

Editor's Introduction

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This issue of the *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs* brings together research that advances our understanding of civic participation, strategic planning, and workforce engagement in public and nonprofit contexts. Collectively, these studies offer fresh perspectives on how organizations and communities navigate complexities to foster involvement, retain talent, and support long-term development.

The issue begins with Bastida, Bronić, and Opačak Error's (2026) examination of the factors influencing voter turnout in Croatian local government elections from 2014 to 2021. The study reveals that prior electoral turnout negatively influences subsequent participation, highlighting a declining trend in local voter engagement. While traditional parties fail to mobilize voters and corruption shows no significant impact on turnout, the authors find that municipal management issues directly affecting citizens' financial well-being, such as welfare benefits, successfully drive electoral participation.

Shifting to municipal governance and planning, Sýkora, Vyhnánková, Koutský, and Slavíková (2026) explore the role of informal institutions in local strategic planning within the post-socialist context of Czechia. Using a Delphi panel and interviews with municipal officials, the authors investigate how planning artefacts can address implementation and evaluation deficiencies in municipal development. The study proposes a practice-oriented coincidence matrix to help mitigate challenges rooted in limited human agency and methodological shortcomings, demonstrating how informal mechanisms can enhance strategic planning outcomes.

Extending the focus to volunteerism, Ma (2026) finds that while the COVID-19 pandemic lowered the perceived learning outcomes of AmeriCorps members, positive role models and helpful feedback mitigated this negative effect. Addressing public sector retention, Zvobgo and Jeong (2026) demonstrate that participative decision-making directly reduces turnover intentions and increases affective commitment among women in non-supervisory federal roles, highlighting the need for inclusive practices.

Together, these articles emphasize the interconnected roles of active participation, strategic adaptation, and effective management in shaping public and nonprofit sector outcomes. From voter turnout and local strategic planning to volunteer learning and federal workforce retention, this issue highlights innovative approaches that enhance both theory and practice.

References

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