

Industry 101

PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy offers a huge diversity of career choices (predominantly for master's graduates). This is largely due to the wide variety of specializations in public policy, including: education policy, environmental policy, energy policy, health policy, international development policy, public and/or nonprofit management and social policy. Public policy careers also span many sectors, with the largest number of public policy master's graduates going to work for local, state and federal governments, followed by the private sector and then nonprofit organizations.



TRENDS & INDUSTRY INFO

According to the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), of the 551 respondents to their most recent alumni survey, 91% of respondents were in full-time employment. The management, quantitative analysis and communications skills that public policy graduates have honed lend them to a diverse range of career paths. The majority of these graduates (64%) gain employment in consulting or research-based roles. These roles encompass anything from policy analyst to research associate to lobbyist (see "sample job titles") below.



WORK ENVIRONMENT

Most professionals working in public policy roles work full time in an office, but the time commitment can differ dependent on the size of the firm, the seniority of the position and whether the person works in the private, nonprofit or state sector. Given the heavy focus on federal government and consulting firms, many public policy graduates work in the Washington, DC area or in New York City. These professionals may work in excess of 40 hours per week, dependent on how time-critical the project is. Consultants may work at a client site (such as a federal or local government office location) rather than in one location.

Sample Job Titles

- Analyst / Data Analyst
- Consultant
- Lobbyist
- Policy Analyst
- Political Consultant
- Project/Program Manager
- Research Analyst/Associate
- Research Fellow

FACTS & STATS

The median annual salary for an entry-level position for a Master's of Public Policy (MPP) graduate is \$47,500. However, it is important to note that this median comprises roles in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. For more clarity, it would be useful to look at these categories individually. According to research by the Careers in Public Health site, the average salaries for MPP graduate are as follows:

Public Sector

\$51,630

Private Sector

\$75,500

Nonprofit Sector

\$40,000

Overall entry-level salary

\$47,500

What can you do in PUBLIC POLICY?

RESUME & SKILLS NEEDED

Resume

Private employers accept applications on a rolling basis, with no formal recruiting period for these roles. State and federal government positions are rare, and thus candidates should regularly check relevant career sites such as USAjobs or state government careers pages. The process can be very competitive.

The field of public policy is broad, make sure you specify your area of focus (e.g. education, healthcare, international development) and the courses you've taken. For all applications, be prepared to discuss your motivation for applying, what you are looking for and be able to articulate your skills and values.

Skills

- Master's Degree in Public Policy (MPP) – there are also joint degrees, pairing the MPP with an MBA or a JD
- Quantitative analysis, critical thinking & decision-making skills.
- Solid oral and written communications skills, in addition to public speaking skills.

Experience

Most internships for private employers are paid, particularly if the internship is with a large firm. In the nonprofit and various government sectors, internships are not always paid. For all sectors, there are a mix of full-time and part-time internships available.

If applying to graduate school, note there are strict deadlines for applying for MPP/PhD programs. Deadlines and fall/spring intakes vary by school, so be sure to check out the school's admissions page.

ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

- [Career Services, School of Public Policy](#)
- [Citizen's Climate Lobby](#)
- [International Economics & Finance Society](#)
- [Maryland Discourse](#)
- [Maryland Student Legislature](#)
- [Model United Nations](#)
- [Students in Healthcare for Action and Reform \(SHARe\)](#)
- [17 For Peace and Justice](#)

WHERE ARE ALUMS?



Arabella
Advisors
Greater good



Atlantic Council

Booz | Allen | Hamilton



Communities
In Schools

Deloitte.



icem

OBSIDIAN
ANALYSIS



The
SOLAR
FOUNDATION

RESEARCH & EDUCATION TO ADVANCE SOLAR ENERGY

Sentinel
Strategy and Policy Consulting



THE
WORLD
BANK

KING
HEALTH
CONSULTING LLC

