

## Grand Challenges in Public Administration

### Convening Intergovernmental Forums for Outcome-Focused Innovation

#### ABOUT THE NATIONAL ACADEMY

The National Academy of Public Administration is a non-profit, independent organization of top public management and organizational leaders who tackle the nation's most critical and complex public management challenges. With a network of more than 950 distinguished Fellows and an experienced professional staff, the National Academy is uniquely qualified and trusted across government to provide objective advice and practical solutions based on systematic research and expert analysis. Established in 1967 and chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Academy continues to make a positive impact by helping federal, state and local governments respond effectively to current circumstances and changing conditions. Learn more about the National Academy and its work at [www.NAPAwash.org](http://www.NAPAwash.org)

#### BACKGROUND

In the Fall of 2019, the Academy identified “Develop New Approaches to Public Governance and Engagement” as one of its 12 Grand Challenges in Public Administration. In the modern world, no significant public problem fits entirely within one government agency or even one level of government, and our federal system presupposes that all levels of government have an important role to play in the democratic process. New problem-solving and public engagement approaches are needed to address significant intergovernmental, inter-jurisdictional, and intersectoral issues including grant programs, emergency management, and social, economic, and environmental needs.

In a typical year, the federal government provides over \$700 billion in grants to other levels of government, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations that provide critical services to individuals and families. The American Rescue Plan (ARP), recently passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden, provides significant additional grant funds. Disparate laws and regulations have created a complex array of rules and processes that can unnecessarily divert resources from outcomes to compliance, yet both grantors and recipients at all levels of government are often unaware of the flexibilities and opportunities for innovation, both within and across programs.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Schmidt Futures is sponsoring a series of Academy-convened forums of federal, state, and local practitioners and researchers to create a candid, collaborative, and constructive space, where local, state, and federal agencies, as well as researchers from academia and other entities can explore and refine administrative aspects of policies to enable them to successfully navigate legal requirements while pursuing outcome-focused innovation. From these discussions, the Academy will develop a playbook of federal actions that could significantly improve state and local capacity to improve outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations. The Academy will also undertake targeted follow-on actions to connect local, state, and federal officials and scholars to facilitate progress on program and process innovations.

## PROJECT STAFF

**Joseph P. Mitchell, III, *Program Director.*** Dr. Mitchell is the Director of Strategic Initiatives & International Programs at the Academy. He leads the organization's Grand Challenges in Public Administration initiative, which currently is identifying and developing ways to address the most challenging issues facing government today. He also advances cutting edge thought leadership and develops partnerships with other good government groups, American universities, and universities in other countries. Over the course of his career, he has worked with a wide range of federal cabinet departments and agencies to develop higher-performing organizations, implement organizational change, and strengthen human capital and teams.

Most recently, he was at the General Services Administration to stand up its new Office of Shared Solutions and Performance Improvement within the Office of Government-wide Policy. As an Associate Director of this new office, he built and led a team to manage multi-functional and cross-agency projects and initiatives in support of the President's Management Agenda. His team established governance and accountability mechanisms for federal Cross-Agency Priority Goals, revamped performance.gov to become more user-friendly and provide additional information to the public, upgraded and expanded the White House Leadership Development Program and CXO Fellows program, provided technical and management support to the federal executive management councils, and established a procurement vehicle that federal agencies can use to acquire commercial software-as-a-service capabilities for their payroll and work schedule/leave management.

Previously, Dr. Mitchell led and managed the Academy's organizational studies program, overseeing all of its congressionally-directed and agency-requested reviews and consulting engagements. He has served as project director of Academy studies for the Government Publishing Office, the U.S. Senate Sergeant at Arms, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Park Service's Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

He holds a Ph.D. from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, a Master of International Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and a B.A. in History from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He serves on the National Science Foundation's Business and Operations Advisory Committee. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, the national academic honor society; Pi Alpha Alpha, the national honor society for public affairs and administration; and the American Society for Public Administration.

**Kathryn Stack,\* *Project Director.*** Kathy Stack is the CEO of KB Stack Consulting, LLC, which advises non-profit organizations, foundations, research organizations, and government officials on strategies to advance cross-program innovation and evidence-based decision-making in health, human services, education, and other social programs. Prior to leaving federal service in 2015, Kathy spent nearly three decades at the White House Office of Management and Budget. Under the G.W. Bush and Obama administrations, she was a Deputy Associate Director overseeing budget, policy, legislation, regulations, and management issues for the Departments of Education and Labor, the Social Security Administration, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and major human services programs including Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, child welfare, and food and nutrition assistance. In this role, she helped both Republican and Democratic administrations strengthen their focus on using data, evidence, and evaluation to improve program results. She is a graduate of Cornell University and a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.

**James Higgins, *Research Associate.*** James joined the Academy as a Research Associate in March 2020. He currently supports the Academy's Strategic Initiatives, including researching for its Grand Challenges in Public Administration campaign and producing the Management Matters podcast. James has previously worked on studies for the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the United States Trade and Development Agency, and the project, Increasing the Agility of the Federal Government. James graduated with a B.A. in International Studies with a focus on Asia from Dickinson College, and a M.A. in Global Policy with a focus on Security and Foreign Policy from the University of Maine School of Policy and International Affairs.