



2021-2022 NASCA CALL FOR SIGNATURE RESEARCH PARTNERS

Deadline for Submissions: Thursday, July 15, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. ET.

Call for Proposals: Partnered Research Project

Each year, NASCA selects up to two corporate partners to collaborate on research deliverables to disseminate leading practices and industry trends. This is an in-kind project and there is no cost to participate in this collaborative opportunity.

Together with our corporate partner, NASCA will collaborate on national research to identify and prioritize key issues, determine trends, and understand the perspectives of state leaders. NASCA conducts research with the following goals:

- Curate and disseminate best practices. The final product will provide government leaders with data they can use to compare state practices and inform leading practices. NASCA is looking for practical findings and clear recommendations, not theory and concepts that cannot be applied to state government.
- Elevate the role CAOs have in driving state government operational excellence.
- Assist CAOs in advocating for the strategies and resources necessary to modernize state government operations with public stakeholders and private sector partners.

The selected research partner will collaborate with the NASCA Research and Policy Committee and staff to further develop the research direction, develop questions, and initiate peer communications which comprises state CAOs and corporate partner volunteers. Each element of the research project will be co-developed with NASCA staff.

Proposals must be submitted via an [online form](#) by July 15, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. ET.

After review and analysis, a recommendation by NASCA's Research and Policy Committee will be given for final approval by NASCA's Executive Committee. A Memorandum of Understanding will be developed upon selection to define the Partner's and NASCA's responsibilities.

2021-2022 Research Themes:

The research and policy committee has highlighted the below research priorities for FY 2021-2022.

- Employee Engagement and Experience, with additional consideration to embedding diversity, equity and inclusion
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in State Government Operations
- Workforce Adaptations, with an emphasis on flexible and hybrid workplaces/conditions
- Procurement Modernization, breaking down barriers to diversify vendors
- Digital Transformation, including data management and analytics

The Project:



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Any deliverables produced by the research project are to be co-branded by the parties: such co-branded deliverables will be agreed upon by the parties prior to any distribution, circulation or publication thereof. Some examples of project design include the following but applicants are encouraged to be creative in crafting the best value to the NASCA membership. **Alternative final product formats are encouraged (ex: video series, podcast, blogs, pilot project, case study, or upon recommendation of the corporate partner, etc.):**

- a. Survey, Interviews, or Focus Groups: NASCA and the partner may agree to collaborate to conduct a joint Survey of NASCA state government members, specifically State Chief Administrators. NASCA will distribute and promote the survey through established NASCA channels if a survey vehicle is selected. The partner will host the on-line survey platform. If in-person or virtual focus groups are recommended as part of the research project, the research partner will financially support in-person events. NASCA staff will host and coordinate virtual and in person conversations associated with the selected research methodology.
- b. Analysis & Report: The survey and interviews shall be the analytical base of a co-branded report providing an overview and analysis of the Survey results. NASCA staff will co-develop and co-write any deliverables associated with the project. NASCA Research and Policy Committee will participate in the direction, question development and final review of the Report and ensure alignment with state member's priorities and NASCA's publication policy before it is published. The final analysis shall include recommendation, key take-aways, and solutions identifying leading and lagging state practices as well as identifying gaps between private sector practices and/or customer and citizen expectations. These key findings shall also be presented in a short, digestible executive summary.
- c. Report Presentation: Research partner will have the ability to co-present the report findings during a NASCA event with NASCA staff and/or Research and Policy Committee. Slides and material from this presentation will be made public.
- d. Marketing and Dissemination: The partner will be responsible for the design of the final reports and collateral informed by NASCA's colors and brand. NASCA and the partner will mutually agree on a dissemination plan including social media tiles, targeted media outreach, and other presenting opportunities. A strong external stakeholder and media dissemination plan is encouraged. NASCA will distribute to members and peer associations. Short form follow-up blogs or one-page key recommendations are encouraged as part of the final product and report.
- e. Partners: NASCA and the partner may seek a mutually beneficial third-party partner to assist with the research project and provide subject matter expertise. NASCA will oversee the execution of a separate Memorandum of Understanding outlining the scope of responsibility between all parties. The selected partner will maintain role as lead research partner and NASCA's direct point of contact.



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Evaluation Criteria:

Any research partner must be a NASCA Corporate Council member in good standing. To achieve the best results for the project, the partner must focus on results that will aid Chief Administrators to answer “Why does this apply to my state?” and “What do I do next?” or “How can I use this report to advocate to my Governor or Legislature?” Thus, proposals are reviewed in terms of the following criteria:

- Will the proposed report be of high value and timely to chief administrators? (Is the proposed topic it be related to 2021-22 Research Themes)?
- Will the report provide practical insight and understanding of the topic?
- Does the applicant demonstrate the potential to produce a final report that will be clear, understandable and highly communicable to government leaders and their stakeholders?
- Does the applicant demonstrate outstanding command and knowledge of the topic?
- Does the applicant have a dissemination or public relations plan for the final product?
- Has the applicant conducted a product in which they are not the sole author and/or demonstrate the understanding of a partnered research project?

Considerations:

The following may be considered during the research project.

NASCA May Provide:
A co-branded product.
Access to facetime and data from State Chief Administrators as they are able to participate.
NASCA staff time for Executive Director, Project Coordinator, Deputy Director, and other staff over the research period.
Mutually agreed upon presentation for NASCA membership.
Opportunity to host focus group to gauge member reaction and feedback to draft recommendations. Research team members may attend NASCA event in conjunction with the focus group.
Dissemination of the report and deliverables to the NASCA membership.



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Call for Proposals Timeline:

Target Dates	Event
May 24, 2021	Call for Proposals Released
June 14, 2021	Deadline for receiving written questions for the Pre-Proposal Conference Call is 4:00 p.m. ET Deadline to register to participate in Pre-Proposal Conference Call is 4:00 p.m. ET
June 15, 2021	Pre-Proposal Conference at 11:00 a.m. ET
July 15, 2021	Proposal responses due by 5:00 p.m. ET
July 16, 2021	Initial Evaluation of Responses distributed to Research and Policy Committee, Interviews with NASCA Staff
July 23, 2021	Evaluations Due to NASCA staff
July 26, 2021	Research and Policy Committee selects finalist
July 28, 2021	Final selection recommendation to the Executive Committee

NASCA conducts two collaborative research projects each fiscal year. Below is a draft timeline from the start date of the project. NASCA will begin one project in August and one project in November.

A Proposed Research Report Timeline:

Timeline	
Week 1	Research project begins; meet with Research and Policy Committee group to refine topic
Week 4	Research and Policy Committee contributes to project design, survey, or interviews



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Weeks 6-12	Survey disseminated, interviews conducted, focus groups
Week 16	Analysis Conducted; draft findings presented to Research and Policy Committee
Week 20	Research and Policy Committee review of initial findings and report layout; Case Study Collection
Week 22	Research and Policy Committee finalizes review and submits last edits; Final Design
Week 24	Executive Committee Approval of final report and launch



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Requested Information:

Please include the following information in your response. Responses should be saved as PDFs and uploaded to the submission form.

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Background

- Corporate Partner name
- Point of contact for the proposal
- Provide the name, title, and bio for the lead staff and list of key staff involved.

Research Proposal (Max 800 words)

Multiple proposed projects require separate proposal submissions.

- Executive summary of the research project (100 words)
- Format of the final deliverable (ex: report, video series, podcast, blogs, pilot project, case study, etc.). (100 words)
- **Topical focus, purpose, methodology and desired results**
 - Methodology (ex. Sample of hosted online survey tool, sample interview questions, etc. Outline of questions or broad topics that the partner would like to include)
- References or links to similar **partnered research** projects where the partner was not the sole author or demonstrate clear understanding of a partnered research project. Results should be actionable and practical. This will be the Association's voice to the industry. Please provide any links to similar partnered research projects, or sample surveys that yielded clear recommendations and take-aways. Partner may provide an example of actionable recommendations that have come from other projects.

Project Logistics (500 words)

- Proposed timeline. (see above for typical timeline)
- Define strategy to incorporate NASCA staff during each component of the research project. NASCA staff should be considered co-authors of the report and will lead the research process.
- Proposed responsibilities or requests of state members. For example, estimated time frame to members for survey or focus group participation.
- Proposed strategy for reconciling disparities in submitted answers from state members

Design & Dissemination (500 words)

- Insights on the research partner's ability to assist with design of the report, executive summary and presentation for the rollout including insights on dissemination and ability to support NASCA headquarters in reaching industry and thought leaders beyond NASCA's membership.
- Insights into ability to track media and stakeholder uptake or impact on state practices or outcomes.



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- Any value-added services that align with the collaboration opportunity but go beyond the scope of this call for proposals. (Is there anything else the Research and Policy Committee should know?)

For questions, you may contact Jamie Rodgers, Deputy Director, at jrodgers@nasca.org or Pam Goins, Executive Director, at pgoins@nasca.org.