

How Can Students Get Involved in Advocacy, Outreach, and Community Service?

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by:

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Student interest in activism and advocacy is at an all-time high, with movements such as Black Lives Matter, the Me Too movement, and LGBTQ+ receiving significant support across college and university campuses. Closely aligned with the drive to create change, public administration, advocacy, and social service graduate programs have become more popular than ever. And that's a good thing for everyone. More people interested in studying social care and public policy issues means more professionals with the knowledge and skills to build stronger, more equitable local, national, and even global communities. It suggests we really can 'build back better'.

If you would like to join this worthy cause and improve the lives of others, here's a glimpse into what working in the advocacy, outreach, and community service sectors looks like. We'll examine what it takes to become a policy leader, how the future of advocacy work may shape up, and what opportunities you can access at a school offering world-class public administration and policy courses for postgrads.

What are advocacy, outreach, and community service?

Advocacy and community services help people access the support they need to live better, safer lives. Advocates and community service workers are often the bridge between their

clients and the organization or institution offering public services. [It's the advocate's job to ensure their clients – regular people with needs not yet met by the system – are treated fairly](#) and given full access to any eligible services. Other advocates work in a managerial capacity to direct public policy and look for ways to improve services.

Why working in advocacy matters

If you're the type of person who wants to make a direct impact, then a career in advocacy or community service is a perfect choice. You can do this on a one-on-one basis by working as a victim advocate or child welfare specialist. However, if you prefer thinking about the big picture and want to shape better public policy, you'll love working for non-profit organizations such as the [Institute for Community Health \(ICH\)](#).

The ICH supports healthcare institutions, government agencies, and community-based organizations in improving and maximizing services. It recently worked with the Consumer Voices for Innovation program to address the health and social impacts of COVID-19. By identifying and evaluating the issues caused by the pandemic, the ICH was able to push through new policies, which increased the number of community health workers and extended a rent moratorium for those who had lost income due to lockdowns.

The 21st-century public service worker

The nature of public service will always require soft, human skills, such as empathy, teamwork, and negotiation. However, rapid innovation and new technologies are changing how we think about public service. And this different approach will require new types of advocates and community workers with a 21st-century skill set.

[A recent report by professional services giant Deloitte](#) finds that the future public service worker will be a highly educated, tech-savvy, and data-driven professional who is comfortable working remotely. Tomorrow's public service workers will no longer be attached to a single career path. Instead, these agile and highly mobile professionals will work on a series of short-term, specialized projects that make a direct social impact.

A big step towards a career in advocacy or community service

Studying for a graduate degree in public policy or community development is one of the best ways to begin your journey toward a [rewarding and meaningful public service career](#). MPAs are postgraduate degrees designed to create future leaders and policy directors. They are ideal for working professionals or graduates with ambitions to work in management roles at governmental agencies, non-profits, world-leading NGOs, or transnational organizations such as the United Nations or the World Health Organization (WHO).

An MPA qualification will also boost your initial career opportunities and earning potential. Having the MPA on your CV shows employers you have a thorough understanding of public policy issues and the ability to develop real-world solutions. The average income for an

entry-level position is \$53,000 per year, significantly more than the average graduate's starting salary. Mid-level positions or roles as an executive director range from \$75,000 to \$80,000 per year.

The Carsey School of Public Policy

The [Carsey School of Public Policy](#) at the University of New Hampshire is a leading, nationally recognized institute renowned for its research, innovative policy education, and civic engagement programs.

Carsey prides itself on taking an evidence-based approach to public policy research, producing highly-skilled graduates who are ready to take on the challenges of today and tomorrow. The school uses the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](#) as a major touchstone. All its programs and initiatives aim to create informed, equitable communities where every person has the chance to succeed and live a meaningful life.

At the Carsey School, our students and alumni strive to serve others in their daily lives and in their careers. Check out the stories of three of our students: Master in Public Policy student Ellie Masson, Master in Community Development student Alena Klimas, and Master in Community Development student Ali Sekou.

The [Carsey School of Public Policy](#) offers three postgraduate degrees for those who want to become future policy leaders.

The first course is a [Master in Public Policy](#) (MPP). This 16-month postgraduate program will teach you all the skills you need to drive real change while navigating the challenges of contemporary policy making. You'll learn to identify root causes, develop transformative and sustainable solutions, and strategically implement your plans on the local, national, or global level.

The Master in Public Policy lets you create a personalized degree based on your interests, skills, and career goals. You'll also get to meet key policymakers in Congress, the government, and advocacy agencies. And you can develop your practical skills and professional networks through the program's [internship opportunities and capstone projects](#).

After graduation, you'll be fully qualified to work as a policy advocate, community outreach partner, government agency officer, or communications officer. The course also lays the groundwork for a career as an elected official.

The second master's degree is Carsey's online [Master in Community Development](#) (MCD) program. Offering a flexible learning experience, this innovative and fully-remote 14-month program is aimed at working professionals who want to take the next step up the career ladder.

All modules are directed and taught by experienced practitioners in economics, finance, organizational management, health and safety, and sustainable development. And although you'll be studying online, there are lots of cooperative learning opportunities and exercises. These create a real sense of community between you and fellow students in your cohort.

Through a combination of coursework and practical case studies, [Carsey students](#) learn the fundamentals of community engagement, giving you a solid understanding of sustainable and effective community development practices. You'll then be able to apply your knowledge across several sectors directly related to public policy and advocacy, including housing, health, finance, business development, and local and national politics.

Specific career options for online Master in Community Development graduates include business development officer, community development director, international development officer, and policy or social impact analyst.

The third is Carsey's [Online Master of Public Administration](#) (MPA), which prepares students for a variety of careers in public and nonprofit institutions, including government administrator, law enforcement professional, research analyst, public affairs coordinator, development and fundraising officer, and city manager. Students study and network with public service professionals and professors who bring strong analysis and best practices to learning.

The curriculum includes courses bringing together concepts from public policy, management, politics and law, providing students with a comprehensive and wide-ranging understanding of what it means to run an organization -- and in doing so bring change to society, improve the lives of citizens on a personal level, and fulfill the promise of democracy.

The Carsey School of Public Policy offers a number of financial aid options to its graduate students in the Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master in Public Policy (MPP), and Master in Community Development (MCD) programs. These include Scholarships available to students, including to University of New Hampshire undergraduates who received a 2021 UNH Sustainability Award; Fellowships for MPP and MCD students; and Education Awards for members of and stakeholders in various public service and community service organizations.

[Stephanie McNally](#) is an MPP student interested in how public policy and advocacy can facilitate more diverse and equitable societies. She says, "With the passions I developed in my undergraduate studies in sociology, I knew I needed to find a way to utilize my skills to make a difference towards a more equitable future. I believe an MPP provides me with the tools I need to work within policy approaches that better consider the needs of a diverse population."

Ethan Pope, National Training Manager at [NeighborWorks America](#) and Assistant Vice President of Community Mortgage Lending at Regions Bank in Chattanooga, TN, and a [current MCD student](#) is also concerned about equality. He wants to help more members of his community find decent, affordable housing. "My learning through the MCD Program is expanding my skill set all the time," says Ethan. "It's making me a well-rounded professional with a broader knowledge base. And I can use that to effectively bridge some of the current disparity gaps in quality housing within the community I live in."

Working in public policy and advocacy isn't a job or career. Instead, it's [a calling for idealistic optimists who want to make the world a better place](#).

Carsey School Admissions Director Dan Bromberg, Admissions Specialist Sanjeev Sharma, and Program Manager Robin Huslage discuss the application process to University of New Hampshire's Graduate programs, including those at the Carsey School of Public Policy.

Article originally appeared on [Masterstudies.com](https://www.masterstudies.com).

- ***Discover the master's degree programs in Community Development, Public Administration, and Public Policy available from the Carsey School.***

Tags:

[master in community development](#)

[public service](#)

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