



Request for Technical Assistance Proposals

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) conducts research on how governments can accelerate progress in addressing difficult social problems and improve the results they obtain with their social spending. An important part of our research model involves providing pro bono technical assistance to state and local governments interested in pursuing PFS and performance improvement projects. Through this hands-on involvement, we gain insights into the barriers that governments face and the solutions that can overcome these barriers. These insights are ultimately published in academic papers and policy briefs.

The GPL is pleased to announce that it will be offering **pro bono technical assistance** to additional state, county, and city governments interested in addressing pressing social challenges through improved human services delivery.

To date, the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab (GPL) has worked with more than 30 jurisdictions throughout the United States. States, counties, and cities receiving GPL TA have launched 8 of the 12 pay for success (PFS) projects using social impact bonds (SIBs) in the country.

Recently, the GPL has been piloting a model of intensive technical assistance for jurisdictions interested in improving the results they achieve with their core human services spending. In these pilots, we have embedded teams of 4-6 GPL fellows within an executive office or set of agencies, and have helped agency staff implement performance improvement strategies including identification of key outcomes and metrics for measuring them, using data to match the right individuals to the right services, performance management strategies that include real-time response to performance metrics, alignment of government-provider incentives through performance payments, and rigorous evaluation of program impacts. This model has yielded promising results, and we are pleased to announce that we will be making this form of technical assistance more broadly available.

The GPL is now accepting applications for two types of projects: 1) **Performance improvement projects** that aim to enhance the results achieved with core government social service spending, and 2) **Pay for Success (PFS) projects** using social impact bonds (SIBs). Governments are invited to apply for either or both types of technical assistance. There will be two rounds of awards, with application deadlines of November 7, 2016 and March 15, 2017.

This assistance is made possible by grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service Social Innovation Fund, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, and the Pritzker Children's Initiative.

Selection Criteria

Both performance improvement projects and PFS projects using SIBs will be judged using the following criteria. Governments may apply for either or both types of support using the same narrative application. Applicants should aim to demonstrate:

I) The potential to advance the PFS field by applying the model in new ways, in new geographic areas, or in new policy fields. (30 points) Priority will be given to projects that improve how social services are delivered, either by applying 1) performance improvement strategies and/or 2) the traditional PFS using social impact bonds model in innovative ways.

The GPL encourages **proposals that apply PFS performance improvement strategies to the core responsibilities of human services agencies**. In particular, we are interested in projects that apply strategies such as identification of key outcomes and of metrics for measuring them, matching the right individuals to the right services, real-time management response to performance metrics, alignment of government-provider incentives through performance payments, and rigorous evaluation of program impacts. These strategies have been key elements of pay for success projects using social impact bonds, and we believe they have the potential to have an even greater impact when applied directly to core social service spending. We particularly welcome applications from jurisdictions that are interested in applying these methods to multiple agencies, multiple issue areas, or multiple types of services. A jurisdiction interested in applying these techniques widely could receive as many as 6 government innovation fellows.

Examples of results-driven contracting and other performance improvement projects include:

- *Seattle*: The GPL is providing technical assistance to help Seattle consolidate its contracts with homeless services agencies and re-orient these contracts to focus on performance. Seattle's Human Services Department (HSD) currently contracts with over 60 homeless services agencies and holds multiple contracts with many of these agencies. In order to achieve better results for the homeless population, the GPL is helping HSD consolidate and re-orient contracts to be performance-focused by specifying performance goals and setting up a performance tracking system, implementing active contract management meetings where the agency and providers meet to review data and improve processes, and restructuring payments to align them with performance objectives.
- *Rhode Island*: The GPL has been helping several state agencies in Rhode Island with a range of results-driven contracting and other performance improvement projects. Efforts have included helping the child welfare agency develop a more robust contract provider performance management strategy, as part of a broader agency turnaround effort, helping the workforce agency build the capacity to monitor employment and earnings impacts of its job training initiatives, and building cross-agency data matching capabilities to provide real-time tracking of program enrollment and efficacy.

Examples of innovative projects proposals that could be eligible to receive intensive support from the GPL, including a team of two to six fellows, include:

A proposal to create a position responsible for systematically improving social service procurements across state agencies that would report to the budget office or a senior official in the Governor's/County Executive's/Mayor's Office;

A project proposing to work across agencies to use multiple sources (such as juvenile justice, child welfare, and education department data) to identify all the troubled families in a jurisdiction and then serve those families in a comprehensive way that streamlines service delivery and tracks meaningful metrics of improvement in well-being.

The GPL also welcomes innovative proposals for **pay for success projects using social impact bonds**. Innovation could involve applying the model to new policy areas or in new jurisdictions. It could also involve interest in new ways of structuring PFS transactions. For example:

- Projects that combine private funding and existing agency resources, using relatively small amounts of private funding as leverage to catalyze performance improvement in much larger core spending streams; or
- Projects that use "rate cards" (fixed payments per outcome) to streamline project development without abandoning the rigorous evaluation methods necessary to determine whether and for whom the programs worked; or
- Projects that combine payments for short-term outcomes that can allow high-frequency feedback loops between performance assessment and process improvements with payments for long-term impacts that are rigorously assessed.

II) A high level of commitment from government leaders. (30 points) We seek engagements in which there is a very high likelihood of a project moving forward and a government that is fully invested in the project. We have found that commitment from senior leadership is the most important factor in project success. Applicants are encouraged to submit letters of support for their project application from: i) the Governor's/Mayor's/County Executive's Office; ii) the head of the agency or department(s) where the proposed project will be based. Other letters of support might include a letter from the city, county, or state budget office or equivalent. Applicants are also encouraged to identify a project lead(s) who will serve as the point person on the initiative.

Example: An application including a letter of support from the Governor's/County Executive's/Mayor's Office suggesting behavioral health, homelessness, and child welfare as areas of top priority and designating a Deputy Chief of Staff as the project lead in the Governor's/County Executive's/Mayor's Office. The application also submits a letter of support from the Health and Human Services agency identifying a deputy as the agency project lead.

III) The potential impact of the project. (25 points) We will consider the scale of potential impact on spending and service recipients—the magnitude of services involved, the degree of transformative change involved, the potential to positively impact the lives of individuals and communities, and the potential for replicating the model in other agencies within the jurisdiction or in other jurisdictions if the project is successful. Applicants are encouraged to identify upcoming procurements that might be candidates for results-driven contracting, including details on the magnitude of spending, the types of services, and number of beneficiaries.

Example: An application describing the \$100M portfolio of behavioral health services that the Governor's/County Executive's/Mayor's Office would like to reprocure with a greater emphasis on long-term health, employment, and housing stability outcomes. The application also describes a possible project redesigning a data and referral system to make new permanent supportive housing spots available to the highest-risk individuals.

An application describes creating a Strategic Procurement Officer position reporting directly to the head of the budget office that will advise social service procurements in multiple agencies for contracts including child welfare, TANF, workforce development, criminal justice, and health. The application identifies specific contracts that are up for renewal that would be part of the Strategic Procurement Officer's portfolio of contracts to improve.

IV) Readiness to engage in project activities. (15 points) Applicants should describe the work they have completed to date in order to determine readiness to pursue either 1) performance improvement projects or 2) PFS using SIBs. Applicants should indicate whether they have initiated or completed a feasibility assessment.

Example: An application describing work that it has done to identify key health and employment outcomes to measure provider efficacy. The application also describes data sharing agreements the jurisdiction has executed between the agencies with administrative data on those outcomes.

Eligibility Criteria

- 1) *Memorandum of understanding.* To be considered eligible for the selection process, governments will need to be willing to enter into an MOU with Harvard University over the terms of the pro bono technical assistance.
- 2) *Knowledge sharing.* If selected, Government Collaborators should, to the extent legally permissible, be willing to make key final documents from the project development process publically available, including feasibility studies, contracts, and evaluation plans.
- 3) *Low-Income Communities and FY16 SIF Focus Areas.* Projects must benefit Low-Income Communities and must address one or more of the FY16 SIF Focus Areas Youth Development, Economic Opportunity, and Healthy Futures.

Applicants will be scored on a 100-point scale, with points allocated to each criterion as designated above.

Application and Award Process

This program is open to U.S. state and local governments. A downloadable application form and additional information about the pay for success and results-driven contracting models can be found on our website: <http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/>. Responses are limited to 5 pages.

Applicants may apply in three ways:

- 1) As individual state or local governments;
- 2) As cohorts of governments;
- 3) As cross-jurisdictional partnerships.

Governments may apply with private and/or social sector organizations as partners; however, the primary applicant must be a government.

Individual government

We expect most applications to be from individual governments. We encourage state and local governments to demonstrate support from both the executive and agency/department leads involved in the proposed initiative(s).

Cohort

Two to four governments may submit a joint application for technical assistance. Each government seeking to participate in the cohort model should designate a government employee to lead their initiative and dedicate a portion of his or her time to this initiative. Each cohort will receive one full-time GPL fellow or team of fellows. During the review process, the GPL may also propose to individual government applicants seeking assistance in similar policy areas that they participate as part of a cohort. If promising ideas for a cohort approach emerge in initial applications or over the course of the application process, we may also release a supplementary announcement encouraging applications from additional governments with similar interests.

The cohort approach may be especially appropriate for governments seeking to address the same type of issue. For example, three state governments interested in adopting results-driven contracting and other performance improvement projects for child welfare agency spending may choose to submit an application for technical assistance as a cohort.

Cross-jurisdictional partnership

Multiple jurisdictions from different levels of government may apply together for GPL technical assistance. For example, a city and state government or a county and state government may submit a joint application.

Phase 1: Application for GPL Technical Assistance

The GPL will host a webinar for interested applicants on Monday October 17 at 2 PM EDT to discuss the GPL model and application process and answer questions. Applicants are encouraged to read publications on the GPL's website for background. GPL staff will be available for telephone consultations with governments that want to learn more about the PFS model or about our services so as to help them prepare stronger applications. Applicants interested in telephone consultations should contact the GPL at govlab@hks.harvard.edu.

The application form is available for download at <http://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/>. We will accept applications through March 15, 2017.

The GPL will make **two rounds of awards through this application**.

- **December Round:** The first award round will be made in December 2016. To receive full consideration for the first round of awards, applicants should submit a completed application no later than **November 7, 2016**.
- **April Round:** The second round of awards will be made on or before April 30, 2017. Awards will be made based on A) applications received by **March 15, 2017** that were not considered in the first round, as well as B) applications considered for the first round that did not receive an award.

Phase 2: Interviews, site visits, and scoping

The GPL will conduct telephone interviews with the most promising applicants. Interviews will be structured to allow applicants an opportunity to further demonstrate the level of commitment in their government to developing a project and to discuss the possible projects already identified. The GPL may conduct site visits and scope possible engagements for top-scoring candidates as well.

Phase 3: Selection and Award

The GPL expects to select approximately 9 service recipients, although the final number of awards may vary. Award decisions will be announced in December 2016 (December round) and on or before April 30, 2017 (April round).

Phase 4: Project Development and Implementation

A typical project development timeline is as follows:

Months 1-3: The GPL works with the Government Collaborator to identify possible projects, including outcomes-focused reprocurement of contracts for core services, designing data sharing and referral systems, and implementing rigorous evaluations.

Months 4-30 or sooner: Once project scope has been determined, GPL Government Innovation Fellows and senior staff are assigned to the Government Collaborator to provide day-to-day support on carrying out the selected project/s. This may include taking multiple projects through development and implementation to launch.

Transparency requirements

Within 90 days of making awards the GPL is required to publish on its website the following information about transaction structuring applicants:

- i. A list of all compliant applications submitted
- ii. Executive Summaries of all compliant applications
- iii. Names of application reviewers outside the GPL

The GPL is grateful for the support provided by our funders.



The Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund (SIF), and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

In 2009, President Obama authorized the creation of the Social Innovation Fund as part of the Corporation for National & Community Service to find solutions that work, and make them work for more people – by proving, improving and scaling effective models. SIF and its non-federal partners have invested nearly \$1 billion in effective community solutions since the program's inception. Launched in 2014, the SIF Pay for Success (PFS) program is designed to help cities, states, and nonprofits develop Pay for Success projects where governments pay service providers only when there are demonstrable results.

Laura and John Arnold Foundation

LJAF is a private foundation that is working to address our nation's most pressing and persistent challenges using evidence-based, multi-disciplinary approaches. Its investments are currently focused on criminal justice, education, evidence-based policy and innovation, public accountability, and research integrity. LJAF has offices in Houston, New York City, and Washington, D.C.

The Pritzker Children's Initiative

The Pritzker Children's Initiative is a national project of the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation. The Children's Initiative funds innovative research and programs for children in underserved communities. In particular, the Children's Initiative is committed to enhancing the early learning capabilities of infants and toddlers, while building measurable successes backed by evidence, accountability, and results.