nextERA Update: Updated October 17, 2019

nextERA, an Alliance for Innovation advisory group, continues to seek and test out new opportunities to live into its mission to “serve as an advocacy group for 21st century innovative local government.” As stated in its bylaws, nextERA has these roles: engage, research and advise.

- **Engage**: Serve as connectors for Alliance for Innovation local government ambassadors through connection with resources, other governments with similar issues or programs, and promoting Alliance for Innovation resources (member and non-member organizations).
- **Research**: Assist in researching information and providing recommendations to inform the Board regarding best practice strategies to sustain innovation in local government organizations.
- **Advise**: Advise the AFI Board on strategic plan initiatives and emerging innovation issues/ideas, as well as provide nextERA insight to Board or AFI strategic partner questions.

**Status Report:**

- **Member Recruitment and Group Composition:**
  - This summer, nextERA asked interested next-generation leaders to express their desire to join the group. AFI and nextERA used targeted peer-to-peer outreach, social media and the AFI newsletter to net 19 total applicants via an online form. Of those 19 people, 13 met the criterion of being a current local government employee. nextERA selected six new members to fill vacancies; they will on-board beginning in October, and their terms will officially start in January 2020. The new members are:
    - Dana Clarke, City of Barrie, Ontario
    - Kristen Gorham, City of Chamblee, Ga.
    - Eric Sandoval, City of Salinas, Calif.
    - Kara Sokol, City of Ferndale, Mich.
    - Brian Uhl, Springfield Township, Ohio
  - Demand to join nextERA exceeded the number of open spots, so group members are actively working with AFI staff leaders to identify intentional, targeted ways to keep all of these individuals engaged with the organization. Potential opportunities could include participation in current and future topic-focused groups, like the Lean Six Sigma network.

- **nextERA Transitions:**
  - nextERA deeply thanks exiting long-time members for their service. Chris Lawrence of the City of Blacksburg, Va. and Matthew Vanderhorst of the City of Montgomery, Ohio will roll off the group this summer, while Joe Gacioch of the City of Ferndale, Mich. will depart in December.

- **Consulting and Testing:**
  - nextERA continues to live into its advisory role through consulting with AFI Staff. This support includes the potential to “test” AFI programs and concepts in team members’ communities before full-scale launch. During monthly calls and subsequent email opportunities, nextERA members this summer provided input on AFI’s proposed future direction and marketing/branding strategies to CEO Joel Carnes. nextERA also has been a test group for The Atlas, an online platform that AFI currently is utilizing.

- **Communications and Storytelling:**
  - nextERA continues to produce high-quality monthly articles for the AFI website and newsletter highlighting best practices and key concepts at member organizations. Recent articles have included “PIEworks: Process Improvement, Innovation & Engagement” by Kyle Kridler, now with the City of Delaware, Ohio and “Innovation is Hard – We Can All Benefit from a Network” by Michael Davis of Durham County, N.C.