Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab
Children & Families Fellow 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 government's 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. GPL staff advance key initiatives through applied research and technical assistance, including identifying high-impact areas for systems re-engineering, implementing pilot projects to demonstrate innovative methods, and building government capacity for sustained change.

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.

Position Overview

The GPL is seeking to hire a fellow with a passion for improving government performance and solving social problems. This fellow position will support child and family-serving systems across three jurisdictions – New York City, Los Angeles, and Atlanta – as part of the GPL's Children & Families policy area team. Support to these jurisdictions will focus on increasing and supporting placements with kin caregivers for youth entering foster care and/or strengthening behavioral health services for youth, especially those in out-of-home care. The fellow will be based in one of these jurisdictions, where they will spend more time on site with the government office or agency that is spearheading a project. They will also provide remote support to the other two jurisdictions.

GPL fellows function as day-to-day project managers, shepherding important transformation 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

Management and coaching are provided by a manager at the Government Performance Lab as well as by the government policy lead(s). 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.

Required qualifications
- Strong project management capabilities—ability to independently execute project tasks and meet key project deadlines.
- Ability to navigate complex organizations, develop trust with senior leaders, and build relationships among diverse groups of stakeholders.
- Ability to travel on a regular basis is required.

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:

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.
- 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.
- 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.

Additional Information and Application Instructions

Compensation: GPL fellows will be funded for one year at a salary of $90,000 plus benefits.

Potential locations include: Atlanta, GA; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY.

Start Date: Candidates should be available to start by March 1 or earlier.

Application Instructions: Candidates should submit an application using the **GPL's Online Application Form** by Sunday, January 8, 2023 at midnight Eastern Time.

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