GA	ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY PARTNERED WITH STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN FELLOWSHIPS THROUGH THE UGA INNOVATION DISTRICT TO STUDY CHALLENGES TO EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND JOB SATISFACTION, DEVELOPING A 3 YEAR ACTION PLAN FOR ENHANCEMENT AND REFORMS OF SOME OF OUR HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES. THE PLAN WAS USED AS THE BASIS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION TO A FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM SPONSORED BY THE HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT.	SERVICE DELIVERY

JURISDICTION	STATE	IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, HAS THE PRODUCT OF A RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH A UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE BEEN USED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION TO MODIFY OR CREATE POLICIES, PROGRAMS, OR TOOLS?	POLICY DOMAIN
LONG BEACH	CA	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH IS OUR RESEARCH PARTNER ON A GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME PILOT PROGRAM, WHERE THE FUNDS ARE SPENT, REPORTS ON EFFECTIVENESS, ETC. THE RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT IS CONCLUDING SOON BUT IS NOT FINISHED YET.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN SERVICES
SAN ANTONIO	TX	CITYWIDE SURVEY TOOLKIT WAS CREATED FROM A RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH UTSA	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
QUINCY	MA	CURRENTLY DEVELOPING OF CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS IN TECHNOLOGY, CYBERSECURITY AND AI.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
NEW ORLEANS	LA	HISTORIC PRESERVATION RECEIVED AN INTERN FROM TULANE UNIVERSITY TO WORK CAPTURE HISTORIC BUILDING DETAILS ALONG A MAJOR THOROUGHFARE THAT WE USE NOW IN OUR PERMITTING OFFICE.	SERVICE DELIVERY
ALLENTOWN	PA	CEDAR CREST COLLEGE, ALLENTOWN AND ALLENTOWN PD PARTNERSHIP ALLOW POLICE ADMINISTRATORS ACCESS TO THE EVALUATIVE TOOLS AND SCHOLARS CAPABLE OF ASSISTING THE ADVANCEMENT OF BEST PRACTICES TO IMPROVE LOCAL POLICING.[ <a href="https://www.cedarcrest.edu/new-collaborative-partnership/">HTTPS://WWW.CEDARCREST.EDU/NEW-COLLABORATIVE-PARTNERSHIP/</a> ]	PUBLIC SAFETY
HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT	TX	HYDROLOGIC MODELING AND FORECASTING WITH RICE, NATIVE SEED MIX DEVELOPMENT WITH A&M, ETC	CLIMATE
BOISE	ID	IN OUR DEPARTMENT WE HAVE WORKED WITH STUDENTS TO STUDY AND EVALUATE BOISE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY. WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING WITH THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, WHICH HAS AN NEA GRANT TO RESEARCH DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN THE U.S. ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICTS, ALTHOUGH THIS WILL MOST LIKELY GET STEPPED ON BY THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PORTLAND	OR	MULTIPLE, IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH PSU RELATED TO OUR CLIMATE WORK. PARTNERSHIPS ON TECHNOLOGY/INNOVATION THAT RESULTED IN ONGOING PROJECTS NOW OWNED BY THE CITY OF PORTLAND (E.G., OUR PARTNERSHIP ON THE PORTLAND URBAN DATA LAKE PROJECT).	CLIMATE
PARKVILLE	MO	PARK UNIVERSITY DEVELOPED, HELP PRESENT LOCAL CITIZENS ACADEMY. SEVERAL STUDENTS IN MPA PROGRAM CONDUCTED RESEARCH IN CITY AS INTERNS.	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
LANE COUNTY	OR	PARKS FUNDING RESEARCH LED TO A SUCCESSFUL PARKS LEVY.	CLIMATE
BOSTON	MA	RESEARCH EFFORTS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTHEASTERN HAVE SHAPED THE MAYORS INVESTMENT OF \$25 MILLION ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT. JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF MANY.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN SERVICES
SAN ANTONIO	TX	RESEARCH HAS SHAPED AND HELP DESIGN A PROGRAM APPROACH AS WE DEPLOY VARIOUS RESOURCES INTO THE COMMUNITY TO COMBAT THE HEAT.	CLIMATE
UTAH COUNTY	UT	TECHNOLOGY (AI) PRIVACY ELECTIONS	SERVICE DELIVERY
WILLIAMSPORT	PA	THE MOST RECENT COLLABORATION WAS A STUDY DONE BY LYCOMING COLLEGE ON CITY RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. UNFORTUNATELY HAVEN'T SEEN A FINAL COPY OF THE WORK.	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY
LOS ANGELES	CA	THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT WORKED WITH UCLA ON A WORKPLACE CLIMATE ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCES IN THE WORKPLACE	SERVICE DELIVERY
SEATTLE	WA	THERE WAS A PRESENTATION DAY OF FIVE PROJECTS IN DIFFERENT PROJECTS, BUT AM NOT FINDING THEM AT QUICK SEARCH.	

JURISDICTION	STATE	IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, HAS THE PRODUCT OF A RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH A UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE BEEN USED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION TO MODIFY OR CREATE POLICIES, PROGRAMS, OR TOOLS?	POLICY DOMAIN
PITTSBURGH	PA	TOO MANY TO DETAIL HERE, BUT BRIEFLY: CHANGES TO SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES, NEW BUDGET/FINANCE TOOLS, AND CHANGES TO PROGRAMS IN THE PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPTS.	CLIMATE, TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICE DELIVERY
AUSTIN	TX	WE DID A AIR QUALITY PILOT WITH UT THAT INFORMED MOBILITY PLANS.	CLIMATE, PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
GLENDALE	CA	WE HAVE ONBOARDED STUDENT INTERNS WHO HAVE HELPED WITH POLICY DEVELOPMENT, MOST NOTABLY IN OUR SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE. THEY HELPED DETERMINE HOW TO OPTIMIZE PUBLIC OUTREACH FOR GLENDALE'S CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN.	CLIMATE, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
AURORA	IL	WE PARTNERED WITH BLOOMBERG HARVARD ON A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT RELATED TO OUR SPECIAL CENSUS. WE HAD A FELLOW FOR TWO YEARS AT NO COST TO THE CITY.	SERVICE DELIVERY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
OLATHE	KS	WE WORKED WITH KU AND DEVELOPED AN ORGANIZATIONAL-WIDE TRAINING CALLED TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MISSION - OVER 1,000 EMPLOYEES HAVE COMPLETED THE MULTI-DAY TRAINING.	SERVICE DELIVERY
ALLEGHENY COUNTY	PA	WPRDC.ORG	SERVICE DELIVERY

## Appendix C. Workshop Attendees

CITY	PARTNERS	HOST LOCATION	TOTAL ATTENDEES	UNIVERSITY INSTS.	LOCAL GOV DEPTS	COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGS
KANSAS CITY, MO	UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI KANSAS CITY, CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MO	UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI KANSAS CITY	40	5	9	4
LINCOLN, NE	UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN, CITY OF LINCOLN, NE	UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN	40	1	12	8
LITTLE ROCK, AR	UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS-LITTLE ROCK, CITY OF LITTLE ROCK, AR	UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS-LITTLE ROCK	20	1	10	1
GUILFORD, NC	GUILFORD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE (GTCC), GUILFORD COUNTY MANAGERS OFFICE	GUILFORD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE	28	4	3	3
SYRACUSE, NY	SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, CITY OF SYRACUSE, NY	SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY	36	1	11	0
HOUSTON, TX	KINDER INSTITUTE FOR URBAN RESEARCH AT RICE UNIVERSITY	KINDER INSTITUTE, RICE UNIVERSITY	62	6	20	17

CITY	PARTNERS	HOST LOCATION	TOTAL ATTENDEES	UNIVERSITY INSTS.	LOCAL GOV DEPTS	COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGS
COLUMBUS, OH	MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, THE CENTER FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL ANALYSIS AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	49	6	6	16
ALLENTOWN, PA	CITY OF ALLENTOWN, PA, MUHLENBERG COLLEGE	MUHLENBERG COLLEGE	54	8	9	9
BALTIMORE, MD	CITY OF BALTIMORE, MD, UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE	UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE	37	10	5	1

## About the Federation of American Scientists

The Federation of American Scientists is dedicated to democratizing the policymaking process by working with new and expert voices across the science and technology community, helping to develop actionable policies that can improve the lives of all Americans. For more about the Federation of American Scientists, visit **FAS.org**.