
AFI's Guiding Principles for 21st Century Local Government

We have chosen lives of public service because we believe in something greater than ourselves. We believe through public service we can enhance the common good, improve lives, and better our communities.

The logo for AFI, consisting of the lowercase letters 'afi' in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters are a dark red color. The background of the entire page is a vibrant magenta, with a white curved shape at the bottom left containing a pattern of parallel diagonal lines.

afi



The Alliance for Innovation (AFI) was founded based upon the ideals of a small group of visionary local government leaders that believed in challenging the usual way of doing business. The organizing principle was simple, AFI would connect change makers to accelerate innovation and transform local government.

Forty years later we've grown to engage tens of thousands of local gov innovators, but the original ideals of that small group still hold true today.

Of course, the world of today is nearly unrecognizable from our founding back in 1979. With pandemic and economic crises reshaping society, we feel it is more crucial than ever that local governments embrace innovation. But there is more to it than that – this innovation must be purpose-driven, it must be leading to true transformation.

As we work to **reopen** our communities and our country, it is important that we go beyond a mythical "return to normal". We must **revitalize**, coming out of this crisis even stronger than when we went in. In order to do that, we must **reimagine**. As our founders did over four decades ago, today we must reimagine the very essence of local government.

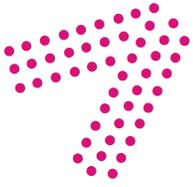
WE BELIEVE

Local Government must move beyond mere resilience to become antifragile.

A resilient organization is able to maintain its original shape and survive when confronted with outside stressors. An antifragile organization is one that thrives in reaction to outside stressors - leveraging those stressors to purposefully facilitate development, growth, and renewal.

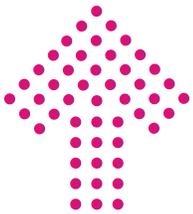
We know that while it is critical to continue to provide basic services, organizational survival is frankly the bare minimum we can ask from local government leaders. AFI Members are actively responding to a higher call. They are actively working to build antifragile organizations that will thrive today and tomorrow, capable of turning each new challenge opportunity.

Alliance for Innovation holds a very specific definition of antifragile local government to guide us along this reimagination journey.



Antifragile local governments focus on outcomes, not output.

It is no longer enough to simply provide the same basic laundry list of city services, developed to meet the needs of the rapidly industrializing economy emerging at the start of the last century. Antifragile local government takes responsibility for solving today's problems, putting stakeholder needs at the center and methodically and relentlessly driving until those needs are met. Organizations that are purpose-driven and stay focused on results (over process), are those that are able to harness the winds of change, becoming antifragile.



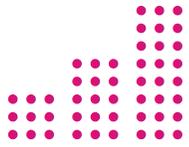
Antifragile local governments attract and unleash great talent.

An antiquated, hierarchical, organizationally siloed, and output-focused organization actively drives away the exact talented and engaged workforce required for success. Antifragile local governments build a silo-busting collaborative operating structure with a relentless focus on creativity and adaptability in their workforces. Antifragile local governments actively recruit diverse, collaborative, multi-disciplined problem solvers, and then empower them to do exactly that.



Antifragile local governments are built for long-term fiscal sustainability.

"Fiscal illiteracy" is a significant and wide-spread issue in local government. Antifragile local governments view the budget as a strategic planning tool and not just an accounting exercise. Antifragile organizations quickly adapt to changing citizen needs and economic conditions. Every local government should be able to answer these three questions: Why do we do what we do? What do we do? What does it cost to do what we do? Loaded with this information, antifragile local governments decide how their resources are invested to support desired community outcomes



Antifragile local governments run on real data, in real time.

Truly effective local government leaders are more objective than subjective when making decisions. Antifragile local governments use connected data to sense, anticipate, and respond to community needs with agility. They actively seek both quantitative data and qualitative input from the widest possible cross-section of stakeholders out in the community, rather than simply responding to the loudest voices at City Hall. Antifragile local government organizations leverage data and analytics to confidently embrace iterative change.



Antifragile local governments actively build trust and accountability.

Trust is broken in many aspects of local government. The community often does not trust their City Hall. Elected officials often do not trust management and staff, and vice-versa. Antifragile local government organizations understand these broken relationships have to be purposefully mended and actively nurtured to effectively make the community a better place to live, work and play. They welcome transparency and being held accountable to measurable outcomes. Antifragile local governments purposefully build engagement and trust with their communities as a foundational element of their daily work.



Antifragile local governments are flexible structures, achieving outcomes through collaboration and partnership.

We have seen that effective partnerships are at the heart of what is needed to transform local government. These partnerships are inclusive of all sectors including private, nonprofit, philanthropic, and other public sector organizations. Internally, when previously siloed departments actively work together toward the common good of the community, the entire organization becomes more effective and efficient in delivering services. Antifragile local governments recognize the community doesn't care which specific department, entity, or partner is providing them with what they need, they just look to local government for the leadership required to get the job done.

AFI is a mutually supportive network designed to harness this vision to power the innovation and change necessary to reimagine local government. We purposefully combine individual strengths and capabilities to achieve greater transformation together than any of us could alone. We believe that harnessing these ideals propel local government to *reopen, revitalize* and *reimagine*.

**We are the movement leading the charge for
tomorrow's local government, today.**

For those of you already a part of our community – thank you. Thank you for your commitment, your energy, and the many gifts you bring to each other.

If you are not yet a part of this movement to transform local government, but these ideals align with your beliefs, we invite you join our community. Add your voice to the conversation and your talents to driving this change. We will reimagine local government together.

The logo for AFI, consisting of the lowercase letters 'afi' in a white, sans-serif font, positioned in the bottom right corner of the page. The background behind the logo is a solid magenta color, which is part of a larger graphic design featuring wavy lines and a hatched pattern in shades of purple and pink.