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Volcker Alliance Releases New Study on Government Workforce of the Future

Study draws on survey of nearly 1,000 rising government leaders, details skills and training needed

New York, NY (May 8, 2018)—Today the Volcker Alliance released a study which addresses an important and timely question: “What knowledge and skills will the next generation of public servants need to be effective?” The report, *Preparing Tomorrow’s Public Service*, presents insights on crucial skills from nearly 1,000 rising government leaders and explores how government’s managerial capacity can keep pace with the scale and complexity of government’s responsibilities. Additionally, the study provides recommendations to government agencies, professional associations, and educational institutions on cultivating the most critical capacities for government service. With nearly one-third of federal career employees eligible for retirement by the end of the decade and similar workforce pressures impacting states and localities, these issues are of growing import.

The rising government managers from the federal, state, and local levels who were surveyed by the Volcker Alliance convey the importance of skills such as motivating teams, perseverance, project management, and oral communication to succeed in public service. “Soft skills” are rated by this cohort of rising government leaders as relatively more important than other “hard skills” such as advanced data analytics.

“Given headlines in recent years about the technical challenges facing government such as the launch of healthcare.gov or the data breach of federal background check data, we expected to hear huge demand for technical training from government employees. However, what we found came through most clearly in this study,” said **Paul A. Volcker**, former chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors and chairman of the Volcker Alliance, “is that public administration is still about people, and communications and management skills are as important as they ever were in implementing policies effectively.”

In *Preparing Tomorrow’s Public Service*, rising government leaders express a strong commitment to government service and a desire for more networked learning and other professional development opportunities. Of those surveyed, 75 percent report that they intend to continue in government for the long term. Over 50 percent wish they had access to professional development opportunities that were more relevant to them, and 74 percent intend to pursue additional professional development.

Dustin Brown, who leads performance and personnel management as the deputy assistant director for management in the US Office of Management and Budget and was interviewed for the report, said, “I appreciate the Alliance shedding light on this important issue to improve the government’s ability to recruit skills needed to modernize.” He added that the Volcker Alliance’s findings align with his hiring priorities for the federal government. “I’m not looking for ‘just policy’ people but for

folks who have the change management skills to work across silos,” Brown said. “For the types of problems government is trying to solve, and the way in which the government is organized, we need managers that can lead implementation efforts across organizations and sectors.”

The Alliance recommends a range of ways that government agencies can invest in and support future public servants, including mentoring and coaching programs, fellowship programs, and employee training opportunities. *Preparing Tomorrow’s Public Service* highlights some existing programs that are tailored for rising managers as models for other agencies to adopt. The Alliance also recommends that graduate programs consider incorporating more field-based content and offer more post-degree, just-in-time courses and experiences.

For more information and to read the [full report](#), visit www.volckeralliance.org.

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About the Volcker Alliance

The Volcker Alliance advances effective management of government to achieve results that matter to citizens. The nonpartisan Alliance works toward that objective by partnering with other organizations—academic, business, governmental, and public interest—to strengthen professional education for public service, conduct needed research on government performance, and improve the efficiency and accountability of governmental organization at the federal, state, and local levels.

The Volcker Alliance is a 501(c)3 organization.