

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab

Procurement Solutions Project Leader

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 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 Strategic 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 accessible 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, or 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.

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 are due by December 8, 2020.

Additional information about the GPL

The Government Performance Lab (GPL) at the Harvard Kennedy School conducts research on how governments can improve the results they achieve for their citizens and make more rapid progress in addressing challenging social problems. An important part of this research model involves providing pro bono technical assistance to state and local governments. Through this hands-on involvement, the GPL gains insights into the barriers that governments face and the solutions that can overcome these barriers.

For more information on the GPL, please visit <http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu>.

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