

2026 Call for Fellow Nominations



DEADLINE:
April 30, 2026

National Academy of Public Administration
1600 K Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006

2026 Election

As the Academy serves to strengthen and improve government at all levels, nationally and internationally, we ask each Fellow to identify and recommend candidates of distinction with the willingness and ability to contribute work and wisdom to this important mission. We further ask that you recognize the fundamental importance of **diversity** in the pool of distinguished Fellows to achieve the objectives and purposes for which the Academy was created. All candidate recommendations must be received at the Academy offices by close of business on **April 30, 2026**.

Please discuss the Academy with your proposed candidate. We are seeking candidates who are able and would like to contribute effort and expertise to the accomplishment of our important mission. Material to share with your candidate is available on the Academy's website at:

<https://napawash.org/the-fellows-primer>

2026 Fellows Nominating Committee

Kerry Neal, Co-Chair

Jeanette Takamura, Co-Chair

Maria Aristigueta

Darren Ash

Don Borut

Soraya Correa

Ron Feldman

David Gragan

Simon Liu

Peggy Merriss

Vince Micone

Rakesh Mohan

Kimberly Nelson

Rosemary O'Leary

Marilyn Rubin

Loren Schulman

Bradley Wright

Renee Wynn

Criteria for Election

The Academy Bylaws list several foundational qualifications that are essential for membership:

- Substantial scholarly contribution to public administration and/or significant administrative experience with evidence of sufficiently broad interests and reflective nature;
- Other significant experience (contributions) in public affairs with a special interest in public administration;
- Demonstrated contributions to the advancement of public administration;
- Adherence to the highest ethical standards;
- Willingness and ability to contribute to the work of the Academy.

The Academy's Board of Directors encourages all Fellows to exercise their right and privilege to nominate candidates for Fellowship in the Academy. The Board particularly encourages Fellows to expand their outreach and utilize their professional networks to find candidates that meet the characteristics outlined below as well as detailed in the [by-sector characteristics of successful nominees section](#).

Based on the Academy's Strategic Plan, the Board prioritizes nominees who demonstrate knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, and accomplishments aligned with one or more of these priorities:

- Artificial intelligence integration and governance in the public sector
- The future of the civil service
- State and local leadership and operational expertise, including experience working across federal, state, and local governments to design and implement effective public sector solutions
- Agile government and innovative approaches to public management
- Climate adaptation, environmental governance, and extreme weather resilience including experience in developing and implementing governance and institutional design frameworks; finance and insurance mechanisms; and adaptation and resilience planning at the federal, state, and local levels.

All nominees should have a significant combination of the following skills and attributes:

- Individuals who are extraordinary current or former federal, state, local, and international government practitioners at a leadership and/or executive level (e.g., members of the Federal Senior Executive Service or equivalent senior leadership level from state and local government such as, governor, legislator, mayor, city or county manager, department or agency head or senior level program administrator);
- Individuals who are nonprofit, non-governmental or private sector leaders actively engaged in improving public policy and administration and who have served with demonstrated distinction;
- Individuals aforementioned can demonstrate their expertise by:
 - Holding a high-level position in the organization; or
 - Demonstrating active participation or leadership roles in professional societies; or
 - Leading a policy accomplishment, for example: legislation, a program, or a study that was innovative and significant; or
 - Addressing a complex problem that involved bringing multiple parties, sectors, governments together; or
 - Significant professional recognition.
- Prominent scholars in the U.S. and those who reside in countries other than the United States who have a record of distinguished contributions to research and theory of public administration.
- Individuals with substantial and demonstrable experience putting together (as co director or co organizer) AND working on comparative governance activities (for example, research/ publication/ university program development/applied development projects), with counterparts in the U.S. and around the world.
- Individuals with substantial comparative experience with the Grand Challenges for example climate adaptation with a focus on water with counterparts in the U.S. and around the world.

All candidates must be:

- Individuals who will become actively involved in Academy activities including project panels, standing panels, committees, fundraising and special projects.

Nominating Instructions

You may submit up to **five** proposed candidates and you must seek two Fellows who can second your nomination.

We ask that you take care to explain how your candidate meets the criteria for election and why the person should be elected. For example, previous participation in the Academy's work or other efforts to strengthen the quality of government delivery affecting more than one government entity would be highly relevant. Election must be based on the willingness and capacity of the candidate to contribute effort and expertise to the accomplishment of our important mission.

To Nominate:

1. Start your online nomination [here](#), you'll need:
 1. Your candidate's first name, last name, and personal email.
 2. A short statement on how the candidate stands out in her/his sector, including examples of the candidate's achievements and examples of recognition by peers and professional organizations in her/his sector or discipline.
 3. The names of two seconding Fellows.
 4. A short statement on how your candidate contributes to a more diverse and robust Academy.
 5. A short statement on how the candidate would be a valuable addition to the body of Fellows.

Please give special care to the Recommender's statement, which may be written in the form of a paragraph or using bulleted statements. This statement is particularly important because traditionally it has been used to prepare the paragraph describing the nominee in the ballot to Fellows. Merely summarizing the previous information gives neither the Committee nor the Fellows additional insight into why the candidate would become a valuable Fellow. We also suggest specific language in the Recommender and Seconding statements that highlight how your candidate's qualifications align with those in the descriptions below of likely successful candidates in their sector.

Nominating Committee Assessment

Each candidate will be interviewed by telephone by a Committee member before the Committee meets to recommend its nominees to the Fellowship for election. Election ballots will be provided to all Fellows electronically in early August.

All candidate recommendations must be received at the Academy offices by close of business on April 30, 2026.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMY FELLOWS REPRESENTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR¹

- I. **Professional Achievements** - Describe the professional journey of the nominee and describe specific examples of the positive impact the nominee's leadership had on the organizations and communities they served.
 - A. The scope and scale of professional impact. What difference have they made in their career? How wide has that impact been felt? Who benefited – especially as it relates to equitable outcomes for underserved populations?
 - B. Achievement can include effective Implementation of innovative programs and initiatives, documented performance and/or budget improvements, or effective crisis response.
 - C. Local government nominees can occupy various roles. For example: elected leaders (Mayor, County executive, Councilmember), appointed city or county managers, department head, or technical specialists/experts. Given the diversity of local government management structures they could have significant experience with a special purpose district (such as a water district), work for a local or regional intergovernmental organization such as Councils of Government (COGs), or a municipally-focused research organization such as a Municipal Research Service.

- II. **Professional Recognition** - Identify any professional recognitions received by the nominee that are evidence of the nominee's positive impact on organizations / entities with which the nominee has been involved.
 - A. Recognition can come from employers, peers, professional associations, or community groups.
 - B. External recognition by peers in local government professions for excellence, leadership, problem solving, creativity.
 - C. Regional or national recognition for program or management innovations is desirable.

- III. **Leadership/Involvement with Professional Organizations**- Identify the nominee's involvement in any leadership capacity with professional organizations in which the nominee has maintained membership. Describe the positive impact the nominee has had on the organization via involvement in leadership positions and/or a history of support for the mission and goals of the organization.
 - A. Leadership role or other forms of active participation in local, regional or national organizations; *such as* (a non-inclusive list): International City/County Management Association, Government Finance Officers

¹ Intended to be used by the NAPA nominating committee to assess candidates for nomination **and** to be shared with potential nominees to assess their readiness for nomination.

Association, Association of Government Accountants, Association of Local Government Auditors.

- B. Engagement with peer networks or Intergovernmental partnerships
- C. Contributions to one or more professional bodies of knowledge through publication in professional association publications, presentations at conferences, interdisciplinary programs, teaching, writing, lecturing, or other media.
- D. Involvement with NAPA such as standing panels or events is desirable

IV. **Support for the Next Generation of Leaders** - Describe examples of the nominee's support for the next generation of leaders through areas such as intern programs, leadership development activities for emerging leaders and/or talent management via the mentoring of young professionals. Demonstrated sustained commitment to fostering the next generation of local government professionals, including fostering diversity within the local government professions that measurably improves the ability of the local government profession to mirror the communities we serve.

V. **Courageous Leadership** - Describe how the nominee has been committed to courageous or ethical leadership, upholding the ideals of representative democracy, or sound judgment during the execution of professional responsibilities. Judgment is a critical trait for successful leaders. Identify examples of the nominee's sound judgment and commitment to goals that build and maintain trust with those served. Leadership examples that exemplify core values such as: professional ethics; diversity, equity, and inclusion; administrative courage; or programmatic efficiency, effectiveness, and equity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMY FELLOWS REPRESENTING STATE GOVERNMENT

SENIOR LEVEL POSITION

- Statewide Elected Officials like Governors, Lieutenant Governors, Comptrollers, Treasurers, etc.
- State Department and Agency Heads and their Senior Operational Leaders (i.e., Subcabinet positions with responsibilities similar to those in the federal Senior Executive Service)
- Legislators and Senior Legislative Staff

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Courageous Leadership - Describe how the nominee has been committed to courageous or ethical leadership, upholding the ideals of representative democracy, or sound judgment during the execution of professional responsibilities.
- Effective Implementation of programs and initiatives ensuring that programs and services, both ongoing and newly enacted are designed and delivered in an effective and efficient manner.
- Impact – How their career had a positive impact on the delivery of government services and/or the practice of public administration.
- Documented performance and/or budget improvements
- Effective crisis response
- Nationally recognized program or administrative innovations
- Examples of supporting the next generation of leaders
- Undertaking efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in public service

REASONABLE TENURE IN STATE GOVERNMENT

- Length of service
- Variety of assignments
- Levels of responsibility

VISIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

- Leadership role or other forms of active participation in national or regional organizations
- Engagement with peer networks, e.g. NGA, NCSL, NASBO, or NAMD
- Participation in Intergovernmental partnerships
- Conference presentations and/or publications
- Involvement with NAPA such as standing panels or events is desirable

RECOGNITION OR AWARDS

- Employment related – state recognition similar to federal senior executive service awards. All states, and even individual agencies within a state, vary greatly in the manner and degree in which they recognize exceptional performance.
- Peer organizations – recognition by organizations of state executive branch officials or related professional organizations. There are more than 100 national organizations of state executive branch official. Many annually recognize several of their members both for their contributions to the organization itself and for their professional accomplishments.
- Community – commendations by good government or stakeholder organizations

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMY FELLOWS REPRESENTING THE FEDERAL SECTOR

SENIOR LEVEL POSITION

- Presidentially Appointed with Senate Confirmation
- Presidentially Appointed
- Career and non-career Senior Executive Service
- Other senior-level position*

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACT

- Demonstrated leadership of major organizational component or program initiative
- Significant sustained leadership or participation in professional organizations in area expertise
- Outcomes based impact in area of expertise
- Examples of supporting the next generation of leaders
- Undertaking efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in public service

LEADERSHIP, VISIBILITY, AND PARTICIPATION

- Exhibiting transformative, innovative, and creative leadership in an existing program or playing a key role in building a new program
- Demonstrated leadership of major organizational component or program initiative
- Recognition as subject matter expert or thought leader in area of expertise
- Significant participation in conference events in area of expertise
- Significant media participation and/or publication

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

- SES Presidential Rank Award (nominee or awardee)
- Agency Head Awards (not routine annual performance awards)
- Service to America Award (nominee or awardee)
- Professional recognition relevant to recipient's area of expertise (e.g., Fed 100)

LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICIPATION/ENGAGEMENT IN ACADEMY

- Engagement in professional organizations beyond the candidate's job description
- Participation in Academy activities such as standing panels and studies

***OTHER SENIOR LEVEL POSITION**

- Military, Coast Guard, or Public Health Service: Flag or General Officer rank (O-7 and higher)
- State Department: Career Ambassador, Career Minister, Minister Counselor, or Counselor
- Senior-Level (SL) and Scientific and Professional (ST) positions

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMY FELLOWS REPRESENTING THE ACADEMIC SECTOR

We are seeking academics in the field of public administration or related fields who are distinctive in two or more of the following categories. In each of these areas the candidate's contributions should be noteworthy.

Research and Scholarship: Evidence of substantial and clearly defined contribution of research and scholarship for public administration. Record of research and scholarship can include publications (journal articles, books, book chapters, and other scholarly or practical reports); funded research and grants. Evidence of impact for scholarly contributions can include citation counts, quality of outlets, seminal research, and leadership in research initiatives. Most importantly, candidates should be accomplished thought leaders.

Leadership and Service: Evidence of distinctive service and leadership includes contributions achieved through academic and institutional, associational, and editorial leadership roles. Academic and institutional leadership roles include university president/chancellor, provost, dean, senate president, and academic program director. Associational leadership roles include but are not limited leadership in an association, such as president or chair, board of directors, section leader, conference chair, and award and activities chair. Editorial leadership roles refer to editorial roles in major journals in the field, such as chief editor, managing editor, and co-editor. Candidates should also have examples of supporting the next generation of leaders.

Contributions to Policy and Practice: Public administration as an applied and design field, requires impact and contribution to policy and practice. Candidates may contribute to policy and practice as evidenced by leading a policy center, working with policy centers/institutes/groups, and undertaking efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in public service. The nomination should include relevance of research and scholarship to NAPA Grand Challenges and evidence of active involvement in NAPA events and activities.

Awards and Distinctions: Nomination can highlight substantial awards as a record of distinction such as National Awards (NASPAA, ASPA, AAPAM, AOM); sub field awards (COMPA, ABFM, ARNOVA); national and international mentoring and teaching awards; and university awards.