



### Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab Fellow Positions

The mission of the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) is to accelerate progress on difficult social problems by improving how state and local governments across the country 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 housing, 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, addressing them requires solutions that center on 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 seeks to hire fellows with a passion for improving government performance and solving social problems. Fellows may provide support remotely to one or more jurisdictions or may be placed on-site with a government office or agency that is spearheading a project. To support our policy area goals, fellows work collaboratively with their assigned manager and receive coaching to help them develop their skills to drive projects forward. Fellows function as day-to-day project managers, conducting transformation projects from conceptualization through design and implementation.

Example projects that GPL fellows have conducted include working with governments to launch [alternative 911 emergency response teams](#), supporting the state of Washington to [release an RFP](#) for culturally-responsive pilot programs to reduce the over-representation of Black and Native children in out-of-home care, creating an [Extreme Procurement Makeover](#) project with Jackson, Mississippi focused on improving procurement efficiency and equity, and [launching an Accelerator](#) to support jurisdictions in reducing homelessness and increasing connections to housing.

In undertaking these responsibilities, fellows' day-to-day work varies and often involves:

#### *Project Management*

- Manage and coordinate projects while navigating complex organizational structures, including developing workplans and balancing multiple workstreams across various government entities.
- Develop, introduce, and oversee performance management systems to enable government and service providers to better collaborate on service delivery.

#### *Communications and Stakeholder Management*

- Conduct interviews and site visits with government officials, community stakeholders, and people with lived experience to help identify 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.
- Create memos, presentations, training documents, and procurement solicitations with the aim of making complex information easier 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.
- Review research literature, government documents, and best practices to inform work.

### *Community of Practice*

- Share insights with government collaborators and GPL colleagues to help spread lessons and best practices.
- Contribute to publications including project features and solutions briefs to help share insights externally.

Continuous learning is a key part of the overall fellowship experience. Fellows are part of a community of GPL team members spread across the country 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 develop substantial policy area expertise, hands-on project management experience, and deeper familiarity with government processes.

### **Required qualifications**

- Strong project management capabilities—the 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.
- For some projects, ability to travel on a regular basis is required.

### **Preferred qualifications**

**Many** kinds of experiences could prepare an individual to thrive in this role. We expect candidates to have many but not necessarily all of the qualifications listed below:

- Passion for improving government performance and solving social problems.
- Self-motivated approach with a learning mindset and an orientation towards results.
- Ability to communicate ideas clearly, efficiently, and with humility both verbally and in writing (e.g., as demonstrated through memos, slide decks, and public speaking).
- Awareness of and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and orientations.
- Sound analytical skills, with experience analyzing and using data to generate insights that drive impact.
- Graduate-level training in public policy, business, law, economics, social work, or related fields. Although non-traditional, applicants outside of the training listed above are encouraged to apply.
- At least two years of professional work experience.

### **Additional information and application instructions**

*Compensation:* GPL fellows will be funded for **one year** at a salary of \$90,000 plus benefits. Fellows based in the states where Harvard is registered to do business—California, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington State—will have their pay and benefits administered through Harvard. Fellows residing in other states will have their pay and benefits, including medical insurance, administered through Harvard’s payroll service provider, DZConnex, and will formally be an employee of DZConnex. Regardless of the state of residence, successful applicants will receive Harvard appointments as “fellows” at the GPL.

*Possible projects in social services include the following:*

- **Children & Families.** Our Children & Families practice supports jurisdictions committed to reimagining the way they support children and families, strengthening prevention investments, and shrinking punitive government responses such as child protection investigations and removals. To achieve this, our projects focus on 1) strengthening voluntary, community-based resources for families (e.g., youth mental health and parental substance use services, home visiting programs, cash assistance), 2) connecting families to those resources before a crisis or safety risk emerges, and 3) supporting extended care networks when families are in crisis. We do this by working with a wide variety of government agencies, including public health, child welfare, and early childhood agencies.

- **Criminal Justice.** Our criminal justice portfolio aims to prevent individuals from harmful interaction with the criminal justice system by testing, scaling, and spreading alternative approaches to public safety. To achieve this, our projects focus on upstream interventions such as developing government- and community-led offices of neighborhood safety, conducting qualitative research with residents impacted by violence, sending alternative responder teams to 911 calls, setting up pathways to direct people with mental health needs to service centers instead of jail, testing alternatives to pretrial incarceration such as referrals to supportive services, and reducing punitive conditions for individuals awaiting trial in the community.
- **Homelessness & Housing.** Our Homelessness & Housing practice supports jurisdictions to take a housing first, equity-centered, data-driven, collaborative approach to sustainably reducing homelessness. To achieve this, we work with jurisdictions to build out systems that 1) prevent homelessness by supporting vulnerably housed individuals further upstream, and 2) reduce the amount of time individuals spend unsheltered or in temporary shelter by creating streamlined, client-centered rehousing processes that yield benefits for unhoused individuals, response systems, and housing partners. Our approach includes both projects that support jurisdictions on specific prevention and rehousing interventions as well as direct coaching and training supports for the staff managing homeless response systems.

*Possible projects in **Procurement** include the following:*

- Our Procurement practice provides technical assistance to cities through the Bloomberg Philanthropies' What Works Cities initiative, and it also supports states and counties in procurement transformation. Our approach enables governments to leverage procurement as a strategic tool to achieve better outcomes for residents. The GPL is currently exploring launching a new procurement excellence nonprofit in July 2024. Applicants who have an interest in procurement may also be considered for roles in the procurement excellence nonprofit.

*Potential locations include:* Alameda County, CA; Chicago, IL; Denver, CO; Detroit or Lansing, MI; Frankfort or Louisville, KY; Jackson, MS; Miami, FL; North Carolina; Portland, Salem, or southern region, OR; Providence, RI; Seattle or Olympia, WA; South Carolina; Washington, D.C.; and remote locations (requires access to major U.S. airports for any travel).

*Start Date:* Candidates should be available to start in July 2024.

*Application Instructions:* Candidates may submit an application using the [GPL's Online Application Form](#) by **Sunday, February 25, 2024, at 11:59 pm ET.**

### **About the Government Performance Lab**

The Government Performance Lab (GPL) 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 100 jurisdictions spread across 36 states and has conducted more than 242 projects shifting more than \$6.2B in government spending towards results. For more information on the GPL, please visit <http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu>.

*Harvard University is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, or any other characteristic protected by law.*