

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab Fellow Positions in Connecticut, Michigan, and Washington State

About the Government Performance Lab

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, embedding them in government agencies to collaborate closely with government innovators in leading intensive reform projects. GPL staff advance 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.

The GPL is seeking to hire Fellows for projects in Connecticut, Michigan, and Washington State.

Connecticut—the GPL is working with the state child welfare agency as part of a new strategy unit to improve the effectiveness of how programs are delivered. This work will include leading efforts to pilot and scale solutions across the state. This would be continuing a project that was launched two years ago and would be part of a team of two. The GPL team is based in Hartford, CT.

Michigan—The GPL is assisting the state child welfare agency on a suite of strategies that use data to improve agency operations and outcomes. Specific projects will be determined in collaboration with the recently appointed agency director. This is a new project we are launching with a team of at least two: one Project Leader and one or more Fellows. The GPL team is based in Lansing, MI and Detroit, MI.

Washington State—the GPL is working with the state child welfare agency to help connect families at-risk for abuse or neglect with the right prevention services. This work will include leading efforts to pilot and scale solutions across the state. This would be continuing a project that was launched in 2018. The GPL team is based in Olympia, WA.

Position Overview

The GPL is seeking to hire a cohort of Fellows with a passion for improving government performance and solving social problems. Successful Fellows are typically:

- Creative problem solvers
- Strong project managers
- Thoughtful relationship builders
- Strong analytical thinkers
- Capable of navigating complex organizations and stakeholders

Fellows function as day-to-day project managers, shepherding projects through conceptualization, design, and implementation. 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. On any given day, Fellows may be developing relationships with project stakeholders, analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, driving organizational change initiatives, leading working groups, briefing government leaders, coaching government staff, or workshopping project challenges with other GPL team members.

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 NGO processes.

Fellow responsibilities vary from project to project but generally include:

Project Management

- Manage and coordinate reform projects from conceptualization to implementation, 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 and community stakeholders.
- 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.
- Think “counterfactually”—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.

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.
- 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 are funded for one year at a salary of \$76,000. Depending on project status, there are sometimes opportunities to extend the position.

Locations: Positions are expected to be located in a wide range of locations in the U.S. More information on sites will be available during the interview process.

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. ***Applications are considered on a rolling basis.***

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The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) provides technical assistance to state and local governments to transform how they deliver services to constituents. Our Fellows—often recent graduates of public policy, law, business, and social work schools—help government agencies implement intensive reform projects focused on difficult social problems in the United States: homelessness, the opioid crisis, child poverty, joblessness, criminal recidivism, and many others. By supporting government agencies in this important work, we hope to improve how governments function, speed up progress on difficult social problems, and ultimately make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable people across the United States. To date, the GPL has engaged in 89 projects with 65 jurisdictions spread across 30 states. For more information on the GPL, please visit <http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu>.

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