

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

What can I do with this degree?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City Management
Financial Administration
Budget Analysis
General Services
Community Affairs
Social Services
Urban Planning

Counties
Municipalities
Townships
School districts
Special districts

Learn local government job application procedures.
Develop a network of contacts.
Check statistics on growing communities for best opportunities.
Gain relevant experience through an internship or volunteer position.
Conduct applicable research that could be useful to your community.
Get involved in community organizations and events.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Administrative Services
Legislature
Judicial

Various departments of state government
Legislative agencies including:
Legislative Reference Services, Bill Drafting Services, Legislative Councils and Budgeting and Auditing staffs
State Supreme Courts
Personal staff of legislators
Intermediate Appellate Courts
Trial Courts of General Jurisdiction
Trial Courts of Limited Jurisdiction

Research the organization of your state government.
Develop specialized skills and interests for particular populations or issues, e.g. disability, education, homelessness, etc.
Develop strong research and writing skills.
Make political contacts through local legislators of both houses.
Volunteer to work on political campaigns.
Make contacts through referrals and informational interviews.
Plan to earn a law degree to qualify for some opportunities.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Professional
Administrative
Technical

Various federal departments and agencies

Legislative Branch
Legislative Agencies

Various agencies including:
General Accounting Office, Library of Congress, Government Printing Office, Congressional Budget Office

Obtain an internship in a federal agency or department. Often this is the best way to get a foot in the door for a permanent position.
Learn federal job application procedures and how to write a federal resume including your KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities).
Research various agencies and departments to discover which ones may be the best fit for your major and experience.
Conduct informational interviews with government employees.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUED

Legislature

Administrative Staff
Washington-based
Home District
Committee

Offices of senators and representatives

Understand structure of Congress and various opportunities available.
Develop excellent research, writing, communication and organizational skills.
Build a strong personal network.
Explore districts other than your own.

Judicial Branch

Supreme Court
U.S. Courts
Supporting organizations

Some positions require law degree and bar certification.
Understand the structure and functions of the federal judiciary system.

Executive Branch

Office of the President
Management and Budget
Administration
Council of Economic Advisors
U.S. Trade Representatives
Executive Departments

Office of the President
Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense,
Education, Energy, Health and Human Services,
Housing and Urban Development, Interior,
Justice, Labor

Independent Agencies

Independent Agencies include the following (not an exhaustive list):
Coordination and Public Safety
Emergency Response Policy
Environmental Protection Agency
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Federal Emergency Management Agency
General Services Administration
National Archives & Records Administration
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Personnel Management
Securities & Exchange Commission
Tennessee Valley Authority
U.S. Information Agency
U.S. International Development Cooperation

There are a large number of niche areas and specialized agencies within the federal government. Do extensive research in order to find the area that best matches your skills and interests.
Take courses or minor in applicable interest area(s).
Research applicable public service exams and hiring procedures.
Complete an internship in a related area.
Maintain a high grade point average to qualify for government employment.
Consider earning a graduate degree to prepare for the largest number of opportunities.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

NONPROFIT

Administration
Development
Program Management
Policy Analysis
Research
Grant Writing

Local and national nonprofit agencies and foundations
Charitable organizations
Trade or professional organizations
Research organizations and think tanks
Educational institutions

Participate in internships and/or volunteer activities for related experience.
Develop strong communication and leadership skills.
Become a member of relevant organizations and seek leadership roles.
Develop strong research skills and learn how to write grants.
Research the organizations' values to find a good fit with yours. It is critical that you are knowledgeable about and care about the work you're going to do.

POLITICAL SUPPORT/LOBBYING

Political Action Committees (PAC)
Various industrial, educational, and public interest groups
Political parties
Lobbying organizations
Large business firms

Get involved with a political party/group and develop a personal network. The ability to develop networks, coalitions and alliances with other associations is highly valued.
Gain experience with government agencies or departments to help build relationships.
Develop excellent public relations, interpersonal and communication skills.
Learn how to persuade and negotiate. Participate on a debate team.
Volunteer in organizations with similar interests and goals.

BUSINESS

Human Resources
Budget Analysis
Management
Sales/Marketing
Management Consulting
Occupational Safety Coordination
Public Relations

Business firms
Contracting and consulting firms
Association management firms

Develop strong analytical, communication and technical skills.
Obtain related work experience in a business setting through internships and summer or part-time jobs.
Earn a minor in business.
Hone computer skills and learn software packages such as databases, spreadsheets and presentations.
Get involved in student organizations and seek leadership roles.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

HEALTH/MEDICAL

Healthcare Administration
Policy Development and Analysis
Health Delivery Systems

Hospitals
Healthcare facilities
Health Maintenance Organizations
Insurance companies
Nursing homes
Social service and community agencies

Most positions will require graduate degree in public health or hospital administration.
Complete an internship in a healthcare environment to gain knowledge of the industry.
Learn to work well with different types of people.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Governance
Policy Making and Analysis
Public Sector Reform
Poverty-Reduction Strategy
Ethics and Anti-corruption
Human Rights
Public Law
Organization and Management Development
Resource Development
Public-Private Partnerships
Media/Communication Policy and Practice
Education

Intergovernmental agencies, e.g., World Bank, United Nations
National governments
Non-profit agencies
Policy and research organizations
Private businesses
Contracting and consulting firms

Obtain internships or volunteer in order to gain valuable experience in areas of interest.
Participate in overseas mission trips or spend a Semester at Sea.
Become familiar with national or international application procedures.
Research the history and culture of countries or geographic areas of interest.
Take steps towards obtaining work or study visas for various locations.
Become proficient in at least one foreign language.
Spend time studying or working abroad, especially working to make and maintain contacts in foreign countries.
Earn a double major or minor in order to gain additional skills or knowledge needed for various positions (i.e., Africana studies, Asian studies, business, psychology, sociology, etc.).
For higher level positions an advanced degree is necessary. Research different programs and the concentrations they offer in order to find the best fit for your interests.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- An undergraduate degree in Public Administration, with the appropriate experience, is sufficient for entry-level position in government and business.
- A graduate degree in public administration or public health administration helps prepare students for management and upper-level administrative positions. Carefully research programs in order to choose specializations or concentrations of interest.
- Consider law school for careers in upper level politics, administration or management. Explore joint J.D. and M.P.A. programs to see if they meet your career goals.
- Obtain broad liberal arts background including written and verbal skills, communication and foreign language skills.
- Part-time, summer, internship, and volunteer experiences are extremely helpful in government affairs, organizations or public service areas.
- Develop strong leadership skills; run for office in clubs and organizations in school or community. Volunteer to organize or lead an event or project.
- Get involved in Student Government.
- Demonstrate interest/involvement in community affairs/events.
- Join related social and/or professional organizations.
- Employment opportunities in local government tend to follow population trends in terms of growth and decline in availability of positions. Be prepared to relocate to find the most opportunities.
- Develop a strong personal network through informal contacts.
- Political connections are helpful for appointed positions. Most agencies respond to professional connections.
- Expect keen competition for federal positions. Prepare yourself with a strong academic background and good experience. Many government jobs have strict guidelines and want to carefully match candidates' KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities) to the job description. Research this first and seek the classes and experiences that will best prepare you.
- Develop patience, persistence and drive in obtaining government positions.
- Explore application to Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) and the Outstanding Scholar Program for federal positions.
- Learn applicable application process for area of interest.
- Research websites and books that address various government job opportunities, pay structure and hiring processes.
- Consider military experience and training as an entryway into government jobs and public service.
- Plan on following a flexible career path to higher positions. Many people begin on the clerical or entry level in order to gain experience and network.