



What Can I Do with a Public Administration Degree?

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Earning a public administration degree can lead to fulfilling roles in government service, nonprofit management, and public engagement. This degree equips you with the knowledge and skills to support individuals and groups around the world.

Public administration professionals serve individuals and communities through government programs and nonprofit services. A public administration degree trains students to use qualitative and quantitative analysis to determine societal needs, allocate resources, and implement policies.

Public administration careers provide rewarding opportunities for people who wish to contribute to the common good. Individuals can pursue public administration jobs in city and county management, environmental quality control, and public health program administration.

With civil service struggling in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for trained, informed individuals with public administration backgrounds [remains as important](#) as ever. This guide offers information on public administration degrees, including available career pathways and salary data.

Careers in Public Administration

Public administration integrates interdisciplinary coursework in government, political science, economics, and business to prepare individuals for a variety of professional roles. Public administration degrees emphasize public relations, management, and analysis skills. This knowledge can benefit learners looking to pursue employment in fundraising, public services, and healthcare.

If you enjoy working with people, assessing qualitative and quantitative data, developing and implementing policy, and providing valuable support to others, a public administration degree may offer an ideal education. The following information explores some available public administration career pathways, along with median salaries and projected job growth rates.

Compensation and Benefits Managers

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$125,130](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [3%](#)

Compensation and benefits managers oversee payment programs for businesses and organizations. These professionals supervise staff, work with fellow managers, and advise employees about payment and benefit structures. They also ensure that companies allocate payment and benefits in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Human Resources Managers

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$121,220](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [6%](#)

Human resources managers manage recruiting, hiring, and dismissal practices, working with other managers to ensure employees fit well within companies. They handle staffing issues and disputes, oversee budgets, and ensure that employees follow government regulations and company policies.

Public Relations and Fundraising Managers

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$118,430](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [9%](#)

A public relations manager prepares and distributes information to craft an organization's public image. Fundraising managers coordinate efforts to raise money by working with private donors. Both public relations and fundraising managers must possess strong communication skills, engage with the media, and supervise staff.

Top Executives

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$107,680](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [4%](#)

Top executives develop and implement strategies and policies to guide organizations and businesses. They work with managers to oversee daily operations, monitor budgets, and consult with employees. These roles include chief executive officers, city managers, and university presidents.

Medical and Health Services Managers

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$104,280](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [32%](#)

Medical and health services managers work in clinical settings and healthcare organizations, often as facility managers. Often referred to as healthcare administrators, they oversee healthcare services, maintain efficiency and quality, recruit and train employees, and monitor budgets. These professionals also implement and ensure adherence to appropriate laws and regulations.

Administrative Service Managers

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$98,890](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [6%](#)

Administrative service managers oversee the entirety of organizational operations. They supervise staff, budgets, record keeping, and facilities to ensure safety and efficiency. Administrative service managers also direct information management practices and policies.

Postsecondary Education Administrators

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$97,500](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [4%](#)

Postsecondary education administrators work at colleges and universities in academic and student services roles. As provosts and academic deans, for example, they serve as intermediaries between faculty and other administrators. These professionals also include admissions officers, who work closely with students; registrars, who oversee student records; and student affairs administrators, who coordinate nonacademic programs and services.

Social and Community Service Managers

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$69,600](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [17%](#)

Social and community service managers engage with individuals and groups to assess their needs, implement effective programs, and allocate resources. By working with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders, these professionals interact with policymakers and the public alike.

Public Relations Specialists

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$62,810](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [7%](#)

Public relations specialists manage the public image of individuals and organizations. They provide the media with information, oversee social media accounts, assess public opinion, and write speeches and statements for clients. They may also help create advertisements for written and visual media.

Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers

Median Annual Salary (2020): [\\$59,660](#)

Projected Job Growth (2019-2029): [0%](#)

Property, real estate, and community association managers take care of land and facilities. They oversee budgets, safety, and maintenance while interacting with occupants and owners alike. These professionals collect fees and dues, handle complaints, and ensure that residents comply with property and association rules and regulations.

Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

What Kinds of Public Administration Degrees Are There?

Students can earn undergraduate or graduate [degrees in public administration](#). An associate or bachelor's degree in public administration includes comprehensive coursework in government, communication, business, and economics. With an undergraduate public administration degree, individuals can pursue employment in the field.

Graduate programs help current public administration workers advance their knowledge and skills to focus on specific aspects of the discipline. Individuals with bachelor's degrees in related fields may find a graduate degree useful if they want to move toward roles in public administration.

Associate Degree in Public Administration

An [associate degree](#) in public administration opens opportunities for entry-level roles in the field. Individuals who enjoy working with others and serving their communities benefit from this degree. Associate degree-holders can also transfer to bachelor's degree programs.

- Public administration associate
- Grant writer
- Information specialist

Bachelor of Public Administration Degree

A [bachelor's degree in public administration](#) prepares individuals to work in nonprofit organizations, the government, and businesses. Bachelor's-level professionals work to assess public needs, analyze data, and implement social and public programs.

A bachelor's degree often includes an internship or practical learning requirement. This introduces students to the field while building connections and enhancing employment opportunities.

- Social and community service manager
- Public relations specialist
- Fundraising manager

Master's Degree in Public Administration

Individuals working in public administration can earn a master's degree to hone their existing knowledge and skills. A [master of public administration](#) (MPA) degree often includes concentrations in recreation, public health, community relations, or urban and regional planning.

- City manager
- Community relations manager
- Urban planner

Doctoral Degree in Public Administration

A [doctorate in public administration](#) emphasizes research and analysis in the field.

Students assess policy, analyze quantitative data, and explore overall program efficacy. The degree leads to top-tier positions in government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and city and community service.

- City administrator
- Social policy advisor
- Postsecondary instructor
- Public policy analyst

Public Administration Degree Program Accreditation

Colleges and universities hold [national or regional accreditation](#), a designation granted by third-party agencies. Schools with national accreditation provide vocational, career, and technical programs, while schools with regional accreditation typically offer certificates and degrees of a more academic nature. Regional accreditation generally holds more prestige.

Students should determine each prospective school's accreditation, as the status can influence transfer options, financial aid, and overall employment options. Along with national and regional accreditation, many departments maintain additional programmatic accreditation.

Awarded by a discipline-specific body, programmatic accreditation demonstrates that the program meets the highest standards and policies in the industry. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration accredits public administration programs.

Public Administration Professional Organizations

[American Society for Public Administration](#)

Driven by a mandate to advance excellence in public service, ASPA unites civil servants, elected and appointed officials, and scholars from around the world. Members benefit from networking and professional development opportunities, publications, and access to events. Students can access ASPA's awards programs, international workshops, and career guidance.

American Political Science Association

Established in 1903, APSA hosts over 11,000 members from more than 100 countries. Along with teaching resources, career information, and diversity initiatives, APSA provides members access to journals and publications, events, and funding opportunities.

Alliance for Nonprofit Management

ANM strives to achieve positive change for individuals, groups, and organizations through advocacy for nonprofits. Members receive discounts on organizational programs and access to initiatives, educational programs, and career resources.

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management

APPAM, founded in 1979, strives to improve public policy and management through interdisciplinary research, analysis, and education. Membership includes access to professional development and educational resources, online and face-to-face networking opportunities, and public policy publications. Students can participate in APPAM's mentorship program and regional student conferences.

National Forum for Black Public Administrators

Focused on increasing Black leadership in local and state governments, NFBPA maintains 36 chapters across the United States. With events, partnerships, and programs available to individual, organizational, and business members, students benefit from NFBPA's mentorship program, scholarships, and networking opportunities.