

Local Government Research Agenda

Categories, Sub-Categories, and Example Research Questions

1. Trust: Citizen-Governance Disconnect

a. Measuring Citizen Trust

- 1 What are the important dimensions of citizen trust and what are the best measures of those dimensions?
- 2 What are reliable, least-cost options for capturing data to measure citizen trust?
- 3 How can local governments use AI tools to gather information on social media trends of the community? (tied to Emerging Technologies category)

b. Affecting Citizen Trust

- 1 How do local governments address the erosion of public trust in government?
- 2 How can compensation for community participation be a factor in building trust with disadvantaged communities?
- 3 How can participatory budgeting initiatives help build trust? (ties to Fiscal Health category)
- 4 How do local governments help residents better understand how their money is spent? (ties to the Fiscal Health category)

c. Engagement and Participation

- 1 How can we encourage people to participate in local governance?
- 2 What are alternate approaches for local governments to engage residents on issues?
- 3 What are alternate locations for local governments to engage residents on issues?
- 4 How does form of government impact trust between staff, elected officials and the community?

2. Emerging Technology in Local Government

a. Tech Industry Effects on Local Governments

- 1 How do technology companies set standards for technology needs of local governments?
- 2 How do technology companies drive innovation in local government instead of being driven by existing problems?

b. Local Government Evaluation of New Technologies

- 1 What expertise do local governments have and use to evaluate new emerging technologies?
- 2 How do local governments design, select, and use enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems?
- 3 How do local government managers navigate trade-offs of values in relation to adopting new technologies?
- 4 How should local government respond to new technologies impacting their communities?
- 5 What are good practices for local governments to utilize in evaluating the impact of newly implemented technologies?

3. Fiscal Health, Sustaining Services and Changing Government Roles

a. Provision and Production of Public Services

- 1 Are local governments taking on more services than they have in the past?
- 2 What services are local government assuming that they have not done in the past?
- 3 What forms of intergovernmental and P3 collaborations can maximize effectiveness and efficiency across public services delivery?
- 4 Do procurement policies that have equity-based goals actually achieve those goals? (ties to Preemption and Public Service categories)

b. Fiscal Issues

- 1 How can local government demonstrate it is an adequate steward of public resources?
- 2 How can local governments justify funding their government at higher levels?
- 3 If government funding is limited, how best do communities prioritize their spending?
- 4 What are revenue options for local governments?

c. Governing

- 1 How are state governments reducing autonomy of local governments? (ties to Preemption category)
- 2 How are local governments being limited in lobbying efforts?
- 3 Who decides what services are provided by what levels of government?

d. State and Federal Preemption

- 1 What are the definitions today of preemption versus home rule?
- 2 What are the political implications of preemption?

- 3 What are the definitions today of preemption versus home rule?
- 4 How are state governments using efficiency commissions using preemption to promote efficiency?
- 5 What are the historical lessons learned from previous state and Federal preemption initiatives? How does preemption of authority by state legislatures impact local governments?
- 6 How does preemption of authority by the Federal Government impact local governments?

e. Policy-Specific Impacts

- 1 How do local governments address preemption of authority on broadband access?
- 2 How do local governments address preemption of authority on taxation?
- 3 How do local governments address preemption of authority on diversity, equity and inclusion programs?

4. Supporting Local Government Careers in Public Service

a. Recruitment of Employees

- 1 What have local governments done to develop successful recruitment campaigns messaging around public service careers?
- 2 Do flexible work arrangements actually have a benefit to attracting and retaining talent?
- 3 What are the effects of local government residency requirements specifically for city managers?

b. Retention of Employees

- 1 What are the organizational benefits of having a succession plan in place versus no succession plan?
- 2 What benefits have there been in incorporating alternative response mental health providers in the overall recruitment and retention of police officers?
- 3 What impacts can still be achieved in DEIA despite the microscope they are under right now?