

# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

What can I do with this major?

AREAS	EMPLOYERS	STRATEGIES
<p><b><u>LOCAL GOVERNMENT</u></b> Management Financial administration Budget analysis Purchasing Human resource management Risk management Emergency services management Community services Social services Urban planning</p>	<p>Counties Municipalities Townships School districts Special districts</p>	<p>Get involved in community organizations and events and develop a network of contacts. 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. Gain relevant experience through internships and/or volunteer positions. Conduct applicable research that could be useful to your community. Research local government job application procedures and applicable public service exams.</p>
<p><b><u>STATE GOVERNMENT</u></b> Executive Branch Functions: Finance and administration Human resource management Environmental management Public safety and criminal justice Risk management Emergency services management Commerce and insurance Purchasing and acquisitions Budget analysis Community services Social services Urban planning Legislature Judicial</p>	<p>Departments of state government (varies by state) 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</p>	<p>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. Use referrals and informational interviews to build a network. Volunteer to work on political campaigns. Consider pursuing a relevant graduate degree for more opportunities and advancement. Learn the state government employment procedures and utilize your campus career center for assistance with the application process. Research applicable public service exams.</p>

## AREAS

### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

#### Legislative Branch

Legislative agencies

Legislature

Administrative staff

Washington-based

Home district

Committee

#### Judicial Branch

#### Executive Branch

Office of the President

Management and budget

Administration

Council of economic advisors

U.S. trade representatives

Executive departments

#### Independent Agencies

Finance and administration

Budget analysis

Purchasing

Human Resource management

Environmental management

Security and protection

Enforcement and compliance

Commerce and insurance

Purchasing and acquisitions

Program management

Risk management

Emergency services management

Social services

Legal

## EMPLOYERS

Various agencies including:

General Accounting Office, Library of Congress, Government Printing Office,

Congressional Budget Office

Offices of senators and representatives

Supreme Court

U.S. Courts

Federal Judiciary

Supporting organizations

Office of the President

Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense,

Education, Energy, Health and Human Services,

Housing and Urban Development, Interior,

Justice, Labor

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

## STRATEGIES

Research the 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.

Research the structure and functions of the federal judiciary system.

Some positions require a law degree and bar certification.

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.

Apply for a government internship through the Pathways Program or other student programs to gain relevant experience.

Learn federal job application procedures and how to write a strong resume. Use your campus career center for help with the application process.

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). Maintain a high grade point average to qualify for government employment.

Apply for a government internship through the Pathways Program or other student programs to gain relevant experience.

Research applicable public service exams and hiring procedures.

Earn a graduate degree to be more competitive for positions.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### POLITICAL SUPPORT/LOBBYING

Elected/Appointed Leadership  
Campaign management  
Staff administration  
Special interest advocacy  
Political advising  
Lobbying  
Party administration

Political Action Committees (PAC)  
Industrial, educational, and public interest groups  
Political parties  
Campaigns: national, state, or local  
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.  
Volunteer to work on political campaigns.  
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.

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### NONPROFIT

Administration  
Management  
Public relations  
Fund raising/Development  
Policy analysis  
Research  
Grant writing  
Direct service

Local and national nonprofit agencies  
Foundations  
Charitable organizations  
Trade or professional associations  
Special interest groups  
Labor unions  
Libraries  
Museums  
Historic sites/historical societies  
Research organizations and think tanks  
Educational institutions

Gain experience through volunteering or completing an internship.  
Supplement curriculum with courses in business, psychology, sociology, or social work.  
Obtain leadership roles in relevant campus and community organizations.  
Develop strong communication and research skills.  
Learn how to write grants.  
Demonstrate knowledge and experience in a specialty area (e.g. public health, environment, urban issues).  
Research organizations' values to find a good fit with yours. It is critical that you are knowledgeable about and committed to the work you're going to do.  
Investigate term of service or service corps positions as a way to gain entry into the field.  
Consider earning a graduate degree for more job opportunities and advancement.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### **BUSINESS**

Human resources  
Budget analysis  
Management  
Sales/Marketing  
Purchasing  
Management consulting  
Occupational safety coordination  
Public relations

Product and service organizations  
Retail stores  
Hotels  
Restaurants  
Manufacturers  
Insurance companies  
Print and electronic media  
Consulting firms  
Other business corporations  
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.  
Become knowledgeable about corporate social responsibility.

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### **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

*See also What Can I Do With This Major in Global Studies?*

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 (e.g., 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.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### HEALTHCARE

Health services administration:

- Operations
- Finance
- Program management
- Material management
- Human resources
- Medical staff relations
- Information technology
- Marketing
- Public relations
- Facilities
- Patient care
- Provider relations
- Government relations

Health policy:

- Research
- Policy analysis
- Policy development
- Legislative work
- Lobbying

- Hospitals, health systems, and clinics
- Medical groups
- Hospices
- Home health agencies
- Long-term care facilities
- Mental health facilities
- Managed care organizations
- Health finance organizations
- Insurance companies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Academic medical centers
- Federal government agencies
- State government agencies
- Public health departments
- Advocacy groups
- Health foundations
- Nongovernmental agencies (e.g. Red Cross)
- Professional associations (e.g. American Medical Association)

- Supplement your curriculum with business courses.
- Gain experience through internships or jobs in a healthcare setting.
- Develop strong communication and technology skills. Learn how to use database and spreadsheet software.
- Get involved in student government or campus organizations related to health issues.
- Learn to work well on teams and develop strong leadership skills.
- Join related professional organizations and build a network of contacts.
- Stay abreast of news in the healthcare industry.
- Earn a master's degree in public health, health administration, public administration, business, or a related field.
- To prepare for positions in lobbying and legislation, some will earn a law degree.

### LAW

*See also What Can I Do With This Major in Law?*

- Prosecution
- Defense
- Contractual
- Corporate
- Nonprofit/Public interest
- Government
- Mediation
- Other specialties
- Law assistance

- Law firms
- Federal, state, and local government
- Private practice
- Corporations
- Special interest groups
- Universities and colleges
- Legal aid societies
- Nonprofit and public interest organizations (e.g., ACLU, NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Legal Services Corporation)
- Legal clinics
- Other private legal services

- Develop strong research skills and attention to detail.
- Participate in debate or forensic team to hone communication skills.
- Choose courses or a minor to specialize in a particular area of law (e.g., a minor in business for a career in corporate law).
- Find part-time or summer work in a law firm.
- Shadow an attorney to learn more about the field and various specialties.
- Get involved in pre-law organizations.
- Plan to attend law school and earn a law degree.
- Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations. Prepare for the LSAT (Law School Admission Test).
- Obtain specialized certification for paralegal positions.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- An undergraduate degree in Public Administration, with the appropriate experience, is sufficient for entry-level positions in government and business.
- A graduate degree in public administration, public health administration, or business administration helps prepare students for management and upper-level positions. 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 a broad liberal arts background including written and verbal communication, research, and language skills.
- Part-time, summer, internship, and volunteer experiences are extremely helpful to find positions in government affairs, nonprofit 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. Assist with campus, local, or national campaigns to gain experience and build relationships.
- Demonstrate interest/involvement in community affairs and events.
- Join related professional organizations such as the American Society of for Public Administration (ASPA).
- Build 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. Seek the classes and experiences that will best prepare you.
- Develop patience, persistence, and drive in obtaining government positions.
- Explore application to government internship programs specifically for college students, such as the Pathways Program at the federal level.
- Research websites that address various government job opportunities, pay structure, and hiring processes.
- Consider military experience and training or the Peace Corps 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.