



Request for Proposals: Governance Capacity Research Stipends

Overview

The [Accountability and Reform Research Consortium \(ARRC\)](#) is a cross-university research collaborative convened by the [Volcker Alliance](#) to deliver rigorous and timely research on the impact of cuts to the federal workforce and programs on public service delivery, citizens, and democratic governance in the United States.

ARRC's Governance Capacity Community of Practice (CoP) is interested in research that examines the capacity of governance networks to implement public policies and public service delivery.

Purpose of this Request for Proposals

ARRC invites proposals on timely research projects that advance work aligned with ARRC's [Governance Capacity Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#) that will advance descriptive, evaluative, and summative understanding of administrative capacity in democratic states. Questions addressed by the Governance Capacity CoP of ARRC include:

- Ways of Measuring and Descriptions of Administrative Capacity:
 - How is the administrative capacity of governments operating under the context of liberal democracies defined and operationalized?
 - Are the standardization and classification of terms and constructs possible?
 - How is administrative capacity effectively measured? What data exist on administrative capacity? What data need to be collected?
- Benchmarks and Leading Indicators of Capacity Erosion:
 - Are there early warning signals or "leading indicators" of capacity erosion that can be built into performance management systems?
 - How can we identify when administrative capacity has been lost versus shifted either to another level of government or to the nonprofit or private sector?
 - How has the erosion or shifting of capacity impacted service provider networks?
- Identifying and Tracking the Consequences of Illiberal and Anti-Democratic Reforms to the Federal Administrative State (Bauer et al., 2021):
 - What democratic practices are being undermined when the federal government is being stripped of its capacity and/or functionality? (Examples include: abuse of EOs to govern; undermining independent commissions; instilling loyalty tests for new hires; deconstructing entire agencies and departments; compromising neutrality of IGs; etc.)
 - What are the implications of these reforms for democratic accountability and the US basis of federalism?



- Conditions of Administrative Reforms Rooted In Democratic Accountability:
 - What constitutes responsible reforms of administrative capacity in the context of democratic accountability standards?
 - What role does federalism play in sustaining or eroding administrative capacity under democratic accountability standards?

Projects may address one or more of these questions and can be empirical, conceptual, or aspirational in scope. Final products will be presented in short-form publications that should be written to be accessible to scholars, practitioners, and policymakers alike. These ARRC products may pull from pre-existing research or be generated from original scholarship or empirical works. Thought pieces, proof-of-concept theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies that hold promise of “scaling up” are invited.

Commitment to producing an ARRC product does not preclude publication of material in other outlets as long as acknowledgements and ascriptions are provided.

Funding

Selected projects will receive research stipends of up to \$5,000. Graduate research assistant support may be provided in kind by Georgia State University, subject to budget availability and project need. Funds may be issued directly to individual researchers or through their home institutions (with 0% indirect costs).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage institutional or in-kind support where feasible (e.g., matching salary, research assistance, or access to data, equipment, or subscriptions). Requests for match waivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Faculty members, researchers, and graduate students affiliated with accredited universities; and
- Research staff at nonpartisan, nonprofit institutions engaged in applied public administration research.

Recipients of ARRC Research Stipends are expected to:

- Actively participate in the Governance Capacity CoP, including sharing works-in-progress during CoP meetings;
- Engage with peers on research design and methodological approaches; and
- Acknowledge ARRC in resulting publications or presentations.

Proposal Guidelines



Applicants will submit proposals through an online form (available on the Volcker Alliance website).

Proposals must include:

1. Research Description (max. 1,000 words, not including references):
 - a. Purpose: Which of the listed questions will your research address, and how? What agencies, occupations, policy changes, or geographic contexts will you examine?
 - b. Methodology: What methods, data sources, and analytical approaches will you use (e.g., literature review, administrative data, personnel records, surveys, qualitative interviews, case studies, text or network analysis, AI or automation modeling)?
 - c. Itemized Budget: Provide a brief budget narrative.
 - d. Institutional Match: How will you or your institution contribute resources to the research (e.g., faculty time, research assistants, data access, software, or in-kind support)? What is your plan and timeline for completing the project and deliverable?
 - e. Anticipated Results: What do you expect to demonstrate or discover about description and assessment of governance capacity within a democratic context? How will your findings inform policymakers, practitioners, and affected communities?
 - f. Deliverable: What will be the final product (e.g., policy brief, working paper, data visualization or dashboard, white paper, academic article draft)? How will you and ARRC disseminate these findings (e.g., briefings, CoP presentations, public reports)?
2. Curriculum Vitae (not included in word limit)
3. Supplemental material (if applicable- not included in word limit)
 - a. Tables, appendices, preliminary findings, etc.
4. Institutional Match Description (if applicable – not included in word limit). How will you or your institution contribute resources to the research (e.g., faculty time, research assistants, data access, software, or in-kind support)?

Review Process

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Timeliness, relevance, and potential policy impact of the research contribution;
- Relevant academic background, publications, or professional experience;
- Methodological rigor and suitability of research approach;
- Unique perspective brought to the research question;
- Ability to complete the deliverable within specified timeframe;
- Willingness to collaborate with others in the CoP and/or match resources toward the deliverable;



- Ability for research to be translated and disseminated to policymakers, media, and stakeholders; and
- Alignment with ARRC priorities and other funded research projects.

Timeline

- Submissions due February 28, 2026.
- Selection decisions announced in middle of March 2026.
- Initial deliverables due on or around August 30, 2026.

Contact

For questions about the Governance Capacity Research Stipends or the application process, please email arrc@volckeralliance.org with the subject line “ARRC Research Stipends – Governance Capacity.”