NKU’s Master of Public Administration program began in 1989, and it is currently the only one in the Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati region. It is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). The MPA program is a 39-credit hour professional program that provides managerial, communication and human relations skills and knowledge in preparation for advancement in a variety of public sector and related careers. The program also allows students to concentrate their studies in: Nonprofit Management, Metropolitan Governance, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, or General Public Management.

**Careers in Public Administration**

An MPA degree prepares individuals for management and leadership in government agencies at the federal, state and local levels as well as nonprofit organizations. The following is a sampling of jobs held by NKU alumni and students: policy analyst in the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO); director at a VA Medical Center; agent in the FBI; staff members for national and state legislators; city and township managers; fire and police chiefs; county government program managers in the areas of environmental services, public health and parks; and various positions in nonprofit organizations, including the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Dress for Success, St. Joseph’s Orphanage, Cincinnati Zoo, United Way and Nationwide Children’s Hospital Foundation.

**Faculty expertise**

Most courses are taught by full-time faculty with doctoral degrees and strong records of scholarly and applied research. Some courses are taught by seasoned practitioners who discuss current issues and best practices in the public and nonprofit sectors.

**Small classes**

MPA classes tend to have 10 to 20 students. These small classes provide a context for deep and meaningful interactions among faculty and students.

**Networking**

The Public Administration Student Society (PASS) organizes panel discussions, service projects and social events. In addition, MPA alumni have one of the most active associations at NKU. Each year, students, alumni and faculty participate in a fall reception, spring banquet and “graduation celebration.” These events encourage continuous networking and lifelong learning.

Dr. Julie Olberding, MPA program director. 
Click on the picture to see the an interview on YouTube with Dr. Olberding
Master of Public Administration

Active and Engaged Learning
Students in NKU's MPA program have many opportunities to actively engage in public administration and nonprofit management in the “real world” – locally and globally.

Service Learning
Many classes in the MPA program involve a service learning project for which students apply knowledge and skills in a way that helps a local government agency or nonprofit organization. In the planning and community development course, students have analyzed demographic, economic and workforce development data to assess current economic situation of Ludlow, Kentucky and other cities.

In the volunteer management course, students have developed handbooks and proposals for nonprofits, such as the Foundation for Ohio River Education (FORE), Cinderella’s Closet and WNKU. For a couple years, MPA students in emergency management and homeland security classes traveled to the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina to help cleanup, rebuild and re-create government records.

Student Philanthropy
A few MPA classes have a student philanthropy component that allows students to get hands-on experience with grant making, which helps them to improve their grant seeking skills. Through the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project, the resource acquisition class has worked with Citigroup and Toyota to evaluate real grant applications submitted by nonprofit organizations, conduct additional research and site visits, and make funding recommendations.

Shadowing
One assignment in the local government management course requires students to “shadow” a city or township manager or other higher-level local official. This is one of the best ways for students to learn first-hand about the important issues and activities in local government as well as the challenges and rewards of this career path.

Travel Abroad
A dozen MPA students recently traveled to Bangladesh to study micro-credit at the Grameen Bank with Dr. Muhammad Yunus, both of which were awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for creating economic and social development among the poor. Students visited villages to witness how lives can be changed by very small loans – the equivalent of only a few American dollars.

Capstone
A key assignment in the capstone course is a research project that has benefits beyond the classroom. Students have conducted citizen satisfaction surveys for Covington and Boone County, written redevelopment plans for declining cities and neighborhoods, and developed grant proposals for nonprofit organizations. In addition, MPA Advisory Board members work with capstone students to hone their job application and interviewing skills.
**MPA Core Courses**
All MPA students take a total of 27 credit hours in required classes. These core classes are designed to provide a solid foundation of knowledge and skills for the public sector. They include topics on human resource management, organizational behavior, public policy, budgeting, administrative law, research methods and data analysis. A capstone course is required for all MPA students during the last 9 hours of the curriculum.

**Nonprofit Management Concentration**
This concentration focuses on managing nonprofit organizations, resource acquisition and management, and volunteer management.

Students can choose electives in grants writing, strategic planning, program evaluation, nonprofit information management and nonprofit laws.

**Homeland Security and Emergency Management Concentration**
Courses within this concentration deal with homeland security, emergency management, terrorism, criminal justice administration, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and volunteer management.

**Metropolitan Governance Concentration**
Students in this concentration focus on local government management as well as planning and community development. They choose from electives in executive management, administrative ethics, urban revitalization, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

**General Public Management Concentration**
This concentration provides students with the flexibility to select courses based on their career needs and aspirations. Students in this concentration are required to take administrative ethics and then they can select a total of nine credit hours from electives in the MPA program.

Visit the MPA web site [psc-cj.nku.edu/programs/public/masters/mpacourses](psc-cj.nku.edu/programs/public/masters/mpacourses) for a complete list of courses offered for each concentration.