HARRIS POLICY LABS

Gain real-world policy experience while pursuing your degree.

THE PROGRAM

At Harris, your classroom isn't limited to four walls. With Policy Labs, your policy education moves from theory to practice as you apply skills to policy challenges in the field. Guided by a Harris faculty member and a professional advisor, you'll apply tools and methodologies from your coursework to develop real-world policy solutions.

Key Benefits

- Advise client organizations and gain consulting experience
- Develop policy recommendations and impact policy outcomes
- Present research to client leadership and expand your networks
- Gain a competitive advantage in the job market and prepare for your job search

Program Structure

- Weekly class meeting
- Team and client meetings
- Site visits
- Professional development sessions
- Final presentation and report to client

"Policy Labs taught me to translate our client's needs into specific questions and define a framework to provide answers that are timely, methodologically strong, and with actionable recommendations."

—**Claudia Figueroa**, MPP'16
Research Fellow
Inter-American Development Bank

"My Policy Lab experience was incredibly helpful in preparing me for a career in public sector consulting. Collaborating with large state agencies to understand their problems, gathering the relevant data, conducting analysis and then distilling the results into actionable steps is exactly what I do on a daily basis now."

—**Logan Pratt**, MPP'16
Government Sector Strategy & Operations Consultant
Deloitte

"As a Harris alum I know Harris Policy Labs gives students the opportunity to get real-world experience that then prepares them to move into the workforce, potentially at the MPC."

—**Josh Ellis,** MA'06
Vice President
Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Harris Public Policy
POLICY LABS

Harris Policy Labs
POLICY EDUCATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM.

THE CLIENTS

Students work in teams to tackle issues faced by clients across the public, nonprofit, and private sectors.

CURRENT AND PAST POLICY LABS CLIENTS:

OXFAM
Ballot Ready
IDHS Illinois Department of Human Services
IDFPR
City of the Century Gary, Indiana
Navy Pier
The University of Chicago Medicine
Cook County Health & Hospitals System CCHHS
LISC Chicago
Metropolitan Planning Council
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

THE IMPACT

Students gain hands-on experience in a variety of policy areas, while clients rely on Policy Labs deliverables to advance their organization's work. Past clients have leveraged analyses to support policy changes or funding requests, or used research to advance better policy outcomes. Several clients have hired Policy Labs students after a project was completed.

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THE RESULTS

Crunching the numbers to improve health outcomes

Client: Cook County Health and Hospitals System
Project: Analyzing Outpatient Clinic Care

Cook County Health & Hospitals System, the second largest safety net hospital in the US, seeks to improve community-based public health care while reducing government expenses in a post-Medicaid expansion era. The Policy Labs team analyzed longitudinal patient data from 12 outpatient clinics—including clinic distance, referrals, health service offerings, and health insurance—and recommended strategies to optimize patient retention, improve future outpatient care, and reduce expenses.

Building tools for change

Client: Oxfam America
Project: Creating a Labor Standards Index for US Workers

As an anti-poverty advocacy organization, Oxfam's mission is to create lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice. One area of focus is on labor standards both in the US and abroad. The Policy Labs team developed a labor standards index by analyzing minimum wage, protection for women workers, and the right to organize. The analytic tool they built will be used by policy leaders to assess, compare, and advocate for improved labor standards in the US.

Sparking sustainable development

Client: Metropolitan Planning Council
Project: Developing a Riverfront Governance Model

Chicago faces opportunities and challenges in realizing the economic potential and environmental value of the city's 150-mile river system. The Policy Labs team identified and analyzed governance structures and financing tools used by other river systems that can act as potential models to guide Chicago's riverfront development, making evidence-based recommendations to the Metropolitan Planning Council.

Surveying in support of economic growth

Client: City of Gary, Indiana
Project: Improving Policies to Support Small Business

Retaining and growing small businesses is a core economic development strategy for most mayors, including the Mayor of Gary. The Policy Labs team developed a survey tool, and then collected and analyzed survey data from small business owners to help the city government develop policies that strengthen its local business community.