

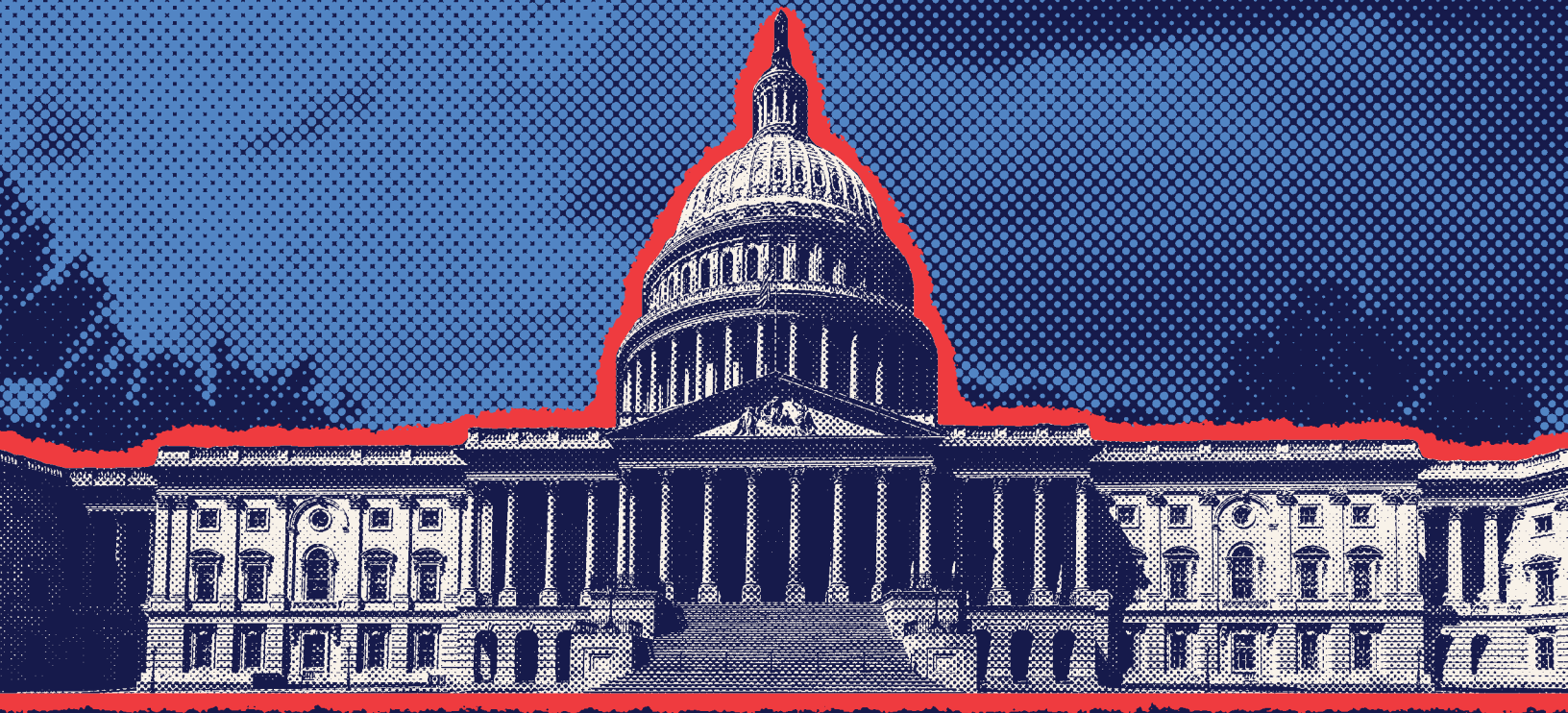


GOVERNMENT FOR A NEW ERA

Building the future America deserves



**PARTNERSHIP
FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**



WHERE WE ARE

OUR GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS

An effective, responsive and accountable federal government is foundational to our democracy. No other institution has the resources, power and responsibility to improve our daily lives and to keep our country safe, strong, healthy and prosperous.

However, our government has not kept up with the world around it, hamstrung by long-standing leadership deficits and systemic challenges.

“For too long, presidential candidates across the political spectrum have run against the very organization they want to lead...”

Our leaders have often been poor stewards of government. For too long, presidential candidates across the political spectrum have run against the very organization they want to lead, and Congress has underinvested in ensuring our government is properly managed, equipped and resourced. In addition, political leaders have focused on short-term fixes and worked in silos instead of treating government as a connected system that must deliver on today’s policy priorities while preparing for the future.

Importantly, the executive branch is also hindered by outdated and overly complex management and personnel systems. Instead of addressing the root causes of these challenges via substantial reform, policymakers have added too many work-arounds and exceptions to count or make sense of. These interventions may have been well-intentioned, but collectively, they have left our government ill-suited for today’s challenges. Americans have felt the effects of these deficiencies and, in turn, disengaged from government, accepting its flaws without believing they could be changed or that an inspired and activated public could play a role.

President Donald Trump and his administration have made this situation much more dire. The president acts as if our government is an extension of his personal and political power rather than a public institution designed for the people it serves. He has selected unqualified loyalists to lead government, unilaterally shuttered agencies, programs and services, and upended the professional and expert career civil service. He has also eroded long-standing guardrails meant to check waste and corruption, undermining the rule of law. Similar mismanagement has also weakened the U.S. military.

The Supreme Court has also taken an expansive view of presidential power, tying Congress’ hands to provide appropriate limits on executive overreach. This shift has undermined deeply established law, precedent and practice. As a result, it is today substantially more difficult to establish smart guardrails on executive authority than at any time in recent history.



WHERE WE NEED TO GO

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

**But in crisis,
there is opportunity.**

“...these stakeholders see in the dismantling of our government an opportunity to rebuild it from the ground up through bold, systemic change.”

Americans have seen widespread negative consequences of the Trump administration’s mismanagement of our government, and those consequences are very likely to grow. In turn, the public is coalescing around what it wants from government with renewed urgency: one that operates effectively and efficiently to solve the country’s problems, one that represents and responds to the needs of the average American, and one that prioritizes the public good over special interests and political allegiance. We have a historic opportunity to engage Americans on the need for better government and rally them around a true path to reform.

At the same time, a vibrant ecosystem around government reform is growing and evolving, composed of new and established stakeholders—from public servants and policymakers to experts, members of the public and cross-sector leaders. Rather than attempting to build government back to how it was before or pursuing incremental changes built atop flawed and broken processes, these stakeholders see in the dismantling of our government an opportunity to rebuild it from the ground up through bold, systemic change.

The enthusiasm for such a transformational effort, coupled with increased public attention on the need for effective government, offers a generational opportunity to move beyond the status quo to transform our government’s management systems and processes. These systems and processes are essential for delivering outcomes to the public, no matter the agency mission, policy choice or political situation.

To realize this change, we need a reform effort that bridges the political divide through practical solutions that enable government to function better and put the public first—principles that should be embraced across the aisle. Such an effort should also focus on increasing coordination between the legislative and executive branches to ensure agencies implement laws in the way Congress intended—and when not, updates are made. Insights from current and former federal employees, who have experienced both the recent erosion of government and its longer-term management challenges, are essential. No group has more intimate knowledge of why government fails, the pain points in its systems, rules and procedures, and where the possible remedies lie. And across the board, it will be important to engage a wide variety of stakeholders and the public to make the case that improving how government works is critical to improving what it delivers.

HOW WE GET THERE

GOVERNMENT FOR A NEW ERA

The Partnership's Government for a New Era initiative **answers this call.**

At its heart, Government for a New Era is about setting the conditions for reform, developing a reform plan and then implementing that plan. To reach its North Star—a government that is effective, responsive and accountable—our initiative strives for a public that is engaged and understands what is at stake when government falls short; policymakers with a sense of urgency and access to ready-made recommendations to improve government systems, laws and policies; and leaders and employees who are prepared, trained and have the resources they need to do their work differently.

To meet these goals, Government for a New Era is bringing together a wide range of voices, including cross-sector and cross-partisan experts who work with government, current and former public servants, and lawmakers who oversee government operations and have the power to change policy. Critically, it is also galvanizing the public to demand the reform we need.

WHO WE'RE BRINGING TOGETHER

CROSS-SECTOR
AND CROSS-
PARTISAN EXPERTS

CURRENT AND
FORMER PUBLIC
SERVANTS

POLICYMAKERS
ACROSS BRANCHES
OF GOVERNMENT

THE PUBLIC,
GALVANIZED TO
DEMAND REFORM

OUR NORTH STAR

A GOVERNMENT THAT IS EFFECTIVE,
RESPONSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE

The Partnership's areas of focus under Government for a New Era center on building an effective, responsive and accountable government.

The scope of what needs to be tackled to reimagine government is immense, but there are several areas of focus that we believe are critical to ensuring that government can deliver on its commitments and best serve the public. Each of these areas requires changes to laws, policies

and practices, as well as the support needed to put those changes into effect. Thoughtful, deep engagement from Congress and the White House, as well as members of the public demanding change, will be needed to carry out the hard work of enacting and implementing lasting reform.

MORE EFFECTIVE



Leadership grounded in character and competence



People and talent systems that drive excellence and mission



Culture that fosters innovation and results

MORE RESPONSIVE



AI and technology that enhance government's ability to deliver solutions and services



Government working as a whole, across silos, to deliver meaningful outcomes for the public



Streamlining procedures and red tape

MORE ACCOUNTABLE



Independent oversight that enables accountability, performance and the rule of law



Agencies that prioritize customer needs and excellent service delivery



Government that engages the public openly and honestly



Making government more **EFFECTIVE**

People are at the heart of any organization. They are the key ingredient to high performance, and they drive, execute and deliver the outcomes of any policy or program. For our government to achieve what it sets out to do, agencies need clear, transparent and fair personnel systems, tools to build a strong culture of innovation and accountability, and leaders—career and political—who are outcome-focused for the public.

**PRIORITY 1**

Leadership grounded in character and competence

Both political and career leaders must serve public over private interests, holding firm to the values of commitment to the public good and effective stewardship of public trust. They must be responsive to policy priorities and effectively manage large, complex organizations—and they must be held accountable for their performance and that of their agency, as well as for delivering results for the public.

**PRIORITY 2**

People and talent systems that drive excellence and mission

Like any organization, our government requires employees of skill and integrity—as well as streamlined systems to recruit, hire, develop and assess them. Agencies must also set clear performance expectations, reward strong performance and fairly address poor performance. Unlike the private sector, government also needs additional guardrails to keep its personnel systems free from partisan political influence and oriented toward the public good.

**PRIORITY 3**

Culture that fosters innovation and results

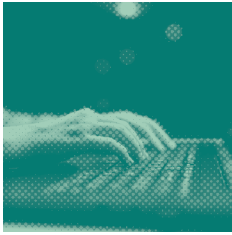
Workplace culture makes or breaks the success of any organization. Our government needs to shift from a culture that overemphasizes process to one that focuses on outcomes, rewards thoughtful innovation and incentivizes appropriate risk-taking. A strong culture—underpinned by shared values, mission alignment and a consistent recognition of success—helps to keep employees engaged and productive, and accountable for meeting their responsibilities to the public.



Making government more

RESPONSIVE

The executive branch is the primary mechanism for implementing laws passed by Congress, enacting a president's agenda and delivering services to the public. To meet any of these responsibilities, our government must balance risk with the ability to move quickly so it can respond to evolving circumstances and adapt to the public's needs. This requires government to work across levels and sectors, to develop tools to better interface with the public, and to implement policies and programs fairly, transparently and quickly.

**PRIORITY 4**

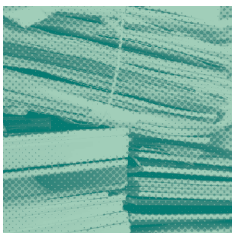
AI and technology that enhance government's ability to deliver solutions and services

The public increasingly expects government to use artificial intelligence and technology to improve outcomes and customer experience. To do this responsibly, our government must improve its systems to build, integrate, buy and oversee technology solutions, including AI. Agencies must also recruit new tech talent and ensure nonspecialists are equipped to responsibly evaluate and deploy AI and emerging technology to strengthen federal services. Crucial, also, will be a broader shift in workplace culture—toward one that better incentivizes calculated innovation to enable better service to the public.

**PRIORITY 5**

Government working as a whole, across silos, to deliver meaningful outcomes for the public

There must be a unified effort across government to deliver better outcomes for the public. This requires collaboration across agencies, branches and levels of government—federal, state and local—to establish and work toward shared goals. Streamlined mechanisms, structures and incentives must underlay this collaboration to ensure integration and coordination is genuine and leads to results.

**PRIORITY 6**

Streamlining procedures and red tape

Successive administrations, Congress and the courts have hamstrung government with layers of rules, procedures and processes that now serve as outdated barriers to getting the job done. Creating a government capable of delivering on its commitments requires removing unnecessary burdens, streamlining procedures and updating laws to allow government to move quickly and responsibly without getting bogged down in red tape. Federal workers' efforts to serve the public good should be enabled, not undercut by procedure, and focus on outcomes over compliance.



Making government more **ACCOUNTABLE**

The health of our democracy depends on a government that holds itself accountable to the law and the needs of the public. However, the vast majority of Americans across the political spectrum do not believe our government meets these standards, according to recent Partnership polling.

To tackle this issue, our government must be guided by strong oversight and accountability mechanisms—within and between agencies and branches of government. These mechanisms should ensure government bodies and officials make proper use of taxpayer resources, follow the law, ensure accountability without discouraging innovation and initiative, and provide timely information and transparency.

To become a more trustworthy institution, our government must also be informed by those it serves. That means understanding the needs, preferences and expectations of its true customers—the people—to meet them where they are, to deliver services and public goods effectively, and to address the country's most pressing issues.

**PRIORITY 7**

Independent oversight that enables accountability, performance and the rule of law

Too often, oversight is seen as a hammer rather than what it is meant to be—checks and touchpoints to prevent waste, fraud and abuse, as well as a tool to ensure agencies have what they need to serve the public effectively, responsively and accountably. The system of federal oversight, from Congress to inspectors general, requires new mechanisms and guardrails to ensure the law is followed and to encourage feedback loops that enable continual improvements in the way public services are designed and implemented.

**PRIORITY 8**

Agencies that prioritize customer needs and excellent service delivery

Regardless of individual mission, all federal agencies interact with customers—businesses, members of the public, and other branches and levels of government. Too often, those interactions are frustrating and unproductive. To effectively implement policies and programs, and to help rebuild trust in government, agencies need to prioritize customer experiences, create modern interfaces and processes, and focus on delivering outcomes in a way that is understandable and meaningful to real people juggling various demands.

**PRIORITY 9**

Government that engages the public openly and honestly

Public trust in government is a critical indicator for the health of our democracy—and it is an indicator that has long been moving in the wrong direction. Reversing decades of distrust will require our government to create new channels and expectations for communicating with and listening to the public. This is critical for our government to make decisions on behalf of the public and to identify and solve persistent, long-standing problems, both of which are key to rebuilding trust.

THREE PARTS. ONE PUSH FOR CHANGE.

Our Government for a New Era work can be broken down into three parts that will take place concurrently in the coming years.

1

Creating the conditions for change

We will educate lawmakers, engage electoral candidates and rally the public around the need for reform by highlighting the value of government and what is at stake when it is undermined.

2

Developing a plan for change

We will create bold policy reform solutions for a new Congress and a new administration, and we will develop new training programs for leaders and employees so they are prepared to champion and help implement the reforms we seek.

3

Implementing the plan and bringing about change

We will lay out our priority areas and policy proposals to presidential transition teams as they get up to speed on government management and operational challenges and prepare to take office. We will also administer new leadership development and workforce programs to help federal employees on the ground manage change and implement our ideas. Finally, we will continue to engage policymakers to move our proposals from policy to practice.



CONCLUSION

The recent damage to our government requires a daunting amount of repair, but repair cannot and should not mean simply returning our institutions to their prior conditions.

The “silver lining” of the current dismantling of our federal government is that we now have an opportunity to build something better and to engage a wider array of voices in shaping how our government

functions to serve the public and solve increasingly complex challenges. Government for a New Era is seizing the moment, laying the groundwork for—and enabling—the fundamental reform we need.

We welcome your support and engagement.

Please visit neweragov.org to learn more and get involved.

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