GOVERN FOR AMERICA

Building a Governent for All of Us

2023 Impact Report

Letter from Govern For America's Co-Founder

I know many people who fear our democracy is in crisis, and I get it. We experience democracy through our interactions with institutions and the promises they make. Government has made big promises over the past couple of years – reducing U.S. climate emissions by 40%, connecting 20 million people to affordable internet, and creating 1 million jobs. But right now we don't believe that government can deliver on these promises, and we're losing faith that our democracy works. Only 15% of Americans trust the government to do what is right and 52% of state and local employees are considering leaving their jobs. We're caught in a cycle of frustration and pessimism that fuels a narrative of government as ineffective and inaccessible, and pushes us towards greater division.

I'm hopeful, because Govern For America Fellows and alumni are showing me a different story about what is possible when we invest in our public servants. These are the stories you'll read about in our Impact Report — how Courtney is supporting environmental resilience in Michigan, how Mirka is funding affordable housing in Missouri, how Parul is creating a new pathway into public service in Maryland, how Toni is making government hiring processes more inclusive in Connecticut, how Harrison is preparing government employees to use AI in Pennsylvania, and more.

Govern For America is filling critical staffing shortages in government and charting an approach to public service that empowers all of us to solve the problems that matter. It's these people who can and are transforming historic levels of government funding into healthy, connected, and resilient communities, so policy goals become meaningful improvements in the lives of 331 million people. The future of our democracy requires that government can deliver on its promises and that we believe that it can.

No individual or organization can do this alone. Our democracy can and must deliver for all of us, and we all have a role to play in that. Now is our moment to invest deeply in the ability of our governments and the people within them to do the work that matters, to ensure progress is equitably disturbed and evenly felt, and to solve the crisis of our democracy.

This year's Impact Report is a snapshot of what's happening and a window into what's possible. If the stories here inspire you or if they make you curious, I hope you'll join us in this work so we can write new stories together.

Because government should be built for everyone, and it can be if we all play our part.

In service,

Octavia Abell
Co-Founder & CEO

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Our Work

Government is where we confront our nation's toughest challenges. The actions of public servants determine whether we can receive life-saving healthcare, drink clean water, access affordable internet, vote freely, and more. Yet state and local offices face an unprecedented talent crisis that inhibits their ability to respond to communities and their needs. People want better outcomes from government, but don't believe that government can deliver. This crisis threatens our communities and diminishes trust in our democracy.
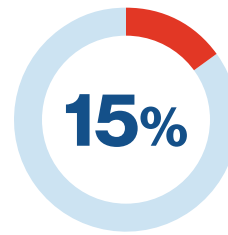
We believe that people are policy. That's why we invest in emerging public servants to build a future where the government represents the diversity of our communities, delivers in the places where it matters to real people, and operates on trust.

Our Mission
GFA's mission is to build the next generation of public servants to create a more responsive government that better reflects and serves our communities.
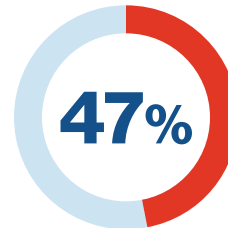
Our Vision
We envision a world where public servants use their power in government and grounding in community to ensure public systems achieve greater opportunity for all people.
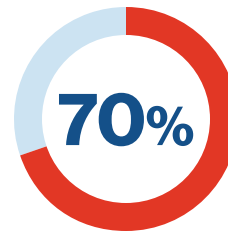
15% of Americans say they trust government to do what is right.
Pew Research Center, 2023

47% of government employees believe their agency lacks diversity, hindering equitable decisions.
MissionSquare Research Institute, 2023

70% of local and state governments face a talent crisis that inhibits their ability to respond to communities and their needs.
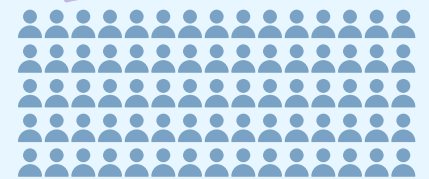MissionSquare Research Institute, 2023

GFA at a Glance

GFA Fellowship:
The GFA Fellowship is a two-year program that activates and supports emerging leaders from diverse backgrounds by providing training, mentorship, community, and placement in full-time, paid government jobs to implement the skills learned and create better outcomes for all communities.
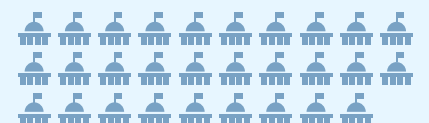
Civic Impact Corps:
The Civic Impact Corps (CIC) is a 12-month program designed to place emerging leaders in government faster. Our unique program offers a community of diverse leaders, professional development resources, and pre-vetted government partners committed to making a difference.

75 Fellows Placed

29 Agencies

What We Do

GFA connects diverse emerging leaders into full-time government jobs and provides the training, mentorship, and community they need to build the skills to lead while sparking a lifelong commitment to public service.

> **I chose GFA** because I believe that by creating pathways to government for people with diverse backgrounds, values, and experiences, local and state governments can be dynamic in their approach to finding solutions for today's dire issues.
>
> — **Mirka Estrada** (GFA '23)

Recruit early-career professionals into paid government jobs

We collaborate with government partners to identify high-impact roles in government and connect candidates to jobs that match their interests and experience. We empower emerging leaders to harness their skills and the power of their stories as catalysts for transformation.

Train and develop innovative, resilient, and equitable leaders

We provide the training Fellows need to build the skills to lead in government. Our leadership curriculum supports Fellows to develop mastery in nine competencies that characterize highly effective public leaders and prepares them to create a more effective and inclusive government that meets community needs.

Sustain a diverse & supportive community of public servants

We believe that a supportive community is essential for nurturing a collective of leaders committed to lifelong careers in public service. Fellows connect with subject matter experts and mentors through GFA's League of Innovators and peer coaching groups to foster mutual growth and accountability, ensuring they have the support needed to thrive.

A investment in GFA is an investment in a government that works for all of us. It's a stake in the decisions that impact you, your family, and your neighbors daily. It's an investment in a democracy that delivers.

Make a donation by visiting https://www.govforamerica.org/donate.

Where We Work

GFA looks for government partners who advocate for early-career talent and are eager to explore new and innovative ways of solving the challenges facing governments and communities.

Over the last year, we've prioritized government partners that have committed to diversifying their workforce, investing in early career talent, or have a substantial need to hire entry-level policy, fiscal, and data analysts.

Sonali Alluri
is a Health Policy Advisor with Saint Louis County in Missouri. Sonali's work helps to heal the effects of the opioid crisis by collaborating across government and with community members to provide community-focused healthcare.

Sandy Gonzalez
is a Budget and Policy Analyst with the Colorado Governor's Office of State Planning and Budget. Sandy researches and analyzes policies and budget proposals to make recommendations for state and federal funds so Coloradans have the resources they need to thrive.

Parul Kumar
is a Partnership Development Fellow with the Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation. She helped create a first in the nation service year program for high school graduates in Maryland to address community needs while gaining workplace experience and preparing for their future goals.

Michael Davis
is an Durational Project Manager and Equity Fellow at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. He works to advance environmental justice and ensure that the Department's policies, programs, and practices are equitable, inclusive, and accessible to every community member.

By 2025, GFA will mobilize a network of 1,000 leaders in 10 states working to create a more responsive government that better reflects and serves our communities.

Our Impact

ALUM SPOTLIGHT

Harrison MacRae
GFA Alum, 2021

Special Assistant for Emerging Technology
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

After completing his fellowship as a Data Fellow in the Missouri Department of Administration, Harrison joined the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to lead tech policy initiatives. His recent work has included suporting the state to take a forward-looking approach to preparing government employees to use AI.

"Being a GFA Fellow set me up for success for a career in public service. Finding a job in government can be extremely challenging and there are often not clear career pathways. Before joining GFA, I was determined that I could make an impact through public service, but I did not know how or where to get started. GFA has been essential to my career because it not only made the government hiring process more accessible, but also placed me on a team that empowered me to do meaningful work. As I've continued my career in government after GFA, my time as a Fellow created a foundation that has then allowed me to excel in my career and impact going forward."

We are growing a diverse community of public servants.

79%
of Fellows are proximate leaders

...who have lived experience in their policy area or are from a community that is underrepresented in government leadership.

15 recent graduates joined the GFA Fellowship in 2023, our most diverse cohort yet.

81%
BIPOC

44%
First Generation

50%
LBGTQIA+

81%
Women or Nonbinary

Did You Know?

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management reports that increasing diversity in public service increases local and state agencies' capacity to serve and protect people with diverse experiences and backgrounds, increase government innovation, and boost productivity.

Source: OPM

FELLOW SPOTLIGHT

Toni Aniugo
2023 GFA Fellow

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellow
Connecticut Department of Social Services

I believe having a lived experience that is relative to my role in government is crucial as it allows for a more humane and direct approach to serving communities with diverse backgrounds. As a Black woman who has lived on governmental assistance and faced microaggressions in the workplace, I can bring a unique perspective to my position in government. I can approach every responsibility with extra care, attention, and understanding. By doing so, I strongly believe I can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable environment where everyone has a place and feels valued at the Connecticut Department of Social Services."

Overcoming unconscious biases during the hiring process can challenge many people of various backgrounds. At the Department of Social Services, Toni is dedicated to creating an inclusive and unbiased hiring experience for all job seekers as she oversees the Human Resources recruitment process. Toni also addresses ADA requests, investigates discrimination complaints, works on the agency's Affirmative Action Plan, develops the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion newsletter, and serves as an executive board member of the Statewide Affirmative Action Employee Advisory Committee (SAAEAC). Each of these initiatives aims to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity for the people served by the Department of Social Services.

We are equipping our community with tools to create a more equitable future.

100%
of government partners indicate that GFA Fellows demonstrate impact in their roles.

100%
of Fellows score competent or proficient, the highest potential rankings, in GFA's Leadership Competencies by graduation.

92%
of Fellows agree that the Fellowship provided the support to be successful in their roles.

GFA's Leadership Competencies include Vision, Emotional Intelligence, Collaboration, Communication & Storytelling, Equity, Character, Planning, Mobilizing Others, Courage & Risk-taking.

Learn more about GFA's Leadership Competencies

FELLOW SPOTLIGHT

Adam Thorp
2022 GFA Fellow

Community Development Specialist
Missouri Department of Economic Development

"In my role, I understand that the data is important to the extent that it captures people's real experiences — and that new and improved data can help make the case for programs that would impact the communities we interact with."

Communities across Missouri face challenges getting online. Adam conducted a cross-state listening tour to share information on broadband mapping and gather input from local government leaders and community members as part of the Connecting All Missourians campaign. Input from mayors, county commissioners, librarians, superintendents, internet service providers, and residents helped Adam and cohort member JR Farthing draft Missouri's plans for spending historic investments in broadband infrastructure and digital equity. Adam paired this feedback with data visualizations that mapped broadband access and affordability to challenge inaccurate federal broadband maps. These efforts resulted in Missouri receiving a $1.7 billion allocation for broadband buildout through the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act, the third largest in the country.

We are nurturing a culture of mobilization.

GFA helps new public servants connect with their communities, use their skills in government, and achieve real results through mobilization. By organizing mobilization efforts effectively, GFA Fellows make a bigger impact and contribute to building a more responsive government.

96%
of Fellows recommend the Fellowship to a peer.

93%
of the most recent graduating cohort are continuing roles in government or government-adjacent roles.

74%
of supervisors agreed their Fellow is having an impact on the local community.

100%
of supervisors agreed their Fellow is having an impact within their agency.

ALUM SPOTLIGHT

Courtney Fung
GFA Alum, 2021

Senior Project Manager
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy

"

GFA has truly been a transformative experience that has significantly shaped my outlook on public service. I know that GFA's influence has broadened my perspective on the role I want to take in my organization and given me the confidence to pursue additional opportunities."

Safe and clean environments are a keystone to building healthy communities. Courtney works to manage, oversee, and coordinate climate adaptation around Brownfields cleanup investigations, sites where pollution has led to abandonment or underutiliziation. She also represents the Department in responding to inquiries from various public, press, legislative bodies concerning cleanup actions and participates in public meetings to inform, educate, and engage with communities. Courtney's experience as a GFA Fellow inspired her to launch an Early Career Professionals group to facilitate connections and community-building, foster a positive workplace culture, and support professional development opportunities for 360 members spanning 20 departments across the State of Michigan.

What's Next

As Govern For America deepens its impact, our community is committed to learning and leading part of a collaborative ecosystem of partners working to remove the barriers to building a more responsive government that works for all people. We're excited to continue this work to realize our vision and theory of change into the next year.

Influencing the Field

This year we tracked more than 40 instances where GFA team members engaged with government agencies, industry associations, academic institutions, and peer organizations as speakers, committee participants, advisory board members, and expert reviewers on topics related to government leadership, workforce development, talent, and equitable training.

Learning What Works

We expanded our partnership with The People Lab at the Harvard Kennedy School to a Fellowships Learning Collaborative to examine the how participating in public sector fellowships affects participant career trajectories and views of government. We also completed a study to better understand how GFA is mobilizing leaders to instigate change beyond the people we serve directly.

Sharing Our Approaches

This year GFA Co-Founder Kyleigh Russ led the Hiring Experience Group at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), a new innovation office focused on improving federal hiring by piloting best practices and scaling what works. She collaborated with OPM's Director to design and implement a strategy aimed at bringing more technologically skilled professionals to government service. This initiative successfully connected 7,000 individuals to these opportunities, accompanied by a rapid uptake of hiring best practices across the federal government. Kyleigh took a leading role in OPM's strategy to invest in early career talent across all skill types.

This Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreement between GFA and OPM highlights the ideal talent sharing agreement that supports leaders to apply their expertise in a different context to build coalitions and drive impact."
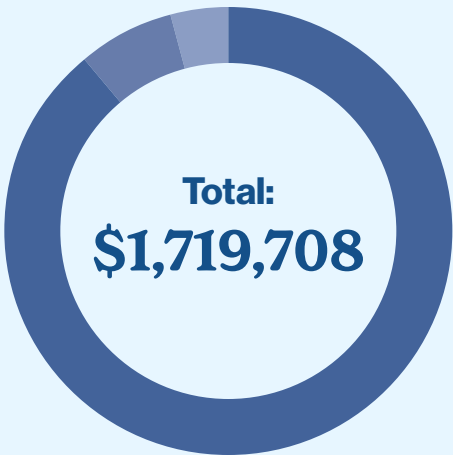

Kyleigh Russ

Financials

Govern For America's model is designed to generate a sustainable public investment in early career talent. Our agency partners are committeed to promoting long-term change by supporting diverse leaders in government to create more equitable outcomes. They directly fund 100% of Fellow salaries and benefits. GFA leverages philanthropic contributions to provide the training and infrastructure required to empower the next generation of public servants to persist in government and achieve the outcomes our communities deserve.

Revenue

■	Foundations:	**$1,516,573.59**
■	Individuals:	**$131,765.41**
■	Program Services:	**$70,058**
■	Other:	**$1,311**

Total:
$1,719,708

Expense

■	Programs:	**$943,753**
■	Operations:	**$286,703**
■	Fundraising:	**$108,389**

Total:
$1,338,845

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We are grateful to our funders and government partners who join us in our mission of building the next generation of public servants to create a more responsive government that better reflects and serves our communities. We can't do this without you.

Andy Moss

Anonymous

Anonymous

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Beni Chhun

Brian Whittaker

Brooklyn Defenders Services

City of St. Louis Division of Community Development

Colorado Department of Labor, Office of Future of Work

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