Background

The National Academy of Public Administration is the pre-eminent authority providing expert advice to government leaders in building and managing more effective, efficient, equitable, accountable, and transparent organizations. The Academy is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organization established in 1967 and chartered by Congress in 1984. To carry out this mission, the Academy draws on the knowledge and experience of its nearly 1,000 Fellows—including former cabinet officers, Members of Congress, governors, mayors, and state legislators, as well as prominent scholars, career public administrators, and non-profit and business executives. Supported by a full-time professional staff, our Fellows bring their insights, experience, successes, and lessons learned straight to our clients through independent thought leadership, in-depth studies and analyses, advisory services and technical assistance, congressional testimony, forums and conferences, and stakeholder engagement.

As outlined in its Congressional charter, the Academy seeks to advance government practices through studies and projects held to the highest standards of efficiency and excellence. From its founding, the Academy’s commitment to good governance drives the organization forward and inspires its work.
Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

*A just, fair, and inclusive government that strengthens communities and protects democracy*

Vision

*Justice, Fairness, Inclusion, and Performance*

The Academy’s new vision reflects the ongoing development of its position within the field of public administration and the constantly evolving nature of our democratic systems. The Academy chose to update its vision to signify its understanding of the growing challenges to our democracy and the critical role public administrators play in sustaining and improving our governance systems. Our new vision is more explicit in its intent to defend and preserve this nation’s great democratic institutions. It transitions the concept of making government work for all into a results-oriented vision, emphasizing what a government that works for all accomplishes. A government that is just, fair, and inclusive for all is a government that strengthens resilient communities and embraces and protects the democratic ideals upon which this nation was founded. An Academy that is just, fair, and inclusive acts within the field of public administration to lead the way for positive and lasting change.

Mission

*Through the experience and expertise of our Fellows and in strategic partnership with all levels of government and sectors, the Academy produces independent research and studies that advance the field of public administration and facilitates the development, adoption, and implementation of solutions to government’s most significant challenges.*

The Academy’s updated mission statement operationalizes the new vision by indicating how the Academy will contribute to justice, fairness, inclusion, and performance—it clarifies the impact and value of the Academy’s work. It also better reflects the full scope of work the Academy accomplishes through its Fellows, funded studies, and philanthropically supported initiatives. Fellows remain the core and essence of the Academy. Still, this new mission reflects our objective to increase our impact in the field of public administration by leveraging all its resources, partnerships, and products while remaining non-partisan in our approach.
Core Values

Excellence
The Academy provides excellent service and solutions through the unique breadth of expertise and experience contributed by its Fellows and professional staff, who represent the best in current and emerging leadership in the field of public administration.

Independence
The Academy’s work and recommendations are always evidence-driven, unbiased, and non-partisan.

Integrity
The Academy adheres to the highest standard of ethical conduct, internally and externally.

Innovation
The Academy leverages the expertise of its Fellows and staff with cutting-edge technology, tools, and methods to think creatively about challenges in public administration and to deliver innovative and effective solutions.

Inclusion
The Academy is strongly committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in its internal operations, its Fellowship, and its client work. In its studies and reports, the Academy supports public administration practices and solutions that recognize and address the needs of all communities.
Growth and Change During and After the Pandemic

Since its last strategic plan in 2017, the Academy has made great strides in addressing internal and external challenges through careful assessment and intentional action. These efforts improved our financial stability, strengthened our internal operations, and enabled us not just to withstand the challenges of the global COVID pandemic but to thrive during extraordinarily challenging times. We built internal stability to ensure our vital work could continue regardless of external circumstances.

The pandemic also created an opportunity to re-examine our progress and our goals. Self-reflection and analysis highlighted the critical importance of intergovernmental partnerships and social justice and demonstrated that the twelve Grand Challenges in Public Administration accurately reflect the most urgent challenges facing government from a public administration standpoint today.

The global pandemic drastically altered expectations of how equity, public health, and governance should be addressed. These stressors tested our system of federalism and highlighted opportunities to utilize new tools, technologies, and public expectations to drive lasting change. The past two years also tested the field of public administration, as leaders at all levels were suddenly forced to find new ways of engaging their constituents and delivering services to address urgent and often life-threatening conditions. To address these issues, the Academy is now expanding our work to develop new “post-pandemic” public administration practices and processes that incorporate the hard lessons we have learned to promote national and international recovery.

The pandemic, despite its urgency, is not the only driver of change across public administration. Climate change presents an ever-present threat to which the field of public administration must adapt. At the same time, advancements in technology and science indicate the need for new and innovative solutions to this collective action issue.

The Twelve Grand Challenges in Public Administration

**Protecting and Advancing Democracy**

1. Ensure electoral integrity and enhancing voter participation  
2. Modernize and reinvigorate the public service  
3. Develop new approaches to public governance and engagement  
4. Advance national interests in a changing global context

**Strengthening Social and Economic Development**

5. Foster social equity  
6. Connect individuals to meaningful work  
7. Build resilient communities  
8. Advance the nations long-term fiscal health

**Ensuring Environmental Sustainability**

9. Steward natural resources and address climate change  
10. Create modern water systems for safe and sustainable use

**Managing Technological Changes**

11. Ensure data security and individual privacy  
12. Make government AI ready
Other advances in technology are challenging our ideas of what “work” is, where it gets done, and who does it, forcing public administrators to reimagine the work of the public sector. Public Administration is a broad and dynamic field, touching on environmental concerns, public health, social equity, technological advancement, and more. These policy issues need carefully tailored solutions that are actionable and adaptable, and the Academy is positioned to bring our unique expertise to the nexus of public administration practice and research.

Separately, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and dozens of other people of color crystallized serious dialogue about social equity and racial justice. These events exposed fault lines in our society and our application of government programs, and they sparked the desire for change across all levels of government and all sectors. Concerns about equity, racial justice, and good government are central to the practice of public administration, and they are foundational to the Academy’s work. This heightened awareness demands that we be even more intentional in bringing the Academy’s voice and influence to the development and deployment of public administration tools and practices that reduce inequity wherever it is found. Social equity is a central focus of the Academy’s work. We are prepared to take the initiative and lead collaborative efforts to advance our mission across all levels of government and all sectors.

The future is uncertain, and the field of public administration is continually evolving. The Academy is prepared to adapt and evolve as well. The Academy’s current position allows us now to transition our focus from internal operational improvements to external growth as we look toward a future that focuses on equitable solutions to the Grand Challenges and the larger issues in government. With projected growth comes the responsibility to ensure the Academy’s programs and operations are sustainable through periods of contraction or difficulty. Maintaining our position through continued funding, relevant and impactful studies, and both more diverse and consistent revenue streams creates sustainability for our essential work.

**America’s 250th Anniversary and the Next Five Years**

Five years from now, our nation will celebrate its 250th birthday. This milestone will be a monumental occasion recognizing the extraordinary resilience of our democratic institutions and system of federalism. This remarkable continuation of independent democratic rule should give us hope for an even brighter future. Though democracy may appear frail at times, the endurance of our Constitution and government institutions through volatile times proves that the country can press on and heal, both physically and spiritually. If the years between now and our 250th birthday are a time of immense growth and progress for equity and justice, it will be a true celebration for all.
We have far to go between now and then, and we will all need to work together to get there. Together, we must reweave the civic fabric necessary to create a shared view of a nation worth celebrating for a divided populace; the work of public administrators and the Academy is central to developing and implementing that shared perspective. The Academy’s new vision and mission inform a future-focused strategy for the Academy. Our twelve Grand Challenges in Public Administration offer an agenda for action that can drive solutions that enable good government, build resilient communities, and ensure the protection of democracy. We will continue refreshing the Grand Challenges with the times, reflecting the most pressing public administration needs. Dedication to these pursuits will better prepare the Academy and government at all levels to overcome challenges and implement innovative solutions so that we can celebrate this milestone in a truly collective way.

**Current Position for Change**

The intersecting threads of the pandemic and recovery, conversations about racial and social equity, and the 250th birthday of the United States present a complicated and unique space for the Academy’s work. Over the past four years, the current strategic plan guided the Academy to strengthen our organization for the future—improving technology, developing meaningful approaches to Fellow engagement, building our financial position, advancing the theory and practice of public administration, and fostering equity across all levels.

The Academy made great progress against the goals established in that plan. Our now-stable internal operations provide a solid framework for more external engagement. Fiscal stability was essential for ensuring future work for the Academy—securing adequate resources allows our vital work for democracy to continue and thrive. The growth of our presence through digital media, Fellow engagement, and the twelve Grand Challenges broadcast the wide variety of our capabilities. The Academy does valuable and meaningful work for the field of public administration and is now in the position to expand its impact.

The Agile Government Center and the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships provide two new channels for the Academy’s effort to improve government performance and build public trust. The Centers bring together public, private, non-profit, and academic partners through their shared desire to improve public administration. These Centers allow the Academy to engage stakeholders on specific issues and produce targeted research that addresses governance concerns. Both Centers serve as venues where public administrators can access research on current public administration
concerns and build relationships. They also increase the Academy’s capacity for collaboration and present a medium for multi-sector partnerships, building flexibility and cooperation across levels of government and disciplines.

Our Fellows remain the core of the Academy. Their individual and collective expertise is our competitive advantage, and Fellow engagement continues to be a top priority. The Academy provides a forum for its Fellows to share their knowledge and engage in discussions about the challenges facing public administration today. Through its weekly podcast, daily Management Matters newsletter, the twelve Grand Challenges, Standing Panels, Study Panels, and more, the Academy engages its Fellows and presents their work in various modes. The Academy emphasizes the development of good leaders and good managers, and our Fellows embody public administration in practice, research, implementation, and engagement at all levels. By opening new opportunities for Fellow participation through the Centers and exploring new research opportunities through contracts, grants, and underwriting, the Academy will maintain strong and lasting connections with its Fellows.

The Academy’s current position is strong, and we recognize its important place within the field of public administration. It is now time to point our efforts outward and expand our work to foster the development, adoption, and implementation of solutions that address urgent public administration challenges. We are now positioned to work on crucial public administration challenges to build administrative capacity at all levels of government and present relevant and timely solutions to the problems plaguing our democratic systems. The Academy looks forward to developing its own research on these important topics while sustaining outstanding results in directed studies for individual government agencies. It is time to start pushing boundaries through new research, having difficult conversations about equity and racial justice, addressing the Grand Challenges, engaging the expertise of our Fellows to do the best work possible, and ensuring that the vital work of the Academy is sustainable in the decades ahead. In short, our charge is to make the results of a just, fair, and inclusive government produce strong communities and protect democracy. We are ready!
Academy Strategic Goals

**Strategic Goal #1**
The Academy commits to addressing equity in governance, incorporating and modeling social equity practices in all its own work, fostering inclusivity, and advancing diversity across the Fellowship.

The Academy holds social equity as one of the pillars of public administration, along with economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. We will bring an equity lens to the field of public administration, using it to promote inclusion and excellence in government institutions at all levels and across all disciplines.

**Operational Objective 1.1**
Improve the Academy’s capacity to identify and address social equity concerns in its studies, research, and programs.

**Operational Objective 1.2**
Develop and support the work of the Standing Panel on Social Equity.

**Operational Objective 1.3**
Propose concrete solutions that address the most critical issues associated with the “Foster Social Equity” Grand Challenge.

**Strategic Goal #2**
The Academy will maintain an interactive and engaging environment where Fellows can collaborate on public administration and governance challenges that motivate their active, substantive, and sustained participation.

Fellows are integral to the mission and vision of the Academy, and their contributions to the field of public administration address a broad spectrum of current issues exemplified by the Grand Challenges in Public Administration. The wealth of knowledge that Fellows bring sets the Academy apart from other institutions, and their participation enriches our work in public administration. The Academy seeks to engage each Fellow in ways that improve their experience and expand their engagement with the Academy and the field overall.

**Operational Objective 2.1**
Sustain a culture that promotes Fellow engagement with the Academy, in which Fellows are excited to participate, and which Fellows actively support with their time and resources.
Operational Objective 2.2
Increase all aspects of diversity in the Fellow population so that the Academy’s work is enhanced by the Fellows’ diversity.

Operational Objective 2.3
Encourage an enduring affiliation with the Academy throughout a Fellow’s lifecycle.

Strategic Goal #3
The Academy will promote collaborative intergovernmental and multi-sector partnerships that further governance in action and build administrative capacity by generating thoughtful, original content recognized for its excellence and reliability.

The Academy has a reputation for excellence in a variety of fields within public administration. As problems in public administration grow more complex, we realize that the private and non-profit sectors must be more engaged in developing and implementing solutions. Building collaborative and multi-sector partnerships will enable the Academy to lead the development and adoption of new and innovative solutions in the field of public administration. Fostering these relationships will also raise awareness of our work and our brand. The Agile Government Center and the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships are two critical assets that we will leverage to extend our outreach and continue our vital work.

Operational Objective 3.1
Position and use the Agile Government Center and the Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships as tools and venues that attract strategic and collaborative partners.

Operational Objective 3.2
Raise the Academy’s brand awareness and reach by developing and implementing a strategic communication, marketing, and public relations plan that elevates our public presence and exposure and increases public awareness of and engagement with our work.

Operational Objective 3.3
Utilize partnerships with governments, non-profits, universities, and the private sector to build administrative capacity at all levels of government, including state, local, tribal, and territorial, to facilitate and implement public administration solutions.

Operational Objective 3.4
Create outreach and engagement opportunities with the academic community to position our work and resources for use in classrooms and curricula.
Strategic Goal #4
The Academy will produce solutions-focused research and studies that help address the nation’s governance and management challenges while advancing public administration as a field.

The National Academy of Public Administration’s charter anchors its commitment to providing guidance and insight in public administration. In its second half-century, the Academy reaffirms its dedication to shaping theory, practice, and analysis in public administration and related public policy. Our solutions-oriented research and other original content will remain a key priority during this period of anticipated growth. As we work with all levels of government and the private and non-profit sectors to address the Grand Challenges in Public Administration and help improve the performance of public agencies, we will take steps toward fulfilling our vision of a just, fair, and inclusive government.

Operational Objective 4.1
Advance awareness of and solutions to the Grand Challenges using the Academy’s Fellows, staff, and resources.

Operational Objective 4.2
Maintain our capacity to produce high-quality, original, and non-partisan research that responds to demands and opportunities in the field of public administration.

Operational Objective 4.3
Build, leverage, and transform Academy reports and data into appropriate management and educational resources that promote new ideas and solutions for academics, practitioners, peer investigators/researchers, and students.

Operational Objective 4.4
Expand our capacity to develop action-oriented solutions to public sector management challenges by providing both tactical and strategic guidance for positive change and impact.

Operational Objective 4.5
Increase brand awareness through an expanded client base, increased client referrals, follow-up work, and additional online engagement.
**Strategic Goal #5**
The Academy will ensure it has the internal structure, resources, staff, and financial capacity to promote the field of public administration across all levels of government and disciplines.

The Academy strives to operate as a world-class organization. To achieve this goal, the Academy must first be sure that its internal operations meet the expectations and standards of this current era. The Academy’s professional staff is integral to its successful products and client relations, and recruiting and retaining a capable and highly trained staff is fundamental to that objective. The Academy must also guarantee that its internal structure and resources provide sufficient capacity to accomplish its vital work in the field of public administration. New approaches to business development, philanthropic engagement, and outreach will support the Academy’s financial sustainability in the future. The goal of remaining a world-class organization is attainable through stable internal structure and continued development of resources.

**Operational Objective 5.1**
Demonstrate the highest ethical standards and most effective practices in all aspects of its internal management and operations to assure its continued leadership in the field of public administration.

**Operational Objective 5.2**
Maintain the capacity and reputation to produce excellent non-partisan research that informs policy and responds to market demands and opportunities.

**Operational Objective 5.3**
Build and sustain philanthropic engagement and business development capacity that generates sufficient revenue to accomplish operating goals.

**Operational Objective 5.4**
Attract and retain a talented, diverse, and equipped workforce that can deliver innovative and impactful products to clients.