

**BLOOMBERG  
HARVARD**

City  
Leadership  
Initiative



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“Harvard is harnessing its tremendous resources—faculty, students, research, and teaching—to help leaders meet challenges in their cities as they build a better future for their fellow citizens.”

—LAWRENCE S. BACOW  
President of Harvard University





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## Our Mission

The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative equips mayors and senior city officials with leadership skills and management tools to tackle their cities' complex challenges and improve people's quality of life.

The Initiative advances the field of city leadership through teaching, research, and new curricular materials that help city leaders drive government performance and address pressing social problems.

By engaging Harvard graduate students in research and field work, the Initiative supports current city leaders while investing in future generations.

This collaboration between Bloomberg Philanthropies, Harvard Kennedy School, and Harvard Business School was made possible by a generous gift to Harvard from Bloomberg Philanthropies in 2016. The Initiative is located at the Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University.

▼ Neighborhood revitalization is a key priority for Birmingham, Alabama Mayor Randall Woodfin. The mayor and his team are applying lessons on using data and evidence in governance to address blighted properties.



# A Place Where City Leaders Advance

Each year, the Initiative selects 40 mayors; in turn, each mayor selects two senior officials from their city to participate. The 40 mayors and 80 senior leaders engage in an intensive leadership and management program developed and taught by faculty from Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School.

## Advancing the Field of City Leadership

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All original materials available online, open source & free of charge to the world

New teaching cases, educator guides & other curricular materials on city leadership

New interdisciplinary research on municipal governance, management & leadership

## Developing Future Generations of City Leaders

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Summer fellowships in mayors' offices

Field lab courses with participating cities

Research assistant program to fill gaps in knowledge

Master's student thesis projects with alumni cities



## Strengthening Leaders & Cities

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In-person classes

HBX Live virtual classes

Executive education scholarships

Focused learning in year-long tracks: Cross-Boundary Collaboration, Data & Evidence, or Innovation & Experimentation

Communications support through public narrative training

Personal 360 leadership development assessments & coaching

Mayoral advising

“The task of city leadership is to unleash the potential for innovative problem-solving in individuals, organizations, and communities. Our program offers a learning environment where public leaders get better at this task by learning from faculty, from self-reflection, and from one another.”

—JORRIT DE JONG

Emma Bloomberg Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Management, Kennedy School of Government; Director, Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University; and Faculty Co-Chair, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative



**CALGARY, CANADA**

“My work on improving Calgary’s mental health and addiction system of care provides a clear example of using the classroom learning to help coalesce action by clearly defining the core problem of a very complex challenge.”

—Naheed Nenshi, Mayor of Calgary

**GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

Mayor Rosalynn Bliss’s team created its first citywide data dashboard on economic development, which tracks key indicators by neighborhood, including public investment, private investment, and new jobs. The city is using the data to guide its development decisions and support the mayor’s goals of increasing economic opportunity for all.



**ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO**

Mayor Tim Keller is institutionalizing strategic decision-making by adding “experimentation” to his list of city-hall values. Every department is now required to include at least one experiment proposal in their budget that might lead to better results.



**BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**

Mayor Randall Woodfin realized he could not reach his goal of tearing down one blighted property a day without data, and he asked his team to analyze the existing data and identify efficiencies in the demolition process. With more data, Woodfin secured a \$500,000 increase in blight removal funding from city council.

**ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA**

Using what he had learned about building collaborative cross-sector teams, Mayor Rick Kriseman created a team of 17 advisors representing key sectors in the community to determine when to safely reopen during the novel coronavirus pandemic. The group included public health experts who could help determine the “when” and representatives from local businesses, the arts community, and religious leaders to determine the “how.”

# Program Participation

2017–2023

465

mayors

2,270+

senior city  
officials

524

cities

61

countries

## TIRANA, ALBANIA

“Despite our different continents, contexts, and conditions, as mayors participating in this program, we shared similar—if not identical—problems, conflicts, and opportunities.

I used lessons involving using data, building consensus, collaborating with other sectors, and communicating through story to address some of Tirana’s greatest opportunities.”

—Erion Veliaj, Mayor of Tirana

## FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

“The case study on teaming reinforced the value of wider networking, and this is now a strategy that I consistently apply—pulling local and international, private and public sector, communities and volunteers into our #TransformFreetown sector working groups, resource mobilization, and implementation.”

—Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, Mayor of Freetown



## FORTALEZA, BRAZIL

The city is now meeting the mayor’s ambitious goal of giving every resident access to prescription drugs for chronic diseases, like high blood pressure or diabetes, in 48 hours or less.

“Through the Bloomberg Harvard program, I developed the leadership tools to empower my staff and create a new culture at city hall, which allowed us to experiment, focus on data, and create an innovative solution that solves a real problem for our citizens.”

—Roberto Cláudio, Mayor of Fortaleza



“Around the world, cities are growing in size and importance, and mayors are leading the charge in addressing the most pressing issues we face, from creating jobs to fighting climate change. This program is aimed at helping them succeed.”

—MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

Founder of Bloomberg LP & Bloomberg Philanthropies;  
three-term mayor of New York City



# COVID-19 Response & Recovery

In March 2020, as the novel coronavirus began to spread throughout the United States, mayors faced a deluge of crises, from soaring infection rates and widespread social unrest, to shuttered businesses with many residents out of work.

In response to city leaders' urgent calls for reliable information and approaches to addressing COVID-19, the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative launched weekly programs for mayors and their teams to provide up-to-date public health information and guidance, crisis management tools, and the opportunity to share key learnings and practices to help them lead their cities through the turbulent time.

▼ Jorrit de Jong, Faculty Director of the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, facilitating the first COVID-19 Local Response Initiative session from the HBX Live studio.





Featuring faculty from Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Business School, the T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Harvard Medical School, and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, sessions covered a range of crisis leadership and management topics, from **Problem Solving Under Uncertain Conditions** and **Communicating in a Crisis** to **Budgeting During COVID-19** and **Scenario Planning in a Pandemic**.

The programs facilitated city-to-city networks and relationships between mayors that enabled the flow of public-health guidance, helping mayors gauge potential emergency responses with one another in real-time. These new relationships have also served as a foundation for mayors to offer each other advice and share experiences.



“COVID-19 has tested mayors and city leaders in ways that we could never have anticipated. Though uncertainties lie ahead, the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative is dedicated to helping leaders meet the challenges of the pandemic in cities around the world and rebuild for a better, more equitable future.”

—RAWI ABDELAL  
Herbert F. Johnson Professor of International Management, Harvard Business School, and Emma Bloomberg Co-Chair, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative



## Adapting Through Crises: Five New Programs

With mayors playing a central role in driving social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative launched five programs that focus on providing city leaders with the skills required to respond to emerging challenges, with an emphasis on social, racial, and economic justice.

- **COVID-19 Local Response Initiative sessions:** weekly sessions for mayors and senior staff worldwide, March–June 2020.
- **Leading Through Crisis: Reducing the Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and Africa program:** bi-weekly sessions for African and Latin-American mayors, summer 2020.
- **Leading Social and Economic Recovery program:** monthly sessions for mayors and senior staff worldwide, began July 2020.
- **Class of 2021 Mayors Program:** featuring in-depth sessions and support for responding to the pandemic and leading the recovery of their cities, for a cohort of 40 U.S. mayors, began July 2020.
- **Workshops on Public Narrative: Leading Through Loss and Talking About Race:** special sessions for alumni mayors, summer 2020.

# Finding the Right Words at a Critical Time

“When violence erupted, one mayor found all the right words,” the *Wall Street Journal* observed of Keisha Bottoms, the mayor of the city of Atlanta, who faced dual crises—COVID-19 was spreading throughout the city and peaceful demonstrations in response to the killing of George Floyd had escalated to violence. In a speech that generated national attention for its emotional appeal and effectiveness, Bottoms drew on lessons from Harvard Kennedy School professor Marshall Ganz’s class on public narrative. Sharing her story of self, story of us, and story of now, she implored citizens to keep the peace and go home. Looking back on her speech, she says, “I recognize the arc of storytelling that we learned during our class and I am grateful for all of the crisis leadership support that I received through the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative.”

90%

of city leaders improved leadership capabilities<sup>1</sup>



Keisha Bottoms, Mayor of Atlanta



Mitch Weiss, HBS

86%

of city leaders report organizational improvement in their cities<sup>1</sup>



Steve Goldsmith, HKS



# 98%

of responding mayors reported a gain in new, actionable leadership insights in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis<sup>2</sup>



Jennifer Musisi, City Leader in Residence



Nan Whaley, Mayor of Dayton

## Learning from Leading Practitioners

The Initiative has benefited significantly from the experience and leadership lessons of HKS Professor Steve Goldsmith, the former Mayor of Indianapolis and Deputy Mayor of New York; HBS Professor Mitch Weiss, former Chief of Staff to Boston Mayor Thomas Menino; and City Leader in Residence Jennifer Musisi, the former Executive Director of the City of Kampala, Uganda. In addition to their roles as senior advisors, they stepped in as faculty co-chairs to the Data and Evidence Track (Goldsmith), the Innovation and Experimentation Track (Weiss) and the series on Reducing the Impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and Africa (Musisi). Musisi is featured as a protagonist in multiple new teaching cases about innovation and strategic leadership in Kampala, Uganda.

## Leading through Tragedy: Action, Empathy & Advocacy

When a shooter opened fire in Dayton's Oregon District, killing nine people, Mayor Nan Whaley drew on many of the lessons she learned through the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative to support a grieving community. First, Whaley focused on healing the community and communicating effectively during a crisis. Second, she applied lessons from Harvard Business School professor Mitch Weiss's session about innovation and experimentation, that she had attended just weeks before the shooting. One particular example, about the One Fund that Boston created after the marathon bombing in 2013, inspired Whaley to quickly launch the Dayton Oregon District Tragedy Fund, raising over \$3.8 million for victims and their families. Finally, building on classes and coaching sessions with Harvard Kennedy School professor Marshall Ganz, Whaley went on to become a prominent voice on gun control, appearing on national news programs and producing op-eds calling for gun policy action, according to the *Washington Post*.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the impact assessment of the first six cohorts of cities.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the impact assessment of COVID-19 Response program participants.





## Student Opportunities

### CITY HALL FELLOWS

Graduates of Harvard master's or professional degree programs are placed in paid, two-year fellowships in municipal leadership in US city halls and tasked with supporting cities in developing and deepening capabilities to address pressing municipal challenges.

### SUMMER FELLOWS

Ten-week summer fellowships offer placement in domestic and international city governments to focus on issues salient to mayors' agendas. Fellows are supported by the Initiative's dedicated staff during their engagement.

### RESEARCH ASSISTANTS — CITY SUPPORT

City Support Research Assistants (RAs) help mayors and senior leaders make progress on a range of organizational challenges by learning from practices instituted by other cities to address similar challenges.

### RESEARCH ASSISTANTS — RESEARCH

Research RAs support affiliated faculty in their research projects on municipal governance, public management, and city leadership. Subjects range from the use of data and evidence in government to collaboration across sectors and from moral leadership to creating conditions for creative problem-solving.

# Student Participation Across Harvard



**ADAM HAWKSBEЕ**

**MPP 2019**

**RESEARCH FELLOW TO  
FULL-TIME CITY POSITION**

While pursuing his graduate degree, Adam Hawksbee, HKS MPP 2019, worked closely with the city region of West Midlands on inclusive economic development, first during a summer internship, then during his Policy Analysis Exercise, and finally as a research fellow with the Initiative. Just months after being hired as the Head of Policy for the city region, he was thrust into supporting its response to COVID-19. “I moved from a strategic, forward-looking role to a day-to-day crisis management and emergency response role,” he said. “As we turn toward recovery and reimagining what the region looks like, I’ve been able to bring in what I learned from Bloomberg Harvard to push us to thinking ambitiously and imaginatively about what comes next.”



**PRACHI NAIK**

**MPP 2020**

**SUMMER FELLOWSHIP**

In just 10 weeks, Bloomberg Harvard summer fellow Prachi Naik, HKS MPP 2020, helped the city of Albany prevent future blight and ensure that vulnerable residents can remain in their homes—a key priority for Mayor Kathy Sheehan. Naik’s survey and report on housing displacement and disrepair helped Albany secure a grant from the Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement Program, a program established by the New York Office of the Attorney General to help cities across the state pilot innovative programs to combat blight and abandoned properties.



**NNEKA**

**EDWARDS-JACKSON**

**MPH 2022**

**SUMMER FELLOWSHIP**

As a COVID-19 Response and Recovery fellow, Dr. Edwards-Jackson, Harvard Chan MPH 2022, who is a pediatrician by training, is developing community-based solutions at the intersection of public safety and mental health. Her analysis of peer city approaches and policy recommendations informed the overall strategy of a community-based public safety task force, formed in the wake of the Black Lives Matter and Indigenous Lives Matter movements. Edwards-Jackson’s project continued the city of Calgary’s work on community-driven mental health and addiction strategy within the Initiative’s cross-boundary collaboration track.



**ALLISON O’SHEA**

**MBA 2021**

**FIELD WORK**

Allison O’Shea, HBS MBA 2021, worked on research on city innovations to advance the status of women and girls. Her work aimed to identify promising approaches, common issues of focus across cities, partnership models, and how cities measured success. “I was drawn to this research project because the challenges facing women and girls are extremely complex and intersectional in nature. In other words, the most pressing challenges facing women and girls vary across age, race, class, and geography, and the solutions can rarely be developed and executed by a single department or agency within city hall.”



# Filling the Gaps in Research on Cities

2017–2023

10

new research  
programs

61+

participating  
Harvard faculty

350+

participating  
Harvard students

Strategic  
Leadership



Robert Wilkinson, HKS

Crisis  
Leadership



Juliette Kayyem, HKS



“Our goal is to fill the gaps in research on effective leadership, management, and innovative approaches to problem-solving in cities.”

—KIMBERLYN LEARY

Senior Fellow, Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University;  
Associate Professor of Psychology, Harvard Medical School;  
Associate Professor in the Department of Health Policy and  
Management, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

## TEAMING IN CITIES

Teaming—actively building and developing teams with a shifting mix of partners to solve problems—exists everywhere, including in cities, but research on the way these teams work has focused primarily on the private sector. New research focuses on team problem-solving in the public sector, studying teams with representatives of city departments, agencies, and other organizations, who are working across boundaries to address complex social issues.

### ONGOING RESEARCH PROGRAM LED BY:

**Amy Edmondson**, the Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management at Harvard Business School

**Hannah Riley Bowles**, the Roy E. Larsen Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Management at Harvard Kennedy School

**Jorrit de Jong**, Emma Bloomberg Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Management, Kennedy School of Government; Director, Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University; and Faculty Co-Chair, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative



## Civic Engagement



Archon Fung, HKS

## Moral Leadership



Marshall Ganz, HKS



Jan Rivkin, HBS

## Innovation and Experimentation



Linda Bilmes, HKS

## Data and Evidence

### PUBLIC NARRATIVE IN CITIES

Mayors have a “bully pulpit” and every speech they give is an opportunity to build relationships, secure support, and mobilize resources. However, the role of “public narrative” has not been studied much. A group of scholars, led by professors Marshall Ganz and Jennifer Lerner, has conceptualized public narrative as a key aspect of leadership, developed a psychometric scale to measure it, and conducted multiple studies to assess the impact of leadership development focused on narrative.

#### ONGOING RESEARCH PROGRAM LED BY:

**Marshall Ganz**, the Rita E. Hauser Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Organizing, and Civil Society at Harvard Kennedy School

**Jennifer Lerner**, the Thornton F. Bradshaw Professor of Public Policy, Decision Science, and Management at Harvard Kennedy School and Co-Founder of the Harvard Decision Science Laboratory

### CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION IN CITIES

More than ever before, local problems—such as homelessness and unemployment—are best addressed through concerted efforts from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, as well as academia. There is currently, however, very little existing literature on how to do so effectively. New research aims to fill this gap and enhance the understanding of collaboration at the city level, especially the conditions for successful problem- or opportunity-oriented collaborative governance.

#### ONGOING RESEARCH PROGRAM LED BY:

**Jan Rivkin**, the C. Roland Christensen Professor of Business Administration and Senior Associate Dean, Chair, MBA Program at Harvard Business School

**Mark Moore**, the Hauser Professor of Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard Kennedy School

**Jorrit de Jong**, Emma Bloomberg Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and Management, Kennedy School of Government; Director, Bloomberg Center for Cities at Harvard University; and Faculty Co-Chair, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative

# Curriculum & Teaching Tools

The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative is creating the world's largest collection of high-quality instructional materials on governance, management, and leadership in cities, which will be **open and free to all**. More than 80 toolkits and teaching cases featuring diverse protagonists from around the world are available (or will be soon), including:

## EXERCISING STRATEGIC,

### MORAL & CRISIS LEADERSHIP

- Public Value Toolkit
- The Town Librarian and the Latchkey Children
- Nobody's Core Business: Dealing with Opioid Overdoses in a Public Library
- At the Center of the Storm: San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz and the Response to Hurricane Maria
- Making a Statement: Mayor Libby Schaaf and the Sanctuary City of Oakland, California
- Reckoning with History: Confederate Monuments in American Cities

## CROSS-BOUNDARY COLLABORATION

- Change at the Speed of Trust: Advancing Educational Opportunity Through Cross-Sector Collaboration in Louisville
- Growing Pains: How a Dutch Cross-Agency Team Took on Illegal Marijuana Production in Residential Areas
- The Secret Sauce of the "Bilbao Effect": The Collaborative Architecture of Bilbao's Urban Transformation
- Design Decisions for Cross-Sector Collaboration: Five Cases

## INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION

- Driving Change in São Paulo: Replacing the City Vehicle Fleet with a TNC
- Fortaleza: Keeping an Electoral Promise
- Raising Revenues in Kampala, Uganda
- The "Garbage Lady" Cleans up Kampala: A Technocrat Tries for Lasting Change
- "You Have One Hundred Days": Accelerating Government Performance in the UAE

## NEGOTIATION

- A Collective, Compassionate, and Systematic Approach: Building Power in Manchester, New Hampshire
- Beyond the Table: Infrastructure Development in Kampala, Uganda
- In the Green: Negotiating Rail Expansion in Somerville, Massachusetts
- In the Weeds: Securing a Grass-Mowing Contract in Stockton, California
- Many Ways to Get There: Securing Public Investments in Richmond, Virginia
- You Get What You Pay for: Reforming Procurement in Naperville, Illinois

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Leading Civic Engagement: Three Cases





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## Addressing Social, Economic & Racial Equity

Making government more effective, efficient, and equitable is at the heart of our curriculum. New teaching tools, research, and programming focus on social, economic, and racial justice.

- **Equitable Economic Development Practitioner Guide and Workshops** help city leaders assess and reduce the racial wealth gap in American cities post-COVID-19.
- **Fiscal Resilience Practitioner Guide and Workshops** support city leaders as they prepare for the financial recession and budget with an explicit focus on equity.
- **Civic Engagement Program**, which includes a City Leader Guide, a set of teaching materials, and an executive education program, helps city leaders strengthen participatory governance.
- **Moral Leadership Series** provides city leaders with a set of teaching cases and notes on ethical dilemmas, including economic justice and reckoning with history.
- **Ongoing racial equity work** with city participants, including problem exploration exercises incorporating equity considerations into key priorities; use of data to diagnose and reduce social and racial inequality and monitor progress; teaching approaches to cross-boundary collaboration and innovation that center on equity; and placing student fellows in cities focused on analyses and recommendations addressing equity.

▼ Amy Edmondson, the Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management at HBS, leading a classroom discussion with 40 mayors.





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“Participating in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative is extremely valuable to any mayor and goes beyond inspirational leadership and management training. You’ll learn, be challenged to think about things deeply and in different ways, and be given tools to lead progress and change in your city.”

— NAHEED NENSHI  
Mayor of Calgary












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CENTER FOR CITIES**  
**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

LOCATED AT THE BLOOMBERG CENTER FOR CITIES  
AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY