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How to Ensure Sustainability for State and Local Budgets Without Pandemic Funding.

Officials from all levels of government outline collaborative approaches to complex challenges

As federal pandemic aid winds down and state and local budgets normalize, government policymakers face an inflection point: Some issues—such as housing affordability and infrastructure investment—are familiar. Others, such as political polarization, are more recent developments that make it more difficult for leaders to make sound, long-term decisions about the public purse. Though the challenges seem daunting, the last four years also pushed leaders at all levels of government to collaborate and communicate in unprecedented ways.

Their experiences have yielded lessons about intergovernmental collaboration that can help guide policymakers in the coming years. To capture those lessons, the Volcker Alliance, with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts, held a symposium in September in which federal, state, and local officials examined how all levels of government can use these lessons to more effectively address shared challenges. The event was part of the alliance’s Richard Ravitch Public Finance Initiative, which highlights promising practices for building sound, sustainable budgets that enable residents and communities to thrive.

The day featured open conversation about the challenges and successes that government officials have experienced with federal funding and how that affects state and local budgeting, fiscal planning, and infrastructure investing. Attendees discussed strategies, policy tools, and responses in three main areas: managing federal funds effectively, building capacity at the state and local level, and future-proofing with innovative financing. The Ravitch Initiative’s recently released report, [Resilient State and Local Finance](#), outlines actions that policymakers can take to advance goals in these areas.

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