



Supporting Governments in Improving Resident Outcomes

Highlights from 2023 at the Government Performance Lab



20,000+

calls diverted to alternative emergency response teams in GPL-supported jurisdictions

Since 2021, the GPL's [Alternative 911 Emergency Response Implementation Cohort](#) has supported 32 jurisdictions in developing, improving, and expanding programs focused on unarmed alternative response to 911 calls. As a result, thousands of residents in need received responses without the presence of law enforcement, such as crisis de-escalation and referrals to social services.



In Long Beach, CA

50%+

reduction in average cycle time for a procurement

114%

increase in number of vendors responding to priority procurements

The GPL helped Long Beach conduct an Extreme Procurement Makeover by surveying vendors to identify barriers, testing new vendor outreach strategies, and coaching staff on how to write and manage results-driven procurements. At the conclusion of the GPL's three-year project in Long Beach, bids from minority-owned businesses increased by 55% and from women-owned businesses by 33%.



\$800,000+

invested in culturally responsive services for Native families in Washington state

The GPL helped the Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) conduct listening sessions with local providers, Tribes, and others, and identify strategies to procure culturally responsive providers as part of the agency's effort to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in its child welfare system. DCYF is piloting the delivery of supports and services that incorporate the cultures of specific Tribal Nations by contracting with five Tribes and Native Serving Organizations.



Launched four new projects to curb housing instability

Through its new [Homelessness Prevention & Rehousing Accelerator](#), the GPL launched projects in four jurisdictions, each testing responses to common challenges communities face across the United States:

- Streamlining the rehousing process for Permanent Supportive Housing (Chicago)
- Preventing individuals exiting prison on parole from falling into homelessness (Colorado)
- Coordinating homelessness prevention across agencies (Detroit)
- Reducing disparities in service delivery for Latino people experiencing homelessness (Los Angeles)

“The City of Detroit is excited to join the Homelessness Prevention & Rehousing Accelerator to support our residents experiencing housing instability. [...] With limited resources in the homelessness response system, it is critical that we design effective upstream interventions that prevent households from becoming homeless and in turn allow us to focus our homelessness services on households with the highest needs.”

— Julie Schneider, Director, Detroit Housing and Revitalization Department

Developing youth-informed measures of public safety in Saint Paul, MN

“The people most impacted by violence and policing are often the least likely to be meaningfully engaged in defining public safety — including in Black and disinvested communities. In Saint Paul, we’re reversing that pattern with the Office of Neighborhood Safety and local youths. We’re building toward a future where we measure the presence of safety instead of the absence of crime.”

— Andrew Bentley, GPL Project Leader



The GPL is working with the City of Saint Paul’s Office of Neighborhood Safety to develop and test actionable, measurable indicators of public safety informed by youths’ perspectives. As part of this research, the GPL and World Youth Connect, a youth-led community-based organization, conducted interviews and focus groups with 50 Saint Paul youths ages 13-24 who have been impacted by violence. The GPL is now analyzing and synthesizing these youths’ insights to develop the indicators.

Testing alternatives to punitive child welfare interventions as the lead implementation organization for a new Doris Duke Foundation initiative

Too often, the child welfare system responds with punitive interventions, like child removals, *after* families have experienced a crisis — instead of offering support and services to prevent these crises in the first place. Through a new Doris Duke Foundation initiative, the GPL is working with a cohort of demonstration sites to reduce the need for child protection interventions. The GPL is helping child welfare agencies and other organizations in the child- and family-serving system to develop and test ways to reach families and connect them to voluntary, community-based supportive services sooner.



Delivered trainings, resources, and peer-learning opportunities to more than 1,200 procurement professionals

Launched in November 2022, the [Procurement Excellence Network \(PEN\)](#) has grown to more than 1,200 members in 432 jurisdictions. PEN is an online training hub and virtual community designed for public sector leaders as they drive reforms to [make procurement more efficient, fair, results-driven, equitable, and strategic](#). It offers free tools, trainings, virtual coaching, and other resources.

Equipped 47 leaders with skills to launch, expand, and improve alternative emergency response through executive education



Alternative response leaders practiced applying new skills in breakout groups, such as translating insights from data analysis into action steps.

The GPL designed and delivered a custom executive education program that trained alternative emergency response leaders in new management and leadership skills and fostered deeper relationships between and within jurisdictions. Leaders from police and fire departments, 911 call centers, social service providers, and other agencies participated in the program, positioning them to catalyze improvements through a focus on data-driven performance management, cross-agency coordination, and adaptive leadership.

“We have a new think tank — people from 16 places that are doing alternative response — to bounce ideas off of. And that’s pivotal in this field because we are re-creating public safety across the nation.” — Kathi Yost, participant in the GPL’s inaugural executive education course on alternative response

Trained 60 practitioners to strengthen procurement systems in collaboration with the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative

For the second year, the GPL and the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative ran “Leading City Procurement Reform” to supply city procurement leaders with the tools, knowledge, and networks needed to help lead their cities’ efforts to innovate, adapt, and drive ever-improving impact, as well as help them tackle a procurement priority of their city. This year, the program convened 60 leaders from 20 cities in the United States and Canada to receive trainings in skills such as crafting results-driven Requests for Proposal (RFPs) and advancing equity through procurement.



To kick off “Leading City Procurement Reform,” participants present on a procurement challenge that their city’s team will focus on improving over the course of the program.

February

The GPL releases **“Mayor to Mayor: Taking the Lead on Police Accountability,”** a report featuring advice from 26 mayors and other local officials on how local government leaders can enhance police accountability.

May

GPL Project Leader Hena Rafiq **presents at the MacArthur Foundation’s Safety and Justice Challenge** on [using data-driven performance management in pretrial systems](#).

September

The GPL **leads four sessions at the International City/County Management Association’s annual conference** on topics including leveraging data dashboards in public management and improving equity in contracting.

October



The GPL **brings together 32 procurement staff** from Jackson, MS; Long Beach, CA; Seattle, WA; and Syracuse, NY, for a summit to share strategies and spread best practices learned from their Extreme Procurement Makeovers (pictured above).

GPL Project Leader Aloka Narayanan **presents lessons on 911 and 988 collaborations** from the GPL’s Alternative 911 Emergency Response initiative **to over 700 registered participants** in a webinar hosted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

March

The GPL hosts an **online learning session, “Supporting Kin Caregivers Outside the Foster Care System,”** for over 150 attendees on approaches for reaching and supporting kin caregivers in their communities. During a follow-up session in November, the GPL **hosts more than 200 attendees** for a discussion on how child welfare systems can preserve family connections when children enter foster care.

August

The GPL **publishes “The Journey to a Well-Being-Oriented System,”** a framework to shift child- and family-serving systems away from punishment and toward prevention.

The GPL’s Criminal Justice team **announces its largest-ever Alternative 911 Emergency Response Implementation Cohort**, with 15 governments participating.



Chicago, a member of the GPL’s Alternative 911 Emergency Response Implementation Cohort, has diverted more than 1,000 911 calls to alternative response teams.

November

The GPL is one of the organizations selected by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs to **train the executive teams of eight homelessness Continuums of Care** in data-driven decision-making.

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) supports governments to build just and effective service systems. The GPL works in four policy areas: Children & Families, Criminal Justice, Homelessness & Housing, and Procurement Systems. Since launching in 2011, the GPL's results include:

242 projects
completed in 36 states

522,000+
residents
receiving better
services

1,700+
public servants
trained

\$6.2 billion+
in government
spending improved

The Government Performance Lab, housed at the Taubman Center for State and Local Government at the Harvard Kennedy School, conducts research on how governments can improve the results they achieve for their citizens. An important part of this research model involves providing hands-on technical assistance to state and local governments. Through this involvement, we gain insights into the barriers that governments face and the solutions that can overcome these barriers. By engaging current students and recent graduates in this effort, we are also able to provide experiential learning.

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