**TO:** Fellows, National Academy of Public Administration

**FROM:** Standing Panel on Intergovernmental Systems

**RE:** A Proposed Framework for the Analysis of Intergovernmental Operations and Programs

**DATE:** January 24, 2020

**Summary**

Over the past two years, the Standing Panel on Intergovernmental Systems has developed actionable suggestions through case studies and discussions initially on the Federal level and more broadly at all levels of government to identify and promote better understanding of effective intergovernmental approaches to apply when addressing key policy challenges facing our country.

In 2017, at a hearing of the Speaker's Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs regarding the proposed National Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (Commission), several Fellows of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) suggested topics that the Commission might consider. They suggested an initial focus on a few topics using a framework that suggested ten structural and procedural practices that seem to affect the effectiveness of intergovernmental arrangements and policy progress:

*1*) **Focus on Outcome**: improvements with minimal undesirable side effects

2) **Communicate**: structure the process for explaining the problems, strategies, policies and results

3) **Prioritize**: evidence drives choosing high-consequence problems

4) **Solve Problems**: at the level closest to the problem with agility and accountability

5) **Work Across Silos**: breaking down and pursuing opportunities across silos

6) **Share Data**: data, analytics, and measured trials inform decisions and actions

7) **Add Value to Knowledge**: improves decision making at each level

8) **Financial**: incentives and disincentives

9) **Leadership**: relationships, strategy, experience, and negotiations

10) **Equity** focus

During 2018, the Standing Panel continued its work further refining a list of tools for effective intergovernmental action as a framework for evidenced based suggestions to improve the current intergovernmental system. The Panel identified four policy areas to test the validity of this these tools as a framework to explain success – whether these intergovernmental practices are likely to result in the most meaningful change across policy areas or whether they need to be refined. Panel members wrote case studies in their areas of expertise to start to identify which practices predict more effective intergovernmental action using the framework. The initial four cases are in the following areas:

1. Infrastructure Renewal and Reinvestment

2. Emergency Mitigation, Management and Response

3. Workforce Development: linking individuals to meaningful work

4. Procurement and Purchasing Partnerships

**Next Steps**

The Standing Panel now seeks feedback from NAPA Fellows on the appropriateness and usefulness of the list of 10 practices suggested for more effective intergovernmental action. Specifically, it seeks review of the policy statements and suggestions on next steps in expanding the use of the existing framework, changes to the framework or other avenues to promote intergovernmental analysis of key policy issues.

The Panel also seeks suggestions about the best use of this framework. The initial identified use of identifying best practices, was to then provide theses as a framework for Congress when legislating, appropriating, and conducting oversight to evaluate and change intergovernmental policy. That remains a central focus of the Panel’s work.

However, the framework should not be limited to jbeing ust a tool for Congress. It could and should also be a tool for government agencies that need to work with each other across levels of government and/or across jurisdictions, to solve problems and pursue other opportunities for improvement.

We hope and believe these tools have a very practical application for practitioners at the state and local government level. Greater consideration of the parts of the intergovernmental system to tackle critical issues is a challenge facing leaders at all levels of government. The framework could be actively shared with practitioners as a tool for their own analysis of problems from the state and local government perspective. The case studies and our learning lessons from them could be used as the input for developing partnerships and convenings on these problem-solving efforts. Also, as NAPA works on its Agile Federalism Center, the framework may be a tool for that effort.