Cal Poly Pomona

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

YOU KNOW HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS. THE MPA GIVES YOU THE AUTHORITY TO CHANGE IT.

NASPAA-accredited. 100% online. Built for public servants who are ready to lead.

$81K+
Average salary for MPA graduates (PayScale, 2024). Director and executive roles earn significantly more.

NASPAA
Accredited — the global standard of excellence in public administration education

30 UNITS
Online. Evening and weekend scheduling for working public servants.

100%
Your public service record speaks for itself

NASPAA Accreditation — Why It Matters for Your Career

NASPAA is the global accreditor for public administration, public policy, and public affairs graduate programs. Fewer than 200 programs worldwide hold NASPAA accreditation. Cal Poly Pomona's MPA is one of them.

For public sector professionals, NASPAA accreditation is the signal that government employers, hiring panels, and civil service systems recognize. When your application for a director-level role includes a NASPAA-accredited degree, the credential speaks before you do.

> *NASPAA accreditation is granted through rigorous peer review and requires ongoing demonstration of student learning outcomes, faculty qualifications, and program quality. It is not a checkbox. It is a sustained commitment to excellence in public service education.*

Curriculum Overview

The MPA is an 11-course program (9 core courses plus 2 electives) culminating in a capstone project that addresses a real policy or organizational challenge. All coursework is delivered online with evening and weekend scheduling.

#	Course	What It Builds
01	**Public Administration Theory and Practice**	How public organizations are structured, how they make decisions, and the theories that explain why they succeed or fail. The conceptual foundation for everything that follows.
02	**Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation**	Analyze, design, and evaluate policies that address public challenges. The analytical tools that move you from implementing decisions to making them.

03	**Public Budgeting and Financial Management**	Government finance, budget cycles, revenue analysis, and fiscal decision-making. The fluency every public sector leader needs and most never formally develop.
04	**Human Resources and Labor Relations in Public Organizations**	Civil service systems, collective bargaining, workforce development, and the HR landscape specific to government and nonprofit management.
05	**Leadership and Organizational Behavior**	How effective public leaders build trust, navigate political environments, manage change, and sustain performance inside complex bureaucratic systems.
06	**Research Methods for Public Administrators**	Design research that informs decisions. Evaluate evidence. Communicate findings to stakeholders with different levels of technical literacy.
07	**Ethics, Equity, and Social Justice in Public Service**	The ethical frameworks and equity lenses that should shape every public sector decision. Applied to real policy design and program delivery contexts.
08	**Intergovernmental Relations and Nonprofit Management**	How government and nonprofit organizations interact, collaborate, and sometimes conflict. Built for professionals who work across sectors.
09	**Capstone Seminar in Public Administration**	A real policy or organizational challenge identified from your professional context, addressed through applied research, stakeholder analysis, and professional presentation.

Electives (Choose 2)

Elective offerings include Public Program Management, Urban and Regional Planning, Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Nonprofit Leadership, and Public Sector Innovation. Elective availability is confirmed by the program office each semester.

Program Format and Schedule

Format

100% online. Evening and weekend scheduling. No daytime class requirements. Built around the reality of a working public servant's schedule.

Completion Timeline

Most students complete the MPA in two years while remaining in their full-time public sector roles.

Admission Cycles

Fall and Spring admission. Two entry points per year. No GRE or GMAT required.

Application Deadline

July 1, 2027, for Fall 2027 admission. Rolling review — earlier applications receive earlier decisions.

Tuition and Financial Aid

Cal Poly Pomona is a CSU institution. MPA tuition is significantly below comparable private public administration graduate programs. The total program cost varies by per-unit rate and applicable fees. Current tuition rates are available on the CPP Graduate Admissions website.

Financial aid is available through CPP's Financial Aid office. Many California government agencies offer employee education benefits. LA County, the City of Los Angeles, and many California state agencies have tuition assistance programs. Ask your HR department — the benefit is more common than most public servants realize.

Admissions Requirements

Required for Application

- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution
- Statement of purpose — describe your public service background and career goals.
- Official transcripts from all degree-granting institutions
- Professional resume
- Two letters of recommendation from supervisors or academic references

Not Required

- GRE or GMAT — neither is required for MPA admission.
- Prior government or public sector work experience — encouraged but not mandatory.

Career Outcomes

MPA graduates advance into roles including Department Director, Division Manager, Policy Analyst, Nonprofit Executive Director, City or County Manager, and Public Affairs Officer. Alumni serve government agencies, nonprofits, NGOs, and higher education institutions in Southern California and beyond.

Many California city, county, and state government classification systems list graduate degrees — specifically from NASPAA-accredited programs — as preferred or required qualifications for senior and director-level civil service positions. The MPA is the credential that opens those doors.

Questions? Contact the Program Directly.

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Apply online: https://calstate.edu/apply

Program page: https://www.cpp.edu/cpge/degree-programs/public-administration