

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab

Procurement Solutions Project Leader

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 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's Procurement practice collaborates with city and state governments to improve the results achieved through contracted goods and services. The GPL believes that procurement is an underused strategic tool, with the power to create outcomes-oriented relationships with the vendor community to help governments improve the lives of the residents they serve. Since the launch of this program in 2015, GPL's procurement practice has affected more than \$2.3 billion in spending by state and local governments.

GPL is seeking a Project Leader to lead a new procurement scaling and spreading strategy focused on developing radically experiential training for government partners. This approach will enable governments to receive support from the GPL to engage in their own procurement transformations through training, light-touch materials, coaching, and other resources.

Project Leader Position Description

The GPL is seeking to hire a Project Leader with a passion for improving government performance and solving social problems. Successful GPL team members are typically:

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

GPL Project Leaders function as day-to-day project managers and small team leaders, shepherding projects through conceptualization, design, and implementation. Project Leaders work closely with Assistant Directors and Managing Directors to build relationships and co-design solutions with stakeholders, partners, and governments. This GPL Project Leader role will focus on designing a new approach to scaling and spreading our procurement solutions through radically experiential training. Tasks for the Procurement Solutions Project Leader may include: designing, testing, and delivering training content to transform government practices, developing tools and templates for governments to improve the results of their programs, coaching and managing GPL Fellows, and workshopping project challenges with GPL colleagues.

Learning is a key part of the experience. GPL Project Leaders 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, GPL team members will develop substantial policy area expertise, hands-on project and people management experience, and a deep familiarity with government and NGO processes.

The Procurement Solutions Project Leader’s responsibilities may include:

Project Management

- Managing and executing state and local government change management from conceptualization to implementation. Taking significant ownership over driving project work forward; independently structuring and executing high-impact work.
- Ensuring projects meet key milestones; navigating barriers and unforeseen shifts in project circumstances while navigating complex organizational structures.
- Developing, introducing, and overseeing performance management systems to enable government and service providers to better collaborate on service delivery.

Fellow Management

- Often, supervising and supporting one or more GPL Fellows in generating high-quality work product, serving as initial source of guidance and review on key deliverables, facilitating clear communication with senior GPL managers, and coaching & supporting Fellows’ professional development.

Communications and Relationship Building

- Conducting interviews and site visits with government officials and community stakeholders.
- Facilitating trainings and workshops to build capacity; providing coaching to permanent government staff.
- Creating training documents, tools, and templates with the aim of making complex information easy to understand and sustainably changing practice.

Research and Data Analysis

- Using continuous improvement tools to analyze existing processes and design new processes that enable agencies to better serve constituents.
- Thinking “counterfactually”—understanding program evaluation principles and using them to improve government operations.
- Reviewing research literature, government documents, and best practices to inform project work.

Community of Practice

- Sharing insights with colleagues, helping to spread lessons and best practices across the GPL.
- Drafting 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.
- Experience in instructional design or curriculum development, including experiential learning and/or simulations.
- Previous experience in teaching, coaching, or facilitation.
- 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.
- Strong demonstrated track record of independently structuring work, driving significant project progress, managing multiple workstreams, and engaging with clients.
- Graduate-level training in public policy, education, business, law, economics, social work, or related fields is preferred.
- At least four years of professional work experience is preferred, including post-graduate schoolwork experience and at least one year working in a management capacity.
- A willingness to travel is required.

Additional Information and Application Instructions

Compensation: GPL Project Leaders are funded for one year at a salary commensurate with experience plus benefits. Depending on project status, there are sometimes opportunities to extend the position.

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 January or February 2022.

Application instructions: To apply, please submit your application using the [Project Leader Application Form](#) by **Monday, December 13 at 12 pm EST**.

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 in more than 200 projects with

89 jurisdictions spread across 35 states. We are a team of 50—the majority of whom are working directly with 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.