

Government and Social Innovation

Current State and Local Models

In 2006, then Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu launched the Louisiana Office of Social Entrepreneurship, putting his state at the forefront of a growing national trend of government-led efforts to spur social innovation and better match resources with results. In establishing this office, Landrieu aimed to make Louisiana “the most hospitable place in the country for those who are launching and testing the best, most effective new program models for social change.”¹

Landrieu’s launch took place at a time when government leaders across the nation were looking for a better way to address social problems. Faced with steep budget deficits and minimal appetite for higher taxes, plus historically low approval ratings of government—all exacerbated by a lagging economy that has created greater need among citizens—government leaders set out to do more with less. A number of them began to cast their eyes toward the nonprofit sector and explore partnership opportunities with nonprofits, foundations, and corporations.²

Meanwhile, the nonprofit sector—particularly nonprofits and foundations dedicated to social entrepreneurship and performance measurement—was increasingly recognizing the influence of government on its work. The innovative service delivery models that social entrepreneurs had developed, and that some foundations were supporting, had often evolved as a direct reaction to what they saw as failed government policies and systems, but now these organizations

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demonstrated an increased pragmatism about the role of government. According to Kim Syman, director of New Profit Inc.'s Action Tank, social entrepreneurs and their supporters realized that "if you're really serious about solving problems in this nation, you need to look at ways that government can partner with entrepreneurial leaders and you also need to stop spending money on things that don't work. If we could find new ways to partner with government, we could take the muscle and mandate of government and marry it to the frameworks of effective nonprofit organizations and let resources follow performance."³ If they were to make real change, these organizations needed to connect back into the systems that were touching many more lives than their individual work ever could.⁴

Leaders in the nonprofit and government sectors began to experiment with new ways of working together: they developed policies, sought public funding for research and development, used public dollars as growth capital to spread best approaches to new locales, collected and analyzed data to better understand social problems and the impact (or lack thereof) of strategies currently being employed to address them, brokered partnerships between the nonprofit and business sectors to leverage resources, and used government's bully pulpit to raise the profile of problems and approaches and to convene diverse stakeholders. In essence, these efforts forged an alternative to the two ideologies that have dominated political rhetoric over the past several decades: the FDR-styled "government as service provider" and the Reagan-inspired "government is the problem."⁵ At present, these new efforts are providing glimpses of a still-emerging vision of government's role in addressing social issues—one in which government makes essential contributions to fostering social innovation and spreading the best solutions to social problems by developing new policies, directing resources based on performance, and facilitating collaboration among organizations and sectors. As New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg describes this vision: "If we are going to emerge from these challenging times stronger than ever and remain the world's leading superpower, we need to reinvigorate government with the spirit of innovation and invention that has always been America's calling card. We are going to have to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government in dealing with age-old problems (from poverty to health care), as well as the responsiveness of government to the latest emerging challenges (from climate change to technology change)."⁶

This article offers an analysis of other models that have developed over the past several years, especially in the three years since the founding of Louisiana's Office of Social Entrepreneurship. At all levels of government, these new frameworks for solving social problems are crossing political, geographic, and cultural divides.

CURRENT U.S. MODELS

In Washington D.C. and in state legislatures and city halls throughout the country, a new generation of government leaders is working with the nonprofit and business sectors to create what Stephen Goldsmith aptly describes as "an environment that enables continual innovation while demanding real impact and perform-

ance.”⁷⁷ They are part of a national experiment and testing ground in which the public sector is finding and spreading the best solutions to our many pressing social problems. As Sonal Shah, director of the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation explains, “This is so critical to who we are as a country. We have such a decentralized infrastructure, and it’s in connecting that infrastructure that we find and understand the solutions. We already do that in the economic space, but we also need to on social issues because social and economic are two parts of the same point . . . Creating an environment where that can happen is important; it’s an important part of what the government has to do.”

At the federal level, the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation is spearheading and coordinating efforts among federal agencies to embed the principles of innovation in government. Competitive innovation funds are now in place at the departments of education and labor, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. In addition, that office hopes to support and learn from the emerging state and local models in order to ensure that this new approach is infused into all levels of government.

Among state and local initiatives, two overarching structural models—office and liaison—are emerging to support a host of activity types.

Office models are dedicated to demonstrating new approaches to encourage innovation and spread proven solutions. With names that include phrases like Social Entrepreneurship (Louisiana), Social Impact (Texas), Strategic Partnerships (Denver), and New Urban Mechanics (Boston), they have emerged at the city and state levels around the country. Most of these offices are situated within government, with two examples of quasi-government models that are a hybrid between public and private.

Liaison models are designed to broker partnerships across government and among the public, nonprofit, and business sectors. The liaison model can take one of three forms:

1. The executive branch can establish a liaison between the government and foundations in an effort to broker partnerships, leverage dollars from both entities, and attack entrenched problems in a more systemic way.
2. Agency liaisons can be established to break down the silos within government and provide a mechanism for forging effective public-private partnerships.
3. Independent nonprofit entities can be established to raise private philanthropic funds, leverage volunteer hours, and cultivate community champions. These are most frequently used with public education and parks/conservation.

Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 138 and 140, respectively) outline the types(s) of models used for each known city or state effort. We analyze many of them through the case profiles that follow.

Table 1. State models.

	Structural Model	Activities							
		Type of Office Type of Liaison	Competitive Innovation Funds	Grant-writing Assistance	Awards	Business Planning/Capacity Building	Policy Change	Brokering Partnerships	Signing a Compact
State Models									
Kentucky Commission on Philanthropy	Government Office							X	
Louisiana Office of Social Entrepreneurship	Government Office	X			X	X		X	
Massachusetts – Executive Office of Education	No Office or Liaison	X						X	
Massachusetts – Office of the Governor	No Office or Liaison								X
Michigan Office of the Foundation Liaison	Foundation Liaison							X	
Minnesota Research and Innovation Council (proposed)	State Agency Liaison	X					X	X	
Newark Foundation Liaison	Foundation Liaison							X	
New Mexico Center for Philanthropic Partnerships	Quasi-Government Office & Foundation Liaison			X					X
Ohio Social Entrepreneurship Initiative	Government Office				X	X			
Texas OneStar Foundation	Quasi-Government Office & State Agency Liaison	X			X	X		X	
Virginia – The Phoenix Project	No Office or Liaison					X			X

The Office Model

Within Government

Examples: Boston Office of New Urban Mechanics, Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships, Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships, Louisiana Office of Social Entrepreneurship, Ohio Social Entrepreneurship Initiative

Following in the footsteps of the Small Business Administration and offices of economic development, several state and local governments have established new offices focused on supporting public-private partnerships and spurring social innovation and entrepreneurship. These offices are often seen as neutral entities capable of brokering relationships between government agencies and across sectors. They also frequently become clearinghouses for the local social sector, maintaining data on nonprofit organizations and social services as well as data on trends in key social issues areas. Housed directly within government, these initiatives benefit greatly from the support of an elected official, which is an advantage as long as that person remains in office, but can make it difficult for these offices to survive changes in political leadership.

Profile: Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships (DOSP)

Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper entered office with a background in business entrepreneurship (having started the state's first brew pub) and the nonprofit sector (where he served on several nonprofit and foundation boards). One of his goals as mayor was to bring the two sectors together to more effectively tackle some of the city's most pressing problems. His first step was to launch the Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships. Mike Roque, director of the DOSP, explains: "The issues of at-risk youth and teen pregnancy were priorities. We surveyed who was doing what and then went back and briefed [the mayor], proposing what we thought the gaps were and how our office could address them." They addressed the gaps by writing grants, offering workshops, and building partnerships.

Grant Writing. According to Roque, the DOSP is a "convener and catalyst," and one of its key objectives is to teach nonprofits and city agencies to work together. The office strives to move organizations away from the mindset that resources are finite, demonstrating, rather, that "by working together, the pie gets bigger for everybody." Several years ago, the DOSP took over managing the city's grant-writing contract and conducted trainings for city agencies and nonprofit organizations on the grant-writing process. They also established processes and protocols for researching and writing grants, which resulted in over \$30 million in federal and national foundation grants over the past three years. The year before the DOSP took over managing the contract, the grant-writing firm had written three grants and raised \$250,000. Many of these grants have been collaborations between city agencies and nonprofit organizations.

	Structural Model	Activities						
		Type of Office Type of Liaison	Competitive Innovation Funds	Grant- writing Assistance	Awards	Business Planning/ Capacity Building	Policy Change	Brokering Partnerships
Local Models								
Boston Office of New Urban Mechanics	Government Office	X				X		X
Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships	Government Office		X		X			X
Durham - Bull City Forward	No Office or Liaison				X			X
Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP3)	Government Office				X			X
Los Angeles Office of Strategic Partnerships	Government Office							X
Minneapolis – AchieveMpls	Independent, Issue- Specific Liaison				X			X
New York City - The Fund for Public Schools	Independent, Issue- Specific Liaison				X			X

Table 2. Local models.

Workshops. For city agencies, the DOSP offers issue briefings and training on working with nonprofits. Organizations, meanwhile, attend workshops that explain key city agencies, teach them how to work with said agencies, and build their capacity to contract with the city. In addition, the DOSP provides energy efficiency workshops and hopes to encourage the creation of multi-tenant nonprofit centers. Both initiatives aim to lower organizations' operating costs so they can provide more and better services to additional people.

Building Partnerships. The DOSP has supported the formation and maintenance of several major issue-based collaboratives. The Youth Mentoring Collaborative has increased the number of youth served by 25 percent, while decreasing the annual cost per youth by \$400. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Partnership consists of nine nonprofits and city agencies, which have teamed up to run a comprehensive teen pregnancy prevention pilot program in three at-risk schools. More recent collaborations include the Denver Transit Oriented Development Fund , which will provide one thousand new affordable housing units in transit corridors, and the Neighborhood Energy Action Partnership , which seeks to educate neighborhoods about and provide energy saving upgrades to homes.

Quasi-Governmental

Examples: New Mexico Center for Philanthropic Partnerships, OneStar Foundation: Texas Center for Social Impact

Quasi-governmental offices utilize many of the same strategies as those located directly within government, but they are structured in a way that ties them less directly to the elected official who played a part in their founding. This approach gives offices more latitude in setting their own agenda and frees them from both the bureaucracy and political considerations that can deadlock some government initiatives. While a leadership transition has not yet occurred during the lifespan of the examples featured here, the quasi-governmental model is meant to provide greater protection from leadership transitions, so that the office is less likely to be eliminated or marginalized when a new executive is elected. The potential drawback is that these offices may never reap the full benefits of a high-level government champion who feels responsible for their success.

Profile: OneStar Foundation: Texas Center for Social Impact

“We are really interested in ways that nonprofits can show impact. The [nonprofit] sector is a huge economic driver in the state of Texas. In 2008 alone, the state's five health and human service agencies contracted over \$6.1 billion with nonprofits to get their work done,” explains Elizabeth Darling, president and CEO of the OneStar Foundation: Texas Center for Social Impact. “Texas has a rich history of acknowledging the importance

of civic engagement through volunteering and service in the nonprofit sector.” OneStar was created in 2004 because Governor Rick Perry “saw an opportunity to favor an independent 501(c)3 that would manage the continuation of the legacy of support for service and volunteerism, the Governor’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative, support capacity building, and serve as the state’s service commission. These functions had previously been buried in state government, and this new joint entity would be empowered to work more freely.”

OneStar was created as a supporting nonprofit of the governor’s office; its CEO and board are appointed by the governor, and it receives a portion of its funding from the state. It does not report to either branch of government, however, and is incorporated as an independent 501(c)3. While its founding activities revolved around traditional nonprofit capacity building and around volunteerism and service, it has since expanded its offerings to include research and learning, as well as a special focus on social innovation.

Organizational Capacity Building. Texas has over 100,734 registered nonprofits and a 43.1% growth rate between 1998 and 2006; more people work in its social sector than in the oil and gas extraction industry. Every year the sector contracts to deliver tens of billions of dollars worth of services on behalf of government, so it is in the interest of state taxpayers to have these services provided by robust, high-performing organizations.

OneStar’s Texas Social Innovation Initiative (TSI) is delivered through a partnership with Dallas Social Venture Partners and Root Cause. Modeled after Root Cause’s Social Innovation Forum, the competitive process identified seven high-performing social innovators to receive \$25,000 worth of consulting, business planning, and coaching services, as well as statewide recognition among funders and policy makers. In addition to TSI, OneStar also manages a Renewing Our Communities fund that was established by the state legislature in order to commit to a new kind of capacity building based on collaborative partnerships, planning, and performance measurement. In this role, it served as a resource to the legislature and is now a partner in implementing legislation that creates liaisons in fourteen state agencies that are all dedicated to reducing barriers to partnerships between government and faith- and community-based organizations.

Service and Volunteerism. As Texas’ state service commission, OneStar has put Texas on the map as the first state in the country to direct its entire AmeriCorps*State funding pool toward addressing a particular social issue: the educational attainment of Texas youth. The AmeriCorps*State program offers states the opportunity to determine a strategy for allocat-

ing resources to the areas and organizations where they will be used most effectively. OneStar is investing its entire 2009-2012 AmeriCorps funding—an anticipated \$30 million—in eligible organizations that are addressing the education crisis in Texas.

Research, Evaluation, and Learning. By providing data on needs and trends, OneStar helps nonprofits develop best practices, better understand the underlying causes behind the issues they address, and realize the importance of measuring nonprofit effectiveness in communities and across the sector. First, it serves as a clearinghouse for research reports and findings on the sector in Texas to keep the state and other nonprofit stakeholders abreast of new developments. Second, it conducts strategic research projects to collect data about the sector's strengths and challenges to inform decision-making and practice. Third, it is developing the Texas Connector, a geo-mapping system that showcases nonprofit information across the state in relation to indicators of social service needs and provides customized statistical reports by region.

The Liaison Model

Foundation Liaisons

Examples: Kentucky Commission on Philanthropy, Michigan Office of the Foundation Liaison, New Mexico Center for Philanthropic Partnerships, Newark Philanthropic Liaison

As partners with government, foundations bring additional capital to the table but can also provide a wealth of knowledge and expertise on issue areas and local system dynamics. In addition, they can serve as a government's research and development arm, taking on pilot projects and experiments that are too risky for government, but which, when successful, can be taken up by government and spread across the larger public system. In New Mexico, for example, the Center for Philanthropic Partnerships (CPP) was launched in 2009 with key partners, that include the New Mexico Children's Cabinet, chaired by Lt. Governor Diane Denish; the Kellogg Foundation; and the Albuquerque Community Foundation, which serves as the CPP's fiscal partner and home base. CPP's mission is "to support innovative, sustainable, cost-effective solutions to social problems through building vital partnerships across philanthropy, non-profit, government and private leadership" in four core areas: family economic success, food systems, civic engagement, and early childhood education.

Profile: Michigan Office of the Foundation Liaison (OFL)

Soon after Jennifer Granholm was elected Governor of Michigan in 2002, a group of foundation leaders met with her to pitch the idea of a foundation liaison who could serve as an interpreter between sectors, as well as a broker of greater partnerships. This group had been part of a similar

effort in the 1980s and offered lessons learned and strategies for implementing a modernized version.

Granholt was enthusiastic, and the group approached other foundations to cultivate a critical mass of supporters to back the proposal. The Michigan Office of the Foundation Liaison opened in April of 2003, three months after Granholt was sworn in. Karen Aldridge-Eason, an executive on loan from the Mott Foundation, has served as foundation liaison since the inception and is a member of the Governor's Cabinet. The governor's office covers approximately 5 percent of the total cost of the office through a combination of cash and in-kind services, with the foundation community covering the balance of expenses.

The role of the foundation liaison is to convene all sectors for dialogue and serve as an interpreter between them. Importantly, the OFL seeks to help government recognize that foundations have value beyond their ability to fund programs: they are experts on issue areas and people who know the local community systems well. Aldridge-Eason explains: "When [foundations] come to our offices, they understand that they're not going to be pressured to give a grant; this is just a conversation right now. The state understands the value of our philanthropic community. They're not just about money, but also about expertise, knowledge. They can recommend the grantees that they've worked with in the past, qualified consultants, etc." She cites two examples of major projects that her office has undertaken in recent years: college access and prisoner re-entry.

College Access. In 2008, Michigan had the opportunity to pursue a federal grant that would help create the infrastructure to increase college access. Given the state's history of a strong manufacturing sector, attending college had not traditionally been seen as a priority. With the economic upheaval of recent years, college was becoming a higher priority, and both the state government and the foundation community had been independently pursuing strategies to build the requisite infrastructure. Discovering this, the OFL brought both groups together into a dynamic community working group that decided to establish the Michigan College Access Network with a two-fold strategy. It would create a one-stop web portal on how to plan, apply to, and pay for college, and also build local and regional hubs around the state that would work with community foundations and other local institutions to develop and support community networks. The Kresge Foundation offered a challenge grant to community foundations to support local college access networks developing and/or expanding within Michigan communities. The local networks also received a planning grant from the state, and used it to build a much more robust system of regional college access programs

and institutions.

Prisoner Reentry. Michigan has one of the fastest growing prison industries in the country, incarcerating people at a higher rate and for a longer period of time than almost any other state, and thus representing a significant expense for the state. In fact, it was the only line item on the budget that was growing during this period of economic restructuring. Based in New York City, the JEHT (Justice, Equality, Human dignity, and Tolerance) Foundation was among the few in the country that would fund prisoner reform programs. It began to explore potential changes in Michigan and approached the Michigan foundation community to ensure that, as Aldridge-Eason puts it, “the work would continue once the JEHT Foundation leaves.” Upon learning of the idea, Aldridge-Eason recommended that the initiative have a regional focus because prisoner reentry is such a personal issue to the local communities involved. She convened a private briefing between the governor and community foundations and reframed the issue as instead being about “safe neighborhoods, safe children, etc.—the kinds of issues that all communities care about.” The JEHT Foundation offered a \$2 million challenge grant to help convince its stakeholders and to get them engaged at the community level, for example by participating in local steering committees and holding discussions with the local coordinator about the best way to model the reentry program.

State Agency Liaisons

Examples: Minnesota Innovation and Research Council, Texas Interagency Coordinating Group

The conviction that government needs to embrace innovation in its own work—in addition to supporting its progress in other sectors—has led two states down the path of establishing state agency liaisons. While neither had been launched as of this article’s publication, their legislative processes provide a glimpse into the potential for this model.

Profile: Minnesota Innovation and Research Council

Spearheaded by State Representative Paul Thissen, a bill to establish the Minnesota Innovation and Research Council was introduced in the state legislature.⁸ This council would have identified high-level champions of innovation in each of the state agencies and brought them together with nonprofits, community foundations, and business leaders to focus on coordinating efforts for better results, with an Innovation Challenge Grant Fund serving as an incentive. Speaking about why the group decided on a liaison model instead of an office, Thissen emphasizes “the need to embed the idea of innovation into agencies themselves. Part of the evolution of the proposal was to move away from this idea that there

would be this [one] place where innovation happens, rather than throughout the agencies where work gets done. How can we embed innovation into agencies?”

Profile: Texas Interagency Coordinating Group

In Texas, a law passed in 2009 established an interagency coordinating group with high-level liaisons from 15 state agencies “to remove interagency barriers to partnerships between state agencies and faith- and community-based organizations.”⁹ This group will be holding public hearings to gather information, receive feedback, and recommend legislative changes.

Insights from the Legislative Process

Minnesota’s proposed model was passed by both houses, but vetoed by the governor, and the approach developed in Texas has yet to be put into operation. Still, the report of the Minnesota Grants Innovation Advisory Committee, which informed that state’s legislation, illustrates several lessons that came from this group of cross-sector leaders.¹⁰ First, the report identified a culture of fear among state agency employees, where innovation is often stifled by the bureaucratic and often compliance-oriented approach to accountability. While many enter government service with a desire to serve the public, they are consistently provided with disincentives to champion transformative change on programs or policies. While the council is designed to change this by bringing champions of agency change together and by providing seed funding to get collaborative ideas off the ground, it is a tall challenge, and one that cannot be underestimated. One possible way to ease these barriers is to encourage and provide opportunities for agency leaders to meet each other, learn about the work of other agencies, and begin joint efforts.

The committee also identified the need for executive branch support: “We absolutely need strong buy-in from the executive branch and from the commissioner level all the way down,” declares Thissen, “because the governor enjoys a platform and bully pulpit unmatched in the legislature.” With a gubernatorial election currently underway, he emphasizes that “whomever the next governor is, we need to figure out: ‘how do we leverage our resources better, how do we take the resources out there and free people to take their models to scale, to serve a lot more people in a more effective way?’”

At the federal level, the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation is playing a similar role in convening a monthly group of innovation representatives from several federal agencies. Jim Shelton, who is assistant deputy secretary for innovation and improvement at the Department of Education, is part of that group. His department’s strategy for embedding innovation offers precisely the kind of comprehensive approach that other agencies can learn from. He explains, “[Our work includes] a little bit of everything—the i3 fund allows us to call for the best programs in the country and is a mechanism for learning about

what worked and why, and then scaling them. Policy pushes like Race to the Top allow you to get states and districts to think about being innovative. Interagency work allows us, in an environment with short resources, to leverage the work we're all doing and to complement and counsel each other's efforts. It all comes together."

Independent, Issue-Specific Liaisons

Examples: AchieveMpls (Minneapolis), the Fund for Public Schools (New York City), Central Park Conservancy (New York City), Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

As governments strive to leverage all available resources to address critical social issues, some cities have established independent nonprofit entities to raise private philanthropic funds and leverage volunteer hours. Public education and parks/conservation are the two issue areas where this approach has particularly gained traction. Founding AchieveMpls CEO Catherine Jordan (now at the Bush Foundation) explains that, as with any intermediary, tensions can arise. "We're not the district and not the community, but we're in between. It's by holding that space where we can convene and dialogue around the issues. It's a challenging space to be in—one that's valuable, but not for the faint of heart."¹¹

Profile: The Fund for Public Schools (New York City)

Originally established in 1982, The Fund for Public Schools was reinvigorated in 2002 as a core component of the district reform efforts of Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein. It is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to attracting "private investment in school reform and encouraging greater involvement of all New Yorkers in the education of [city] children." The Fund has raised over \$260 million since its 2002 re-launch, and has used that money for system-wide reforms as well as to support individual school initiatives.¹²

Fund CEO Stephanie Dua describes Board Vice-Chair Caroline Kennedy's early emphasis on raising awareness: "She recognized that you couldn't build support without raising awareness. There was a real concern previously about money being lost if given to the district directly. [Kennedy] brought a new level of accountability to the organization and emphasized building a commitment to education as a cause—so the early work was about building awareness, as well as being a fundraising effort."

The Fund now manages well over 100 grants, with annual fundraising fluctuating between \$25 million and \$45 million per year. While it maintains its independence as a separate 501(c)3, its offices are physically located in the same building as the Department of Education. This fosters a close working relationship with the chancellor and his senior leadership as well as a high-level understanding of their priorities. Currently, much of the Fund's work can be categorized as either research and devel-

opment or capacity building, with donor relations and grant management as a supporting area that undergirds the first two activities. It dedicates a small portion of its time and resources to direct programming in areas such as libraries, the arts, and mentoring.

Research and Development. Dua explains that The Fund is “not ever looking to fund something in perpetuity.” It is well positioned, however, to use private funds to test a hypothesis or new approach: “We’re trying to seed efforts that can have big impact, but that are still too new to be ready for the use of taxpayer dollars. If proven successful, it will then be scaled out across the district.”

The Fund takes advantage of its proximity to the DOE to “kick the tires” on new ideas and help the senior DOE staff better understand the ramifications of proposals. “When a DOE staff member says: ‘We want to raise money for X project,’ we have to really understand it, what it’s doing, whether it makes sense for private funding. Then we play a translation role for reform-minded businesses, individuals, or foundations to help them understand how education theory is translated into practice, how the DOE works, and the potential impact of their work.” Once a project is under way, Dua and her team also bring funders to briefings with key project staff to keep them abreast of the implementation process, successes, and challenges.

Capacity Building. A second core focus area of The Fund is building internal capacity within the DOE. Projects of this type develop new internal functions or refine existing capabilities by bringing in external partners for temporary support. Since its re-launch, The Fund has secured private funding for several capacity-building projects. These have included revamping the human resources department to make it more customer driven toward teachers and staff, piloting the quality review process of schools and building the expertise to conduct it in-house, and improving the DOE budget process and laying the groundwork for school-based budgeting.

Donor Relations and Grant Management. Particularly important to The Fund’s work has been its ability to earn the trust and confidence of donors and the community at large. This focus on grant accountability is part of a larger effort to make it easier for private individuals and organizations to give to the district. Across the nation, foundations and individuals have lamented the difficulty of donating to schools. New York City was determined to make the process straightforward in those situations when the proposed donation fit with the chancellor’s priorities. The Fund takes seriously its accountability for the use of donations and “has very honest conversations with donors—both on successes and on when we are behind schedule. It’s very complex work—change management—

it's new work, and difficult to accomplish. We talk honestly with the Department of Education and with donors and say where we've achieved what we intended, where we've hit road blocks, and how we're addressing those road blocks."¹³

EARLY LESSONS LEARNED

The models we discuss here suggest that a new approach to governing is spreading across the country. As we were writing this article, new initiatives continued to emerge. In Massachusetts, for instance, Governor Deval Patrick, together with his Cabinet, signed a Social Innovation Compact at a high-profile event in April 2010. Through the compact, both government and social innovators committed to pursuing new partnerships and support systems and to sharing information and expertise between their respective sectors.¹⁴

Also out of Governor Patrick's administration, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, partnering with New Profit Inc. and Root Cause, launched an initiative that helps to broker partnerships between social entrepreneurs and school districts, aimed at implementing new approaches to reduce high school dropout rates. According to Secretary of Education Paul Reville, the initiative provides an opportunity to make progress on the issue, even during a time of very limited resources: "We're dealing with really horrendous choices among miserable options right now and we need all the help we can get in working smarter, working more effectively, working more strategically to meet the needs that haven't changed among the people that we care for and care about. Those needs have deepened so we've got to get smarter about how we do this."¹⁵

For all of the emerging approaches discussed here, it is too early to draw solid conclusions about what works and why. Still, our interviews revealed five lessons learned that were shared across the models:

Successful collaborations require concrete goals, definitions, and expectations.

Each person interviewed for this paper identified deep collaboration as an important tool for unleashing the power of social innovation, but each also mentioned how much more difficult this was than they had expected. "Collaboration is always a good idea, but when money is tight and resources are tight, it's essential," said Mike Roque, director of the Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships. "People are busy, collaboration and sharing power is hard. People throw around the term collaboration, coalition very loosely, and we're very specific in our definition. Agencies come together, often for money, but if money goes away, the collaboration will stay together if it's been set up correctly. We always have a written memorandum of understanding to establish expectations." Similarly, Greg Landsman talks of the Ohio Social Entrepreneurship Initiative's decision to define terms as clearly as possible: "If you don't put some parameters around what you mean by social entrepreneurship, it can become anything to anyone. We're not going to be

dogmatic about it, but we wanted to pick a spot on the map and then go from there. It has helped control the conversation. Otherwise the conversation can get a little unruly and it's hard to know where to put your energy.”

While building collaborations is not new, the focus with which many of these models are approaching collaboration and the central role it plays in their strategy is striking. For many, their very mission and theory of change depend on developing deep and meaningful partnerships with other organizations and sectors. We know this is crucial and that these entities face several challenges in making it work.

All agree that measurement is important, but they are searching for ways to better assess their individual impact in collaborative efforts.

Everyone agrees that measuring results is critical and each of the initiatives we detailed here has instituted a system for measuring the impact of its work. “We now know what our data really measures, [and] we’ve gotten much, much better at [analyzing] it,” says Judith Kurland, Boston Mayor Tom Menino’s former chief of staff and current chief of programs and partnerships for the city. Still, many are finding it particularly challenging to determine their own individual impact as part of a collaborative effort. How do they assess whether the time and resources that they dedicated to a project were relevant to achieving the social goal when other entities were also involved? New measurement models are being developed that would fill this gap; they may prove useful to these initiatives.

Partnering with the private sector to fund innovation research and development can reduce government’s risk.

As some of these models show, foundations and other non-government actors have the freedom to take risks on new, high-potential approaches to entrenched problems in a way that governments rarely can. Foundations thus have the opportunity—and, we maintain, the responsibility—to search for and support those new initiatives or approaches that have the potential for transformative change. This sometimes leads to the establishment of separate intermediary organizations that are better positioned to raise private funds and to incubate and support innovative practices. Former AchieveMpls CEO Catherine Jordan—who raised over \$24 million in philanthropic funds for the public schools—explains: “There’s often not complete trust in government systems. Foundations were not eager to give money directly to the district, but they appreciated and often sought us out as the intermediary. . . This position of being independent, autonomous, yet with good access into the district is really critical.”

Some experiments will surely fail, but our nation’s history demonstrates that it is precisely this tolerance for failure and risk that has created the environment in which our greatest innovations and inventions have been born. Philanthropy can provide the testing and vetting ground that will allow new and better approaches

to emerge, and government can then provide growth capital to ensure broader reach.

Government agencies are a key lever of change, but are often overlooked.

In several cases, the role of civil service leadership within government agencies was highlighted as a key lever of change, given that agencies are still providing a significant percentage of human services—either directly or by contracting these services out to both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. As Elaine Kamarck, lecturer in public policy at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, commented, “Reducing the cost of government cannot be done without simultaneously creating a competent and honest cadre of government employees. As the tasks of government get more and more complex, government employees will need better education and training in order to govern effectively and they will need to reflect the composition of the peoples they govern.”¹⁶ A new style of professional development and cross-agency relationship building could be developed that would encourage this group of leaders to embrace innovation models and would offer greater opportunity for leaders from different agencies to meet, identify opportune areas for collaboration, and develop collaborative work plans.

Robin Brulé, director of the New Mexico Center for Philanthropic Partnerships, describes the center’s attempts to help address the conundrum facing many agency leaders: “I often talk with people in agencies who say, ‘We know there are better ways of providing these services, but we don’t know how to change it to make it more accessible or align it with what other agencies are doing in this area.’ It’s important for them to know that the center is a resource for advancing these types of cross-sector integrative initiatives. We can help them by leveraging resources and developing partnerships to drive policy change, improve cross-systems collaboration and integrate service delivery systems in more powerful, impactful ways.”

A strong government champion opens doors and improves the chances of success.

Most of the initiatives we describe here were launched by or in conjunction with an elected official who championed the cause. This was the case with Mayor Hickenlooper and the Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships, whose director, Mike Roque, explains: “This is really dependent on a government champion and a strong mayoral system. It would be much tougher if we had a weak mayor system.” Elizabeth Darling of Texas’ OneStar Foundation echoes this sentiment at the state level: “For us in particular, being linked to the Office of the Governor lends credibility to our efforts. More than that, it’s a leverage point that—even though they’re not involved in our day-to-day business—provides a statement to the state and beyond that this work is important.” The bold leadership of these public innovators lent credibility to the office or liaison and allowed them quickly to become influential players.

LOOKING AHEAD

As these models gain traction, they point the way toward a new, twenty-first-century style of governing. By breaking down government silos and building bridges across sectors, the models described in this paper focus intently on solutions and impact. Of course, challenges remain, with questions about how to measure the impact of involvement in a collaborative effort or how to structure an innovation challenge fund in a way that maximizes available resources. Yet while the various states and localities may ultimately settle on different answers to these specific questions, they all agree on the larger point: this new approach by government is allowing them to use resources more effectively and to make greater and faster progress in addressing the important social issues of our day.

APPENDIX. GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL INNOVATION: SUMMARY OF EXISTING STATE AND LOCAL MODELS

Government Models (State)

Kentucky's Commission on Philanthropy, established 2008.

<http://www.kyphilanthropy.org>.

Kentucky's Commission on Philanthropy was launched by Governor Steve Beshear to better align Kentucky's public and private financial resources for work on social issues. The commission will ask private and public funders to identify common goals, adopt shared strategies, and collaborate on projects of common interest. The commission's first area of focus will be early childhood education and health. The commission convened a Summit on Philanthropy in June 2009 as an initial means of engaging potential partners.

Louisiana Office of Social Entrepreneurship, established Fall 2006.

<http://www.crt.state.la.us/ltgovernor/socialentrepreneurship>.

The Louisiana Office of Social Entrepreneurship was established to advance social innovation by supporting the creation and growth of the most innovative, measurable, and sustainable solutions to social problems in that state. It was founded in 2006 by then Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu, in part as a response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Its initiatives have included seminars on social innovation for public sector employees, business planning training for social innovators, a social innovation business plan competition, and seminars on volunteerism and social entrepreneurship.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Education—Dropout Prevention Initiative, established March 2008.

<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoehomepage&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eeoe>.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, partnering with New Profit Inc. and Root Cause, launched the Dropout Prevention Initiative to help broker part-

nerships between community-based dropout prevention programs and school districts with low graduation rates. Once districts have established partnerships, they may then apply to a state innovation fund to support them in implementing new approaches to reducing the dropout rate.

Massachusetts Office of the Governor—Social Innovation Compact, signed April, 2010.

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoepressrelease&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eeoe&b=pressrelease&f=20100416_social_innovation&csid=Eeoe.

Along with 41 organizations committed to social innovation, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed a Social Innovation Compact designed to bring the nonprofit, philanthropic, business, and government sectors together. The goal of the compact is to maximize the state's ability to establish creative problem-solving relationships, and to better utilize the state's resources to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government services.

The compact ensures a commitment by all parties to advance cross-sector partnerships and establish a lasting dialogue. With government as the catalyst, the commonwealth and social innovators will work together to identify and implement proven, innovative solutions to persistent social challenges facing the state.

Minnesota Innovation and Research Council, proposed February 2010.

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bin/bldbill.php?bill=ccrhf2227.html&session=ls86>.

This council would have identified high-level champions of innovation in each of the state agencies and brought them together with nonprofits, community foundations, and business leaders to focus on coordinating efforts for better results, with an Innovation Challenge Grant Fund serving as an incentive. Passed by the House and Senate, the bill was later vetoed.

Ohio Social Entrepreneurship Initiative, established June 2009.

<http://www.governor.ohio.gov/Projects/OhioSocialEntrepreneurshipInitiative/tabid/1123/Default.aspx>.

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Development's Entrepreneurship and Small Business Division, the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GOFBCI) launched the Ohio Social Entrepreneurship Initiative to provide access to financing and funding information, training resources, and several current examples for organizations working to establish social enterprises. The Department of Development and GOFBCI are working together to expand social entrepreneurship: low-profit ventures developed by for-profit and nonprofit organizations in response to social problems. These efforts are pursued using entrepreneurial principles that can involve producing market value, earning revenue, and employing the chronically underemployed.

Government Models (Local)

Boston Office of New Urban Mechanics, announced 2010.

In order to secure Boston's role as the hub of municipal innovation, the Office of New Urban Mechanics will focus on exploring and implementing innovations that enhance traditional city services and operations. Under Mayor Thomas Menino's leadership, the office will develop and implement new ideas that improve city service delivery, such as next-generation applications for the city's Citizens Connect iPhone suite. The office will also work to tap into local sources of innovation, including residents, employees, communities, and institutions.

Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships, established January 2004.

<http://www.denvergov.org/Default.aspx?alias=www.denvergov.org/strategicpartnerships>.

The Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships was created in 2004 to serve as a liaison between the city of Denver and the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. The office works with individuals, foundations, corporations, and nonprofit partners to increase funding for cooperative initiatives, foster partnerships to support nonprofits, and engage the entire community in volunteer efforts.

Fairfax County Virginia Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP3), established in its current form in 2008.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/partnerships>.

The Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships fosters public-private partnerships to stimulate positive change in the community and encourage civic engagement. The office brings together representatives and leverages resources from public and private sectors to address community issues that affect the quality of life in Fairfax County. Over the past 20 years, the office has fostered joint ventures that range from adopt-a-family efforts to initiatives that address adult health and dental care.

Los Angeles Office of Strategic Partnerships.

The Los Angeles Office of Strategic Partnerships is a public-private partnership that serves as the liaison between the city's executive branch and the nonprofit community. The office works to facilitate and support partnerships between sectors in an effort to develop creative solutions to common problems. Current projects include facilitating the work of nonprofits through a nonprofit advisory group and improving low-performing schools by assisting the mayor's Partnership for LA Schools.

Quasi-Government Models

OneStar Foundation: Texas Center for Social Impact, established December 2003.

<http://www.onestarfoundation.org>.

Established by executive order of the Governor of Texas, OneStar focuses on improved results for the people served by the nonprofit sector through nonprofit capacity building, service and volunteerism, research and learning, and a special focus on social innovation. It also serves as the state's national service commission, administering the AmeriCorps grant program, as well as the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Office. OneStar Foundation is a supporting nonprofit of the office of the governor.

Foundation-Government Liaison Models

Michigan's Office of the Foundation Liaison, established 2003.

<http://www.michiganfoundations.org/ofl>.

Michigan's Office of the Foundation Liaison was created at the suggestion of foundation leaders and with the support of the governor. It is a cabinet-level position funded by foundations to identify and broker strategic partnerships between the state and foundations likely to result in policy reforms that would improve the lives of children and families in Michigan. The OFL is funded by foundations. It does not serve as a fundraiser for state government.

New Mexico Center for Philanthropic Partnerships, established June 2009.

http://www.newmexserve.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=169&catid=57.

The Center for Philanthropic Partnerships (CPP) was launched in 2009 with key partners including the New Mexico Children's Cabinet, chaired by Lt. Governor Diane Denish; the Kellogg Foundation; and the Albuquerque Community Foundation, which serves as the CPP's fiscal partner and home base. CPP's mission is "to support innovative, sustainable, cost-effective solutions to social problems through building vital partnerships across philanthropy, non-profit, government and private leadership" in four core areas: family economic success, food systems, civic engagement, and early childhood education.

The Philanthropic Liaison to the City of Newark, established 2007.

http://www.michiganfoundations.org/s_cmf/bin.asp?CID=5498&DID=22242&DOC=FILE.PDF.

The Philanthropic Liaison to the City of Newark was created by the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers (CNJG) to work with Mayor Cory Booker's administration to leverage philanthropy's impact on the city. In collaboration with the Office of the Mayor, CNJG hired the city's first liaison—modeled after a similar position in the state of Michigan—to harness interest, foster greater effectiveness, and attract resources toward policy and programmatic areas that affect Newark's residents. A director-level position, the liaison helps identify and broker strategic part-

nerships between the city and foundations to leverage public-private opportunities to improve the lives of Newarkers.

Independent, Issue-Specific Liaisons

Achieve Mpls—Minneapolis, Minnesota, established January 2002.

<http://www.achievempls.org>.

AchieveMpls is the nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Minneapolis students. The support it offers takes many shapes, including program management, program support, and additional resources offered to the students, teachers, and administrators of the Minneapolis Public Schools.

NYC Fund for Public Schools—New York, re-established 2002.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/fundforpublicschools>.

The Fund for Public Schools is dedicated to improving New York City's public schools by attracting private investment in school reform and encouraging greater involvement by all New Yorkers in the education of children. This includes working to secure critical funding for system-wide education reform initiatives, facilitating strategic public-private partnerships, managing a targeted set of programs to support city schools, and building citywide public awareness.

Nonprofit Facilitators/Conveners

Bull City Forward—Durham, North Carolina, established Fall 2009.

<http://bullcityforward.org/>.

Bull City Forward is a community-led effort to address challenges in Durham's neighborhoods and increase the city's economic prosperity by increasing the level of social innovation and entrepreneurship there and, in turn, establishing Durham as a national model of innovative community and economic development. This is being done through a set of coordinated strategic interventions: building an "on-ramp" of opportunity for youth across the city; recruiting and retaining best-in-class social innovators and entrepreneurs to the region; supporting emergent entrepreneurs with mentoring, networking, and education opportunities; incubating promising concepts and teams and connecting them with start-up capital; developing clear and rigorous metrics of success and scaling the most promising enterprises; and creating a policy environment.

Phoenix Project—Virginia, established January 2006.

<http://www.phoenixproject.org>.

The Phoenix Project works to develop social entrepreneurs in Virginia through leadership programs and public convenings. It partners closely with over 40 colleges and universities and with municipalities to develop partnerships that can build entrepreneurial, scalable, and sustainable solutions to the challenges of severe poverty while simultaneously providing a powerful context in which to pre-

pare the next generation of social entrepreneurs. Phoenix Project also organizes statewide events where leaders from the public, private, nonprofit, and academic sectors can network and discuss shared strategies for accelerating social entrepreneurship.

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1. Mitch Landrieu, keynote address at Fourth Annual Conference of Social Entrepreneurs, New York University Stern School of Business, Berkeley Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, April 13, 2007.
 2. For more on these early efforts, see Andrew Wolk, *Advancing Social Entrepreneurship: Recommendations for Policy Makers and Government Agencies* (Cambridge, MA: The Aspen Institute and Root Cause, 2008).
 3. Interview with Kim Syman, March 2010. Unless noted otherwise, all quotes in this article are taken from our interviews with these innovators.
 4. For an overview of social entrepreneurship and the field's interest in government, see Andrew Wolk, *Social Entrepreneurship and Government: A New Breed of Entrepreneurs Developing Solutions to Social Problems* (Washington DC: SBA Office of Advocacy, 2007).
 5. On the shifting role of government in relationship to the public and business sectors, see Stephen Goldsmith and William Eggers, *Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2004). Also see also Wolk, *Social Entrepreneurship*, 157-177.
 6. Stephen Goldsmith, *The Power of Social Innovation*. (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010), xiv.
 7. Goldsmith, xxvii.
 8. The details of the bill are at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bin/bldbill.php?bill=H2660.0.html&session=ls86>.
 9. Texas House Bill 492 <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/81R/billtext/pdf/HB00492F.pdf>.
 10. Recommendations on improving collaborative activities between the state, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector: A report to the Minnesota Legislature (St. Paul: Office of Grants Management, 2009). http://www.admin.state.mn.us/documents/reports/collaborative_activities_study.pdf.
 11. AchieveMpls was born out of the 2001 merger of two organizations: the Youth Trust (part of the mayor's office) and the Minneapolis Public Schools Foundation. The leaders of both organizations had resigned; the boards decided to merge and install Jordan as CEO of the newly formed AchieveMpls.
 12. Fund for Public Schools website, <http://schools.nyc.gov/FundForPublicSchools/AboutUs/default.htm>.
 13. "Quality Review," New York City Department of Education, <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/review/default.htm>.
 14. The text of the compact is available at <http://publicinnovators.com/blog/mass-governor-signs-social-innovation-compact>.
 15. Reville, keynote address at School Readiness in Massachusetts: Actionable Information for Funders, Government, and Nonprofits, Boston, July 7, 2010.
 16. Elaine Kamarck, *Government Innovation around the World* (Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 2003) <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan015626.pdf>.