The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab
Government Performance Fellow 2015

The Harvard Kennedy School’s Government Performance Lab, with funding from the Bloomberg Philanthropies’ “What Works Cities” initiative, is seeking to hire Government Performance Fellows to provide technical assistance to cities pursuing results-driven contracting.

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 citizens. An important part of this research model involves providing pro bono technical assistance to state and local governments. Through this hands-on involvement, the Government Performance Lab gains insights into the barriers that governments face and the solutions that can overcome these barriers.

About the Bloomberg Philanthropies’ (BbP) “What Works Cities” Initiative

Bloomberg Philanthropies’ “What Works Cities” is an unprecedented philanthropic initiative to help 100 mayors of mid-size cities collect, interpret and use data and evidence in their policy and management decision-making with the goal of engaging the public, making government more effective and improving people’s lives. In addition to the Government Performance Lab, other organizations providing on the ground support as part of the What Works Cities initiative are Results for America, The Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University, the Sunlight Foundation, and the Behavioral Insights Team.

Position Overview

Government Performance Fellows for the “What Works Cities” initiative serve as the primary advisors to partner cities from the Government Performance Lab. The Government Performance Lab is seeking to hire several Fellows who will be embedded full-time with Mayors Offices throughout the U.S. and one Fellow who will be based in New York City and will travel extensively to cities that receive short-term or less intensive technical assistance. The embedded Fellows will also be expected to do some traveling to provide short-term technical assistance to additional cities. The locations for which embedded Fellows will be hired have not yet been finalized as partner cities are still being selected.

Fellows function as the day-to-day project managers of results-driven contracting projects, shepherding projects through conceptualization, design, and implementation. Fellows will develop substantial policy-area expertise, hands-on project management experience, technical skills related to benefit-cost analysis, financing, and evaluation, and a deep familiarity with government processes. Oversight will be provided by the Mayor’s Office policy lead, an experienced Assistant Director at the Government Performance Lab, and Government Performance Lab Director Professor Jeffrey Liebman.

Responsibilities

- Drive effort to identify high priority issue areas for procurement reform.
- Develop systems for measuring outcomes and cost-effectiveness of key procurements using analytical methods and administrative data.
- Design financing structures that condition a portion of payments to contractors on outcomes to incentivize strong performance.
- Conduct benefit-cost analyses, financial modeling, and data analyses as well as review research literature to inform results-driven contracting projects.
- Strengthen the partnership between the city and contractors.
- Devise strategies to incorporate contractors’ performance track records into future procurement decisions.
- Assist with efforts to publicize project goals, including targets, timelines, and strategies, as well as performance against those goals.
- Assist with community outreach, legislative engagement, and communications.
• Contribute to key Government Performance Lab tasks, including representing the Lab at public events and drafting policy briefs.

Qualifications

• Demonstrated passion for improving government performance.
• Outstanding quantitative and analytical skills, with experience generating and using data to drive insights.
• Excellence in both written and verbal communications, including policy memos, slide decks, and public speaking.
• Exceptional project management capabilities and creativity in problem solving.
• Track record of adeptly navigating complex organizations, developing trust with senior leaders, and building relationships among diverse groups of stakeholders.
• Self-motivated with an orientation towards results over process and a track record of driving results with limited supervisory direction.
• Willingness to learn, attention to detail, and ability to multi-task are critical.
• Graduate level training in public policy, business, law, economics, or other related field is highly preferred.
• At least two years of professional work experience is highly preferred.
• An understanding of program evaluation concepts is highly preferred.
• Willingness to travel is highly preferred.

Additional Information

The positions are funded for one year beginning summer 2015, with a base salary ranging from $66,000 to $70,000. Depending on project status, there may be opportunities to extend the fellowship.

Application Instructions

To apply, please submit a brief cover letter and a current resume/CV to hks-silab@hks.harvard.edu. Current students and recent graduates should also submit a transcript. Please include “Government Performance Fellow 2015” in the subject line. All materials should be submitted as PDF or MS Word documents with the applicant’s name in all filenames.

The cover letter should detail how the applicant’s skills and experiences meet the qualifications of the position, and should include contact information for three references. Applicants should also indicate any geographical limitations in their cover letter.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis beginning in May 2015.

For more information on the Government Performance Lab, please visit http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu. To learn more about What Works Cities, please visit www.WhatWorksCities.org.

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, or any other characteristic protected by law.