



Economics Career Development Office

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Public Policy & Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) Career Guide

About Public Policy & NGOs

Public policy is a set of laws, regulations, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promoted by a governmental entity to address societal problems. Public policy is created through a complex process that involves and is influenced by government officials, interest groups, business leaders, academic experts, and the public. Economics is a valuable tool for policy professionals because it can help them understand how different policies affect businesses, consumers, the environment and the global economy. Policy professionals work to test and shape the laws and regulations that govern our society, and they can have a profound impact on people's lives. There are many different career paths in policy, from working in government or regulated industries to working for think tanks and advocacy groups.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are usually non-profit organizations that are dedicated to a particular cause, such as poverty reduction, environmental protection, or human rights. NGOs can be local, national, or international. NGOs provide services that governments may not be able to provide, such as education, healthcare, and disaster relief. They also advocate for policy change and raise awareness of important issues. Economics can be beneficial to NGOs to understand the economic implications of their work, raise funds, advocate for policy change, and manage their resources effectively.

Recommended Courses

Core Electives in the major

- Econ 410 Introductory Econometrics (*Especially useful for policy research/analysis)
- Econ 441 Analytical Public Finance
- Econ 448 Human Resources and Economic Growth
- Econ 460 Economic Forecasting

Applied Electives in the major

- Econ 370 Economics of Poverty and Inequality
- Econ 371 Energy, Resources and Economics
- Econ 420 Urban and Regional Economics
- Econ 421 Economic Decision Analysis
- Econ 449 Government and Natural Resources
- Econ 474 Economic Problems of Developing Areas

Suggested Courses Outside of the Department of Economics

- Civil Society & Community Studies 430 Fundraising & Development for Nonprofit Organizations
- Public Affairs 200 Contemporary Public Policy Issues
- Public Affairs 380 Analytic Tools of Public Policy
- Public Affairs 285 Strategic Public Management
- Political Science 359 American Foreign Policy
- Political Science 405 State Government & Public Policy

Relevant Majors & Certificates

Majors:

- [Political Science](#) (L&S)
- [Community & Nonprofit Leadership](#) (SoHE)
- [Legal Studies](#) (L&S)
- [International Studies](#) (L&S)

Certificates:

- [Political Science](#) (L&S)
- [Political Economy, Philosophy, and Politics Certificate](#) (L&S)
- [Public Policy](#) (L&S)

Relevant Student Organizations & Involvement

- [Political Science Student Association](#)
- [Leading Women of Tomorrow – UW Madison](#)
- [Leaders Igniting Transformation](#)
- [Sifting & Winnowing](#) - The Wisconsin Undergraduate Journal of Law, Political Science and Public Policy
- [Equilibrium](#) – Wisconsin Undergraduate Journal of Economics
- [Federal Reserve Challenge](#)

Search <https://win.wisc.edu/organizations> for additional student organizations.

Sample Job Titles

- Research Assistant
- Policy Analyst
- Legislative Aide, Assistant, or Analyst
- Government Relations Associate
- Lobbyist
- Project Assistant
- Data Analyst

Job and Internship Search Resources

- [Morgridge Center for Public Service](#) – hosts the [Public Service Fair](#) each semester and a variety of service-oriented volunteer programs and on-campus jobs
- [Guidestar](#) – search for US-based nonprofits and filter by subject area and/or geography
- [Non Governmental Organizations](#) – lists of NGOs and think tanks based on area of focus from UC Berkeley Library
- [Public Policy Research Think Tanks](#) – guide with tabs based on area of research and geographic location from Penn Libraries

- [Idealist](#) – the world’s largest social-impact job board
- [Wisconsin in Washington, DC Internship Program](#) – program through UW to spend the summer or a semester interning and taking classes in Washington, DC
- [Government, Policy, International Affairs, & Law Career Community](#) through SuccessWorks – subscribe to their newsletter [HERE](#)
- [Internship Board for Political Science Department](#)
- La Follette School of Public Affairs job search resources by [sector](#) AND [policy areas](#)
- [Handshake](#) - Find internships and jobs, as well as info sessions and workshops on campus
- [Indeed](#) – Search for internships and jobs by job title, company name, city, state and more
- [LinkedIn](#) – Create a professional social media profile to connect with peers, colleagues, and employers; follow companies of interest to learn about job postings and news.

Exploratory and Diversity Programs:

- [Wisconsin Women’s Network](#) offers opportunities for students through their Mentorship Program and Policy Institute
- [The Sadie Collective](#) offers a variety of programs focused on the success of Black women in economics and related fields (finance, policy, etc.) including an Exploring Career Pathways Conference and Research Symposium.
- [LGBTQ+ Victory Institute](#) offers internships, fellowships and trainings to identify and prepare a diverse pipeline of LGBTQ+ leaders to advance equality through public service.

Gain Technical Skills

- [DoIt Software Training for Students](#) - free workshops including Microsoft Excel, Python and more!
- [LinkedIn Learning](#) - free access to online trainings approved by LinkedIn
- [SSCC Training Classes](#) - free classes on various software including Stata and R

Additional Resources for Career Exploration

- [Economic Career Development Office](#) – get career guidance, resume and cover letter reviews, and interview tips
- [Exploring Careers in Policy](#) from SuccessWorks Career Communities