New York’s next mayor will need to address a number of critical challenges facing the city. This report spotlights 15 innovative policies from cities across the U.S. and around the globe that could serve as a model.

**UPDATING 311**  
A More Responsive, Transparent & Participatory 311

**Boston & Chicago:** 311 services in several cities are leveraging open source data and the capabilities of mobile computing to better serve residents and increase accountability among government agencies.

**KINDERGARTEN TO COLLEGE SAVINGS**  
Fostering a College-Going Culture & Allaying Rising Tuition Costs

**San Francisco:** The City of San Francisco is funding the country’s first universal college savings account program for all of its public school kindergartners. The initiative will foster a college-going culture and alleviate rising tuition costs.

**INNOVATION LOAN FUND**  
Loan Fund Seeds New Ideas at the Agency Level

**Chicago:** Chicago’s multi-million dollar, revolving loan fund surfaces the most promising new ideas generated within city agencies—ideas intended to pay for themselves within five years through marked improvements in service delivery.

**PROJECT ORACLE**  
Measuring Impact in Human Services

**London:** A mayoral-led consortium of foundations and universities in London is moving all nonprofit youth organizations toward consistent, academically rigorous evaluation measures, a revolutionary turn away from the norm in performance monitoring of social service providers. The new system will for the first time enable the city to gauge and compare the relative progress made by publicly funded entities who work with disadvantaged teens and families.

**PEAK ACADEMY**  
Sending Agency Staff to Innovation School

**Denver:** Based on the belief that true innovation must be embraced by line-level staff as much as by mayors and agency heads, Denver has launched Peak Academy, an innovation school where city employees can get training, develop new ideas and gain support for new approaches.

**LONDON**  
Crowdsourcing Capital Projects

**London:** Using a new crowdsourcing website, the funding of capital projects—bridges, gardens, community centers—is being transformed throughout the United Kingdom as communities develop and jointly fund major new projects with local government.

**ZERO WASTE**  
A Comprehensive Approach to Increasing Recycling & Improving Waste Management

**San Francisco:** San Francisco introduced its Zero Waste program in 2002. Progress has been swift. From 1990 to 2010, recycling rates rose from 20 percent to 77 percent. Recent waste management reforms have targeted retail, packaging, consumption, public events, government procurement and construction and debris.

**DIGITAL BADGING**  
Creating an Alternative Assessment System for Out-of-School Programs

**Philadelphia, Providence and Chicago:** Philadelphia, Chicago and Providence have all begun to introduce digital badging initiatives that allow students both inside the K-12 system and outside to earn credentials for skills they learn in a wide variety of educational settings, from digital tools workshops at public libraries to art classes at museums.
Seattle, Vancouver & Santa Cruz: An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a small, self-contained residential structure sharing a lot with an existing house. In Seattle, Vancouver and Santa Cruz, legislation was enacted to permit ADUs on sufficiently sized lots in one- and two-family zones. Building regulations were also relaxed to allow formerly illegal subdivisions to be safely brought to code without facing severe fines.

Los Angeles & Chicago: Immigrant entrepreneurs account for a disproportionate share of new businesses, and given their language skills and established networks in their native countries, there is clear potential for many to export their goods and services. Chicago and Los Angeles are targeting these enterprises in order to double citywide exports, thereby boosting local economic growth.

San Francisco: The City of San Francisco now requires businesses in the city with 20 or more employees to provide employees with tax-free commuter benefits.

Oakland: Oakland has unveiled a new city government ID card with a novel debit card feature. Designed to assist low-income, “underbanked” individuals, it offers ease-of-access to reputable banking and government services.

Chicago: A coalition of Chicago’s top corporate consulting and law firms crafted a $100-million budget savings plan for the incoming mayor—at no cost.

Michigan: Under a new model, cash prizes are used to incentivize underbanked individuals to open and make regular deposits into a traditional savings account. The initiatives aim to dramatically increase the number of low-income families enrolled in the banking system.

Seattle, Vancouver & Santa Cruz: An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a small, self-contained residential structure sharing a lot with an existing house. In Seattle, Vancouver and Santa Cruz, legislation was enacted to permit ADUs on sufficiently sized lots in one- and two-family zones. Building regulations were also relaxed to allow formerly illegal subdivisions to be safely brought to code without facing severe fines.

Los Angeles & Chicago: Immigrant entrepreneurs account for a disproportionate share of new businesses, and given their language skills and established networks in their native countries, there is clear potential for many to export their goods and services. Chicago and Los Angeles are targeting these enterprises in order to double citywide exports, thereby boosting local economic growth.

San Francisco: The City of San Francisco now requires businesses in the city with 20 or more employees to provide employees with tax-free commuter benefits.

Oakland: Oakland has unveiled a new city government ID card with a novel debit card feature. Designed to assist low-income, “underbanked” individuals, it offers ease-of-access to reputable banking and government services.

Chicago: A coalition of Chicago’s top corporate consulting and law firms crafted a $100-million budget savings plan for the incoming mayor—at no cost.

Michigan: Under a new model, cash prizes are used to incentivize underbanked individuals to open and make regular deposits into a traditional savings account. The initiatives aim to dramatically increase the number of low-income families enrolled in the banking system.

Seattle, Vancouver & Santa Cruz: An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a small, self-contained residential structure sharing a lot with an existing house. In Seattle, Vancouver and Santa Cruz, legislation was enacted to permit ADUs on sufficiently sized lots in one- and two-family zones. Building regulations were also relaxed to allow formerly illegal subdivisions to be safely brought to code without facing severe fines.

Los Angeles & Chicago: Immigrant entrepreneurs account for a disproportionate share of new businesses, and given their language skills and established networks in their native countries, there is clear potential for many to export their goods and services. Chicago and Los Angeles are targeting these enterprises in order to double citywide exports, thereby boosting local economic growth.

San Francisco: The City of San Francisco now requires businesses in the city with 20 or more employees to provide employees with tax-free commuter benefits.

Oakland: Oakland has unveiled a new city government ID card with a novel debit card feature. Designed to assist low-income, “underbanked” individuals, it offers ease-of-access to reputable banking and government services.

Chicago: A coalition of Chicago’s top corporate consulting and law firms crafted a $100-million budget savings plan for the incoming mayor—at no cost.

Michigan: Under a new model, cash prizes are used to incentivize underbanked individuals to open and make regular deposits into a traditional savings account. The initiatives aim to dramatically increase the number of low-income families enrolled in the banking system.

Seattle, Vancouver & Santa Cruz: An Accessory Dwelling Unit is a small, self-contained residential structure sharing a lot with an existing house. In Seattle, Vancouver and Santa Cruz, legislation was enacted to permit ADUs on sufficiently sized lots in one- and two-family zones. Building regulations were also relaxed to allow formerly illegal subdivisions to be safely brought to code without facing severe fines.

Los Angeles & Chicago: Immigrant entrepreneurs account for a disproportionate share of new businesses, and given their language skills and established networks in their native countries, there is clear potential for many to export their goods and services. Chicago and Los Angeles are targeting these enterprises in order to double citywide exports, thereby boosting local economic growth.

San Francisco: The City of San Francisco now requires businesses in the city with 20 or more employees to provide employees with tax-free commuter benefits.

Oakland: Oakland has unveiled a new city government ID card with a novel debit card feature. Designed to assist low-income, “underbanked” individuals, it offers ease-of-access to reputable banking and government services.