ON CAMPUS — IN THE WORLD

Through research, teaching, and engagement with practitioners, Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government improves public policy and public leadership so that people can live in safer, freer, more just, and more prosperous societies.

Our faculty, students, staff, 20,000 degree program alumni, and 50,000 executive education participants tackle a diverse range of public challenges in the United States and around the world.

The stories on the following pages show just a few of the ways we are advancing six priorities at Harvard Kennedy School:

- Making democracy count
- Improving public services
- Expanding economic opportunity
- Enhancing global security and human rights
- Strengthening public leadership
- Expanding our reach
We make democracy count for more people in the United States and around the world.

Encouraging Voting

Seth Flaxman MPP 2011 and Kathryn Peters MPP 2011 built TurboVote, an online tool that helps people register to vote and get information about upcoming elections. Flaxman and Peters are pushing for 80 percent voter turnout in U.S. elections by 2024.

Campaigning for Change

Guillaume Liegey MPA 2010, Brune Poixson MPA 2017, Delphine O MPP 2014, and Amélie de Montchalin MPA 2014 worked on the successful campaign of French President Emmanuel Macron. After Macron’s 2017 win, O, de Montchalin, and Poixson took government positions in France. Poixson observed, “It’s an amazing job, being part of the French government at such a turning point in French history.”

Media and Politics

The Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy is exploring ways to maintain robust traditional media and to make emerging media accountable. Nicco Mele, lecturer in public policy and director of the Shorenstein Center and former deputy publisher of the Los Angeles Times, has said, “At this critical moment for media and politics, a healthy digital future for journalism remains one of the great challenges of our era, and is essential to a healthy democracy.”

Negotiation and Legislation

Negotiation and political experts at the Kennedy School—including Adams Professor of Political Leadership and Democratic Values Jane Mansbridge, winner of the 2018 Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science—are developing case studies to understand more deeply the dynamics of successful cross-partisan legislating and are creating tools and training materials that legislators can use.

Cyber Defense

The Defending Digital Democracy project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs develops strategies and tools to protect democratic processes from cyber and other information attacks. Eric Rosenbach, co-director of the Belfer Center and lecturer in public policy, has observed, “State and local election officials are now on the front lines of a battle to maintain trust and confidence in America’s digital democracy.”
We help cities, states, and countries improve public services for their citizens.

Lab Results
The Government Performance Lab, led by Jeffrey Liebman, Malcolm Wiener Professor of Public Policy and director of the Taubman Center for State and Local Government, works with state and local governments to improve public services. To address the growing problem of homelessness in Seattle, the lab provided pro bono technical assistance to the mayor’s office, the city’s human services department, and five service contractors as they reworked homeless services contracts.

Field Work
Our experiential learning courses give students the opportunity to work on real problems in local governments. Our field courses include “Greater Boston Applied Field Lab: Advanced Budgeting, Financial Management and Operations” and “Innovation Field Lab,” which pairs students with local government leaders in five Massachusetts cities to solve public problems.

Training Mayors
The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative engages mayors and their senior staff from cities around the world. This initiative is a joint program of Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and led by Jorrit de Jong, lecturer in public policy and management.

Creating Social Change
Julie Battilana, Alan L. Gleitsman Professor of Social Innovation, leads the Social Innovation and Change Initiative, which examines how to create and implement sustainable social change. Through the Cheng Fellowship, the initiative provides financial support to students tackling pressing social problems through innovation by governments, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit enterprises.

Getting Smart and Going Digital
Data-Smart City Solutions is helping 100 mid-sized American cities use data to improve services. The project is led by Stephen Goldsmith, Daniel Paul Professor of the Practice of Government, director of the Innovations in American Government Program, and former mayor of Indianapolis and deputy mayor of New York. David Eaves, lecturer in public policy, leads the Kennedy School’s digital HKS project, which is creating new courses and case studies that help students learn the perspectives and tools needed to thrive in a digital age. Eaves has been named to Apolitical’s list of the world’s 100 most influential people in digital government.

“We have a hundred years of research on how to maximize commercial value; it’s time to focus on understanding how to generate social value.”

JULIE BATTLIANA, Alan L. Gleitsman Professor of Social Innovation
We work to expand economic opportunity so that everyone has a fair chance to get ahead.

Closing the Gap

The Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP) is a center for research and outreach on gender inequality and is co-led by Iris Rabinovitch Pratt Professor of Business and Government and academic dean, and Hannah Riley Bowles, Roy E. Larsen Senior Lecturer in Public Policy. As part of an ongoing project on gender and technology, WAPPP is conducting research and hosting events on how to remove gender bias in the technology sector and level the playing field. Policymakers can also access WAPPP’s online research repository, the Gender Action Portal (GAP), which has helped inform the U.K. Government Equalities Office’s guidelines on how to narrow the gender pay gap.

Increasing Mobility

David Ellwood, faculty director of the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy and Isabelle and Scott Black Professor of Political Economy, chaired the U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, a project that brought together practitioners and scholars from across the political spectrum and across the country. Its aim was to develop strategies to help “all people achieve a reasonable standard of living with the dignity that comes from having power over their lives and being engaged in and valued by their community.”

The World at Work

Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) aims to improve lives across the globe by generating evidence that leads to more effective and sustainable policies. Rema Hanna, EPoD co-director and Jeffrey Cheah Professor of South-East Asia Studies, has studied how financial incentives for teachers may decrease teacher absenteeism and increase students’ test scores. She has also examined ways to reduce severe poverty in Indonesia and the effects of pollution in Mexico City on people’s health and ability to work.

Tackling Inequality

The Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy’s Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality and Social Policy is a nexus for work on inequality across Harvard. Complex puzzles like inequality benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that generates new insights. Courses at the Kennedy School like “Race, Inequality, and American Democracy,” taught by Khalil Muhammad, professor of history, race, and public policy, address the challenges of inequality. The Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government also features an evolving collection of Harvard research on jobs, inequality, and the prevention of financial crises through its GrowthPolicy.org portal.

Mapping Opportunity

Ricardo Hausmann, professor of the practice of economic development and director of the Center for International Development, spearheaded the creation of the Atlas of Economic Complexity, a data visualization tool for exploring global trade dynamics over time and discovering new growth opportunities in countries across the world.
Our ideas in action around the world

Serving Through Leadership Field Experiences
With support from the Center for Public Leadership, students who are dedicated to transformative leadership and social change take part in field experience trips across the United States. In 2018, students traveled to Kentucky, meeting with the mayor of Lexington and state lawmakers from both political parties. They also traveled to Appalachia to discuss social innovation and health issues with local government, nonprofit, and private sector leaders.

Preparing Students to Run for Office
From Harvard Square to the Oval Office: A Political Campaign Practicum is a non-partisan initiative of the Women and Public Policy Program that trains Harvard graduate students to run for office at the local, state, and national levels in the United States and around the world. Alumnae of the program include Ethel Branch MPH/ID 2008, the attorney general of the Navajo Nation, and Tamar Chugashvili MC/MPA 2015, a member of parliament in the country of Georgia.

Building Better Cities Everywhere
The Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative provides training to mayors and their senior staff from cities in the United States and across the globe. The program aims to reach leaders from 240 cities around the world over the course of four years. The mayor of Fortaleza, Brazil, Roberto Cláudio, observed that the program helped him develop a greater sense of shared purpose with his colleagues: “There is a feeling of being part of the team.”

Supporting International Development
The Center for International Development’s Growth Lab helps policymakers understand the dynamics of growth in developing countries through tools like the Atlas of Economic Complexity. And Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) works with policymakers across the globe to develop evidence-based policy. EPoD projects have focused on industrial pollution in India, research on industrial pollution in India, and the 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Training Leaders Around the World
HKS Executive Education offers short-term programs for global leaders and policymakers, including “Implementing Public Policy,” “Leadership for the 21st Century,” “Cybersecurity,” and “Infrastructure in a Market Economy: Public-Private Partnerships in a Changing World.” Roughly half of participants come from outside the United States. We also offer customized programs for global leaders and have run programs in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and elsewhere.

Understanding Global Human Rights Concerns
The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy focuses on humanitarian crises, migration, corruption, and other aspects of human rights that affect people across the planet. In 2018, the center marked the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 20th anniversary of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court through a number of landmark conferences, lectures, and other events.
We enhance global security and human rights so that people can live safer and freer lives.

Reading Rights
Ryan Family Professor of Human Rights Policy Kathryn Sikkink presents a case for renewed optimism about human rights in her book Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21st Century, and Dara Kay Cohen, Ford Foundation Associate Professor of Public Policy, shines a light on sexual assault in times of conflict in her book Rape During Civil War.

Focusing on China
The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation is home to the Kennedy School’s China Programs, which produce research on China’s growing role in the world, provide training and workshops, and host fellows from American and Chinese universities. Anthony Saich, director of the Ash Center and Daewoo Professor of International Affairs, has conducted detailed surveys of Chinese satisfaction with government. His research reveals differences in approval ratings based on the level of government and on respondents’ region and income level.

Arctic Awareness
For the fourth consecutive year, a delegation of Kennedy School students, faculty, and staff took part in the Arctic Circle Assembly in Iceland in October 2018 and presented ideas for dealing with the rapid climate change that is occurring in the Arctic and is a bellwether for changes expected around the globe. This trip was part of a new course organized by the Belfer Center’s Arctic Initiative, a joint project of the Environment and Natural Resources Program and the Science, Technology, and Public Policy Program.

Training Leaders in National Security
The National Security Fellows program is a closed-enrollment fellowship for U.S. military and civilian officials from the intelligence community. National Security Fellows study a wide range of public management and security issues. More than 600 people have completed the program since 1985.

“The experience deepened my understanding of current security issues, and strengthened my decision-making and teamworking skills to work more effectively in the Washington policy arena.”

Bruce R. StubbS SES, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations and Deputy Director of the Strategy and Policy Division N91B, Department of the Navy; participant in “Senior Executives in National and International Security” executive education program.

Safeguarding Security
Ash Carter, former U.S. secretary of defense, is the Belfer Professor of Technology and Global Affairs and director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs—which in 2019 was ranked the world’s best university-affiliated think tank for the sixth year in a row. The Belfer Center addresses a wide array of challenges in international relations, security, climate change, energy policy, and diplomacy. It has projects focused on North Korea, Iran, and many other countries and regions.
We strengthen public leadership by training principled and effective public leaders.

Peacemakers

Former President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos

Former President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, MC/MPA 1981, won the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize for his work to end the 52-year civil war between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Santos said that Ronald Heifetz, King Hussein Bin Talal Senior Lecturer in Public Leadership, once gave him “a wise piece of advice: Whenever you feel discouraged, tired, pessimistic, talk with the victims. They will give you the push and strength to keep you going.”

Pathbreakers

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, MPA 1971, was the first democratically elected female head of state in Africa, serving as president of Liberia from 2006 to 2018. Sirleaf was one of the winners of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, receiving the award for her efforts to build peace in Liberia, promote economic and social development, and advance rights for women.

Nurturing the Next Generation

David Gergen

David Gergen, public service professor of public leadership, political commentator, former presidential advisor, and bestselling author, works closely with a rising generation of public leaders. “It is important for young leaders, or aspiring leaders, to have role models, someone that they can look up to, and it helps to formulate their own ideas of how they can achieve great things,” Gergen said.

A Forum for Debate

The John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum at the Institute of Politics is Harvard’s premier arena for political speech and debate, and it regularly hosts world leaders and prominent public figures. All speakers must agree to take unfiltered audience questions as part of their talks.

Student Leaders

Every year, about 1,000 students from about 90 countries and territories learn to apply practical skills and hone the values needed to solve public problems through our master’s and doctoral degree programs. Our students are active both in class and outside of class, where they participate in more than 80 student-run organizations, 12 student publications, nine student-led policy conferences, and the Kennedy School Student Government.

“By choosing the right values and living up to them consistently, citizens and leaders can be much more effective at solving public problems and making people’s lives better.”

DOUGLAS ELMENDORF, Dean and Don K. Price Professor of Public Policy
We expand our reach through excellence in teaching, research, and engagement with practitioners.

Online Learning

We are developing a new set of online learning experiences designed for mid-career professionals in public service who are unable to come to the Kennedy School for the time required for a traditional master’s degree. Our new program of six-week courses will cover three key areas of the Kennedy School’s curriculum: evidence for decisions, policy design and delivery, and leadership and ethics.

Getting Organized

Rita E. Hauser Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Organizing, and Civil Society Marshall Ganz, a veteran grassroots organizer, teaches popular degree program courses and executive education programs on organizing and public narrative. “Marshall Ganz influenced the way I think about leadership,” says Omar Yankar MPP 2010, who founded a public charter school for low-income students in El Paso, Texas, after graduating from the Kennedy School.

Reaching Out

Through our executive education programs, we provide training to leaders in governments, nonprofit, and businesses from the United States and roughly 140 countries around the world. About 50,000 participants have taken our executive education courses over the last 40 years. Each year now we train roughly 4,000 leaders committed to serving the public interest.

Policy Analysis Exercise

MPP students point to the Policy Analysis Exercise—the capstone requirement—as a highlight of the program. Students develop solutions for policy or management challenges presented by real-world client organizations, drawing on the technical skills and knowledge they have gained at the Kennedy School. Ethan Forsgren MPP 2018 worked with University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics and University of Iowa Health Alliance to analyze Medicaid-managed care in Iowa, and Sophie Feintuch MPP 2018, who conducted fieldwork in the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, helped the International Rescue Committee improve a parenting program.

Teaching with Technology

The Teachly app helps faculty members learn more about their students and give each student a fair opportunity to participate in classroom discussions. Dan Levy, senior lecturer in public policy, and several colleagues developed this digital tool to track classroom participation and help create a more personalized learning experience for students.
Our Educational Programs

Harvard Kennedy School offers one- and two-year master’s degree programs in public policy and public administration, small and highly selective doctoral programs, and dozens of executive education programs. All of our students learn from our faculty of renowned scholars and seasoned practitioners, while engaging with visiting public leaders and policymakers and with their talented classmates.

Master’s Programs
• Master in Public Policy | MPP
• Master in Public Administration in International Development | MPA/ID
• Master in Public Administration | MPA
• Mid-Career Master in Public Administration | MC/MPA
• Joint & Concurrent Degrees

Doctoral Programs
• PhD in Political Economy & Government
• PhD in Public Policy
• PhD in Health Policy
• PhD in Social Policy

Executive Education
Our open enrollment and custom programs convene thinkers and doers from around the globe who are committed to advancing the public interest. The programs—most one week or less—offer senior leaders the opportunity to step outside of their day-to-day routine and reach beyond their current knowledge and skills to expand their thinking and strengthen their ability to lead.

Our Centers for Research and Practice

Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government generates world-changing ideas and puts them into practice every day. The faculty, students, staff, and fellows at our research centers tackle a diverse range of public challenges in the United States and around the world. Our centers are focal points for analysis and action.

Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation
Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs
Carr Center for Human Rights Policy
Center for International Development
Center for Public Leadership
Institute of Politics
Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy
Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government
Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy
Taubman Center for State and Local Government
Women and Public Policy Program

Ask what you can do.