

# The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab

## Fellow Positions

Our nation needs to make more rapid progress addressing difficult social problems. The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) believes that state and local governments are critical contributors in this effort. We hire and train full-time Fellows, embedding them in government agencies to collaborate closely with government innovators in leading intensive reform projects. Our team advances key initiatives through technical assistance, including carrying out rigorous data analysis, identifying high-impact areas for systems re-engineering, implementing pilot projects to demonstrate innovative methods, and building government capacity for sustained change. Most of these projects are focused on solving difficult social problems such as homelessness, the opioid crisis, child wellbeing, joblessness, criminal recidivism, among many others.

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. We are committed to increasing diversity, improving equity, and fostering inclusion (DEI) 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.

### **Position Overview**

The GPL is seeking to hire a cohort of Fellows with a passion for improving government performance and solving social problems. Fellows function as day-to-day project managers, shepherding important reform projects from conceptualization through design and implementation. Successful Fellows come from a variety of backgrounds and are typically:

- Creative problem solvers
- Strong project managers
- Thoughtful relationship builders
- Strong analytical thinkers
- Capable of navigating complex organizations and stakeholders
- Comfortable driving work forward independently and working on a geographically dispersed team

Fellows are typically placed on site with the government office or agency that is spearheading a project; oversight is provided by a manager at the Government Performance Lab as well as by the government policy lead. Fellow responsibilities vary from project to project and frequently include:

1. Diagnosing challenges in government functions and service delivery
2. Crafting operationally feasible, high impact solutions to those challenges
3. Helping governments implement solutions to produce meaningful changes in client outcomes and make frequent adjustments to implementation based on results
4. Building buy-in for reforms and government capacity to sustain them
5. Contributing to spreading demonstrated solutions nationwide

In undertaking these responsibilities, Fellows' day-to-day work often involves:

### *Project Management*

- Manage and coordinate reform projects while navigating complex organizational structures.
- Develop, introduce, and oversee performance management systems to enable government and service providers to better collaborate on service delivery.

### *Communications and Relationship Building*

- Conduct interviews and site visits with government officials, community stakeholders, and people with lived experience to uncover service delivery barriers and inform solutions.
- Facilitate meetings, trainings, and workshops to advance project work and build capacity; provide coaching to permanent government staff.
- Brief agency leaders and solicit decisions from them at key project milestones.
- Write memos, presentations, training documents, and procurement solicitations with the aim of making complex information easy to understand.

### *Research and Data Analysis*

- Help governments match and analyze administrative data to measure population outcomes, understand cost-effectiveness, and form insights that can improve service delivery.
- Use continuous improvement tools to analyze existing processes and design new processes that enable agencies to better serve constituents.
- Apply a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion to government service delivery challenges.
- Understand program evaluation principles and use them to improve government operations.
- Review research literature, government documents, and best practices to inform project work.

### *Community of Practice*

- Share insights with colleagues, helping to spread lessons and best practices across the GPL.
- Draft blog posts, project features, and policy briefs to help the GPL share its work broadly.

Learning is a key part of the experience. Fellows are part of a coast-to-coast community of GPL team members dedicated to sharing lessons learned, building organizational expertise, and refining GPL tools, models, and frameworks. Through project work and regular engagement with the broader GPL community, Fellows will develop substantial policy area expertise, hands-on project management experience, and a deep familiarity with government and nonprofit organization processes.

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- Passion for improving government performance and solving social problems.
- Self-motivated with an orientation towards results.
- Excellent written and verbal communications, including memos, slide decks, and public speaking
- Strong project management capabilities.
- Awareness and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and orientations, and ability to apply that to their work.
- Sound quantitative and analytical skills, with experience generating and using data to drive insights and communicating those insights to others.
- Ability to navigate complex organizations, develop trust with senior leaders, and build relationships among diverse groups of stakeholders.
- Graduate-level training in public policy, business, law, economics, social work, or related fields is preferred.
- At least two years of professional work experience is preferred.
- For some locations, a willingness to travel is required.

## **Additional Information and Application Instructions**

*Compensation:* GPL Fellows will be funded for one year at a salary of \$80,000 plus benefits. Depending on project status, there are sometimes opportunities to extend the position.

*Possible locations include:* Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Concord (NH), Detroit, Hartford, Houston/Harris County, Lansing (MI), Long Beach (CA), Los Angeles, Memphis, Minneapolis/St. Paul, San Antonio, San Francisco/Bay Area/Oakland, Olympia (WA), Providence (RI), Texas (Rural county TBD), Tulsa, Washington DC, as well as positions with our What Works Cities team that may be based in any major U.S. city. Other sites are possible as well. More information on sites will be available during the interview process.

*Start date:* We aim for these Fellows to start in July 2021. If you have different timeline preferences, please note it in your cover letter. Our work is currently remote until at least June 30, 2021 due to COVID-19 concerns. As we learn more, we will revisit a timeline for an in-person start in the respective jurisdiction. The Fellow will have 30 days' notice before they are expected to work with the government in person.

*Application instructions:* To apply, please submit a brief cover letter and a current resume/CV via the GPL's [online application form](#). Current students and recent graduates should also submit a transcript. If you have a geographic area of interest, please indicate this in your cover letter. All materials submitted via the application form should be formatted as PDF or MS Word documents with the applicant's name in all filenames. Please note that successful candidates may be asked to complete a background check and/or drug test.

*Application deadline:* Applications for positions beginning summer 2021 are due by February 7, 2021.

## **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 hire and train full-time Fellows, embedding them in government agencies to collaborate closely with government innovators in leading intensive reform projects. Most of these projects are focused on difficult social problems such as homelessness, the opioid crisis, child wellbeing, joblessness, criminal recidivism, among many others. By supporting government agencies in this important work, 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 in more than 100 projects with 71 jurisdictions spread across 31 states. We are a team of 40—the majority of whom are embedded in governments around the country providing technical assistance. For more information on the GPL, please visit <http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu>.

Harvard University is an equal opportunity employer and we are committed to diversity and welcome applications from individuals who share our commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.