



Brandeis

THE HELLER SCHOOL
FOR SOCIAL POLICY
AND MANAGEMENT

MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY MPP

**Analyzing inequities.
Creating solutions.**

- Economic and Racial Equity
- Health Policy
- Social Policy
- Women, Gender and Sexuality

heller.brandeis.edu/mpp



A World Facing Unprecedented Social Challenges

Creating social transformation is about solving problems, especially those that appear vast and — at first glance — impossible to overcome. As a society, we face many such challenges — everything from persistent racial and economic disparities to systemic barriers to accessing health care. To develop solutions to these and other structural inequities, we must pursue substantive social change informed by policy analysis, research, and experiential knowledge.

At the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, we interrogate these far-reaching issues through an intersectional analysis that includes race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and disability and develop processes and policies that fuel positive change for all.

As a Master of Public Policy program that prepares students to address injustice through effective policymaking, we embrace diversity, inclusion, and equity across every aspect of our program, from the content of our curriculum to the studies conducted in our research institutes. Like the broader Heller School community, we are committed to crafting an experience of belonging and affirmation for every MPP student.

Unlike most graduate-level public policy programs that cover a broad range of policy areas, we are located within a graduate school that has nine research centers that focus exclusively on social policy issues. We dive deep into our area of expertise, equipping our students with a comprehensive, interdisciplinary perspective that is informed by economics, political science, and sociology.

Building a Broader Understanding

We teach students to think beyond current structures and to pursue tangible progress through feasible yet innovative approaches to social change. Our students learn about the broader context surrounding social issues, the systemic inequities that exacerbate them, and the analytical tools used to assess root causes and implement equitable solutions.

At Heller, we are proud to be a diverse and supportive community of faculty committed to using knowledge to advance social justice. We live at the intersection of research and public policy - a place where policy impacts people.

Develop Viable Solutions

Our core curriculum will challenge you to develop viable solutions to complex social issues in an ever-changing political environment. When paired with a focused social policy concentration, it will give you a broad academic framework and the targeted skills you need to impact individuals, communities, and systems. In our program, you will learn how to:

- Evaluate social policies and programs through quantitative and qualitative research tools
- Apply theoretical frameworks to uncover the root causes of social problems and develop innovative policy solutions
- Determine the operating systems of policy-related organizations and how the field is organized
- Understand the history of social welfare policy and how government institutions, interest groups, political parties, and leaders shape public policy
- Dissect the dynamics of power and identify how those dynamics maintain inequities
- Assess how advocacy and strategic communications frame policies and influence policy adoption
- Demonstrate competence in research, policy design, and evaluation of social policies through coursework, internships, and a capstone policy analysis project
- Develop expertise in a specific social policy area, such as economic and racial equity; health policy; social policy; or women, gender, and sexuality
- Advance your communication skills, with a focus on writing and public speaking



Program Structure

Full-time Enrollment

Fall admission

Two-year program:

- Year One: August-May
- Optional Summer Internship
- Year Two: August-May

Sample Courses:

- Perspectives on Economic and Racial Equity
- LGBTQ+ Justice: A History of Pride, Prejudice, and Policy in the United States
- Issues in National Health Policy

Core Curriculum and Concentrations

The program requires students to complete 56 credits over two years in person on campus. Core curriculum coursework covers three primary categories: concepts, methods, and tools. Across the curriculum, students explore how aspects of identity and equitable access impact social policy and its implementation. In addition to the core curriculum, we require a minimum of three concentration courses, allowing students to develop deeper knowledge in the specific language, literature, and networks of a particular policy area. MPP concentrations are all linked to Heller's renowned research institutes and centers.

Concentrations:

- Economic and Racial Equity
- Health Policy
- Social Policy
- Women, Gender and Sexuality

Summer Internship

During the summer between your first and second year, you'll put your emerging skills into practice through social policy internships that take you across Boston and beyond. These experiential learning opportunities allow you to explore a range of careers within the social policy space — from roles within research organizations, to nonprofit organizations, to municipal, state, or federal government agencies. You'll apply the research methods and abstract concepts that you learned in the classroom to a workplace setting — where they can lead to meaningful change.

Select MPP internship placements include:

- National Partnership for Women & Families
- Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center
- Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- The Alliance of Community Health Plans
- Urban Institute

Capstone Project

The program culminates in a semester-long capstone project designed to highlight the policy analysis skills you gained during your first three semesters. After selecting a topic area within your concentration, you'll build your project over 13 weeks — a time frame that mirrors what's required to prepare a real-world policy brief. The final result is a 25-30 page brief and supporting oral presentation that diagnoses a policy problem, evaluates the political opportunity context, weighs the pros and cons of different solutions, and settles on a recommendation.

Outcomes

After graduation, MPP students use their skills, knowledge, and passion to address persistent inequities with real-world policy solutions. Our robust alumni network provides Heller graduates with the professional connections and support they need to effect structural change in their careers. Some — such as those working in federal, state, or local government — pursue social change from the inside. Others address social challenges from the outside through work for advocacy organizations that advance equity and justice for marginalized communities.

Select placements for our graduates include:

- Council of State Governments
Justice Center Policy Analyst
- Mayor's Office of Black Male Advancement, City of Boston
Policy and Research Manager
- State of Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research
Legislative Analyst
- Congressional Black Caucus
Sustainability Consultant
- Budget and Tax Center at the North Carolina Justice Center
State Policy Fellow
- Center for the Study of Social Policy
Policy Analyst
- Partners HealthCare
Health Policy and Contracting Specialist
- RTI International
Research Health Economist

Why Heller?

Our program offers a range of compelling advantages for students who are passionate about earning a degree that prepares them to make a meaningful impact:

- Connect to a broad network of faculty, students, and alumni who share your passion for social justice
- Learn policy design, analysis, implementation, and evaluation using an intersectional approach
- Take what you learn and make the difference you want and the changes the world needs
- Become part of a community of current and future social policy change agents who are committed to “knowledge advancing social justice”
- Access opportunities for additional work and research experience in one of our 9 research centers that will accelerate the next step in your career

Admissions

We seek students who are committed to finding solutions to the world's most pressing social problems and who are passionate about putting those solutions into action. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints.

Scholarships

All Heller applicants are automatically considered for merit-based scholarships when they apply for one of our graduate degree programs, and 95 percent of MPP students receive a scholarship upon their admission.

Perspectives from Our Alumni

“The Heller MPP program allowed me to select courses in my specific policy interest. I was able to narrow my focus on policies impacting immigrant youth, LGBT youth, youth experiencing homelessness, and much more. The Heller MPP capstone prepared me to conduct an in-depth analysis of these policies and speak confidently about them. At MIRA Coalition, I now employ the skills I gained at Heller to advocate for immigrant and refugee families by providing information to policy-makers, service providers, and the media.”

—Catherine Ramirez Mejia, MPP'21

Access and Resource Specialist

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition

“My Heller experience really gave me the foundation I needed to do the work I do now. The classwork definitely gave me experience with tools that I use on the job, but perhaps bigger than that it gave me the context for policymaking and analysis while giving me the chance to learn how bright, like-minded individuals with different backgrounds and experiences were thinking of different issues. I find that insight gained from classmates and professors sticks with me the most.”

—Pierre Holmes, MPP'22

Policy Analyst

RAND

“It's very rare to be in a space where so many people are passionate advocates and conscientious about issues that are unfolding in the world. The relationships that I've built within Heller are the things that I hope to take with me for the rest of my life.”

—Mariela Martinez, MPP'22

Analyst

U.S. Government Accountability Office

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