Ceri Jenkins
Co-Managing Director

mayors innovation project

The Mayors Innovation Project is based at COWS: a "think-and-do tank" at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

COWS promotes "high-road" solutions to social problems through policies that promote:

- equity,
- environmental sustainability, and
- resilient democratic institutions.

Joel Rogers
Director, COWS, Mayors Innovation Project

COWS | BUILDING THE HIGH ROAD

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WHO WE ARE

A **national learning network for mayors** and senior city staff. More than 100 cities have been involved in our project.

- Support mayors in achieving their key goals and accomplishments.
- Provide practical, replicable tools to support their leadership and capacity.
- Convenings open to all cities, but membership offers other benefits.

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HOW WE SUPPORT MAYORS

Convenings to Exchange Ideas

Biannual policy meetings; invite-only meetings, such as the New Mayors' Workshop and Women Mayors Network

Technical Assistance for Members

Connecting mayors with tools for their most pressing challenges.

- 2 policy memos per year for members.
- Special projects focused on specific issues or places.

Publications

Briefs with tools and next steps.

City-specific reports with detailed case studies and analysis.

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Partnership examples:

- Harvard's Behavioral Insights Group: applied behavioral science to city issues, two cohorts of member cities.
- Water Center at Penn: offering technical assistance to cities implementing water affordability programs.
- LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas: created book of city policies and ordinances to promote gender equity in cities.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Broad range of topics that promote high-road governance.

Examples:

- Increasing utilization of recycling programs;
- Diversifying fire departments;
- Implementing water affordability programs;
- Financing farmers markets;
- Understanding the impacts of state marijuana legalization in cities;
- Promoting an innovation culture across the city workforce.

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LESSONS LEARNED:
WORKING WITH CITIES AND MAYORS

Focus on what cities can do and what mayors can do, not just good ideas.

Short, to the point, and include clear next steps.

Include a range of relevant city examples that other cities replicate.

Capacity-building is the end goal of our work.

Cities of all sizes benefit from peer-to-peer learning (we're not going out of business).

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WORKING WITH RESEARCHERS

Building our network of researchers interested in tackling practical, real-world examples that mayors and city leaders face. Areas include: behavioral science, urban planning, public policy, sustainable design, and more.

Flexible partnerships could include the following types of engagement:

- In-person overviews to mayors and city leaders at meetings, convenings or in-person site visits.
- Written memos or briefs, or reviewing drafts before sharing with city partners.
- Advising a mayor or lead city staff on specific issues, possibly as part of a cohort, or one-on-one.
- Applying behavioral science and "nudges" to defined policy and governance issues.

CONTACT FOR FUTURE INFORMATION

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Fill out form to indicate interest:

https://forms.gle/YnW5nfx2QX5a8DcZA