

## **Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab Assistant Director of Research and Writing Position**

The mission of the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) is to accelerate U.S. progress on difficult social problems by improving how state and local governments function. We hire and train full-time team members to collaborate closely with government innovators in developing and testing initiatives that lead to the creation of more just and effective service systems in areas including child and family wellbeing, criminal justice, homelessness and behavioral health, economic mobility in historically marginalized communities, and procurement.

Research and writing are critical to the GPL's ability to fulfill its mission. In order to transform government, the GPL is working to identify promising practices and insights generated through intensive projects in the field and clearly and persuasively communicate them to state and local government policymakers and practitioners.

Because many of the challenges we work on are rooted in historic and systemic wrongs, particularly systemic racism, we know that addressing them requires solutions that center diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We are committed to increasing diversity, improving equity, and fostering inclusion in our internal and external work – from the methods we use to hire and train our staff, to the way we select and execute projects in the field.

The GPL is housed at the Harvard Kennedy School [Taubman Center for State and Local Government](#).

### **Duties & Responsibilities**

The Assistant Director will work closely with the GPL's senior leadership to develop and distribute products capturing key insights, evidence, and lessons learned from GPL projects in the field, spread them to state and local government leaders across the country, and elevate the role of the GPL as a thought leader. Over the next two years, the GPL aims to increase the production of case studies, policy briefs, guides, and toolkits based on its fieldwork, while also experimenting with other ways of engaging policymakers and practitioners through trainings, virtual convenings, targeted newsletters, and distribution through professional organizations.

The Assistant Director will manage the process of content creation—managing one or more GPL Research and Writing Fellows, collaborating with GPL staff to identify and write about lessons learned from our on-the-ground projects and producing and editing written materials including policy briefs, case studies, technical training materials, website content, and blog posts. The Assistant Director will also work closely with the Taubman Center for State and Local Government Director of Writing to assist with the distribution of GPL content via press releases, media pitches, and social media, working to increase the visibility and usefulness of our written materials to the public. Over the next year, some of the content the GPL may create include publications highlighting how child welfare agency leaders are working to improve connections between families and preventative services, documentation of bail reform and other criminal justice reforms intended to reduce incarceration, and resources for jurisdictions overhauling their procurement practices.

Key responsibilities for the Assistant Director will include:

- 1) **Creating clear and insightful content** – The Assistant Director will manage one or more GPL Research and Writing Fellows and collaborate with GPL staff across the country to produce content that captures key insights, evidence, and lessons learned from the GPL's projects. This may include both original content (long-form pieces, case studies, technical guides, policy briefs, interviews with

government leaders) and derivative content (syntheses of insights across projects, blog posts, and guides to existing resources). The Assistant Director may directly craft the content, manage the GPL Research and Writing Fellow(s) to produce it, and/or may manage a collaborative production process involving other GPL team members.

2) **Identifying and engaging target audiences**— The Assistant Director will determine key audiences, including state and local government policymakers, other practitioners, and policy area thought leaders, and develop strategies to reach these audiences. These efforts may include developing and managing new collaborations with professional organizations and other conveners, creating and curating outreach lists of key audience members, working closely with senior GPL staff to facilitate individual outreach, creating curated sets of existing GPL resources for target audiences, recruiting governments for participation GPL trainings and other light-touch technical assistance offerings, and responding to requests for information from government leaders. The Assistant Director will also work with the Taubman Center Director of Communications to respond to media inquiries and requests.

3) **Distributing content to target audiences**— The Assistant Director will collaborate with the Taubman Center Director of Communications to distribute content to target audiences and improve the visibility of the GPL to policy and practitioner audiences. These efforts may include regularly updating the GPL's website, creating content for GPL newsletters, placing pieces in publications, securing presentation or speaking invitations at conferences, submitting pitches to media outlets, and managing social media accounts.

4) **Maintaining communications supports and resources** – The Assistant Director will work with the Taubman Center Director of Communications and the HKS communications office to develop and maintain communications resources and supports, including a digital asset library (e.g., photos, videos, logos), content library, news coverage alerts, GPL style guide, key GPL presentations, and templates for common written products.

## **Required Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree
- At least 2 years of related work experience, including research, writing, public policy, or communications; 5 years of work experience preferred.

**Additional Qualifications:** Many kinds of experiences could prepare an individual to thrive in this role. We expect the strongest candidates will have many, but likely not all, of the qualifications listed below:

- Graduate degree in law, public policy, writing, communications or equivalent preferred
- Strong research and research translation or knowledge management skills. Ability to identify core concepts and insights and synthesize into clear, plain language descriptions
- Excellent writing and editing skills, including the ability to consistently and independently produce compelling, well-written, and error-free work products with only light-touch guidance
- Familiarity with state and local government or public policy
- Capacity and willingness to both manage an organization-wide translational research and/or communications strategy and to undertake day-to-day implementation
- Strong project management capabilities, with a demonstrated ability to independently manage projects to completion, establish priorities among multiple simultaneous deadlines, and sustain timely responses to deadlines and requests
- Team player with the proven ability to build strong relationships and develop trust with colleagues

- High level of competency with computer programs including word processing and spreadsheets and with collaborative tools such as Dropbox, Google Docs, or Microsoft OneDrive
- Experience with or willingness to learn graphic design programs such as Canva and Adobe Create Cloud applications
- Experience managing online media, including websites and social media accounts
- Ability to drive work product to completion in a start-up environment

### **Additional Information and Application Instructions**

*Compensation:* GPL Assistant Directors are funded for one year at a salary range of \$105,000 - \$115,000 plus benefits. Depending on project status, there are sometimes opportunities to extend the position.

*Location:* The location is flexible, but it requires access to a major U.S. airport for occasional travel.

*Start date:* We aim for this role to start in November 2022.

*Application Instructions:* Candidates should submit an application using the [GPL's Online Application Form](#). As part of this application, you will be asked to submit the following:

- 2-3 writing samples. Writing samples should be solely authored by the candidate and include:
  - At least one long piece (5-8 pgs.)
  - At least one short piece (fewer than 2 pgs.)
  - At least one example of a policy-oriented paper (e.g. policy brief, memo, academic paper)
  - At least one example of digital media product (e.g. news article, press release, blog post, and/or social media post)
  - (Optional) Sample of print or web layout and graphic design products (e.g., slide deck, website graphics, or publication layout)
  - Links to any websites or social media accounts the candidate has been the primary manager for

This position may require the completion of a criminal history check.

### **About the Government Performance Lab**

The Government Performance Lab at the Harvard Kennedy School conducts research on how governments can improve the results they achieve for their residents. An important part of this research model involves providing technical assistance to state and local governments. We improve how governments function and how services are delivered, speed up progress on difficult social problems, and ultimately make a meaningful difference in the lives of vulnerable people across the United States. To date, the GPL has engaged with 89 jurisdictions spread across 35 states and has conducted more than 200 projects shifting more than \$6B in government spending towards results. The GPL is housed at the Harvard Kennedy School's Taubman Center for State and Local Government. For more information on the GPL, please visit <http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu>.

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