

Center for Federal Management Leadership

The new Center for Federal Management Leadership will provide leadership to a federal sector undergoing major changes and fiscal adjustments. The entire federal workforce will be undergoing a profound transition, as the baby boomers retire. Many agencies are experiencing wholesale turnover in leadership and senior management at all levels of government. While slowed by the recession, most analysts expect these trends to accelerate in the years to come. Already, the influx of new managers at the top and middle of organizations is raising significant challenges, as newly installed managers have to rebuild institutional knowledge and management experience.

The times are ripe for a major initiative to better serve the broad range of actors involved with the formulation and implementation of federal policy initiatives. The proposed Center can play an important role in assisting federal managers in meeting their emerging challenges through research, training, networking, and collaboration across jurisdictions.

Promoting greater interaction with public officials will also have significant benefits for our students and teaching. First, it will provide greater opportunities for internships, research assistantships and other applied projects for our students. Second, by building more partnerships with leaders of government agencies, we will gain the opportunity to have them serve as clients for capstone projects in our classes. Third, our faculty will gain new insights and research opportunities by virtue of the activities of the new Center.

The Department of Public and International Affairs will provide the leadership and staff for the new Center. Sheldon Edner, a full time faculty with the MPA program, will serve as Center director. We plan to locate the Center at the Arlington campus to afford synergy with the chartered State and Local Government Leadership Center and our proposed Center for Nonprofit Management, Philanthropy and Policy (pending approval). We envision working collaboratively with other University units located primarily at the Arlington Campus such as the School of Law, The School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution and the School of Public Policy, as well as the School of Management on the Fairfax Campus. We plan to establish an internal advisory group consisting of colleagues to help set priorities, coordinate activities, and conduct long-term planning.

Potential Audiences for Center Activities

Our opportunities reside in all major federal agencies in the Washington area. We will concentrate in particular on agencies located in Northern Virginia. We will also engage with consulting firms and other organizations to address national public management issues of relevance to federal officials across the government.

We have already completed or have ongoing activities on federal public management issues with several organizations including:

- The CGI contract for research on public-private collaboration
- The IBM Center for the Business of Government relationship on government contracting
- The contract with the Transportation Security Administration for interns and research on budgeting issues
- The Smith Richardson foundation grant to study the implementation of the Obama recovery program
- The relationship with the Association of Government Accountants for research on governmental budgeting and accounting MOU under discussion

We will outreach with the federal community to discuss emerging needs for the services of our new center. This will include senior federal agency officials, contractors, and leading consulting firms.