



## **PBPL-874|URST-874 - Public Policy Practicum PROGRAM GUIDE**

### **Course Description:**

The Public Policy Practicum (the “Practicum”) provides students with a chance to develop further their professional competencies in a public service environment and to gain actual work experience in the public policy sector.

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|------|-----------------------------------------|
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### **I. Purpose**

The Practicum is a semester-long opportunity for students in the Master of Arts in Public Policy (“MAPP”) and Certificate in Urban Planning (“CUP”) programs to apply and expand their knowledge and technical skills by performing an actual consulting engagement (the “Practicum Project”) for a public-sector client organization (the “Practicum Client”). Practicum students will work in small teams of 3-5 students (the “Project Team”) to analyze and make recommendations with respect to issues of real significance faced by their clients. Each engagement (the “Engagement”) will combine research, project planning, and problem-solving challenges, as well as substantial client contact. Client organizations are selected from across the policy spectrum to better enable students to pursue subject matters of particular relevance to their studies and career interests. Each engagement will culminate in a final report and formal presentation to the client organization. The Practicum instructor(s) will provide ongoing guidance and participants will have opportunities to share ideas, experiences, and best practices.

The Practicum requires students to produce a written product that addresses selected competencies of the MAPP|CUP programs, which is accomplished by integrating the lessons of their classroom instruction into the Practicum Project. Accordingly, students must have completed at least three core MAPP courses prior to taking the Practicum. If a student has only successfully completed two core MAPP|CUP courses when applying, they must take the third concurrently with the Practicum (*see Prerequisites, below*).

Typical Practicum placements focus on the College’s Hartford, Connecticut community, and other cities in New England and elsewhere facing similar urban challenges. Past

placements have included projects on behalf of the organizations listed on Appendix 1.

**Table 1: Sequence of Events**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Step 1: Complete at least three MAPP CUP core courses (or be taking the third concurrently with the Practicum; see below).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Step 2: Identify the Practicum Project and Project Team in consultation with the Practicum instructor(s). Each year, available Practicum Project placements will be developed by the MAPP faculty and distributed to qualifying students during the Fall Semester. The MAPP faculty will make best efforts to match Practicum Project assignments with students' expressed professional interests.                                                                     |
| Step 3: Meet with the Practicum Client to discuss its needs and expectations for the Practicum Project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Step 4: Design a research approach and plan, including required data collection, that is responsive to the expectations of the Practicum Client and actionable within the timeframe allotted for the Project. Any research directly involving human participants must be undertaken consistent with the requirements of Trinity College's Institutional Review Board ( <i>see</i> <a href="https://commons.trincoll.edu/irb/">https://commons.trincoll.edu/irb/</a> ). |
| Step 5: Complete, acquire signatures, and submit to the Practicum Instructor(s) an engagement letter, including a scope of work, with the Practicum Client.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Step 6: Participate in bi-weekly meetings with the Practicum Instructor(s) to evaluate the progress of the Practicum Project, obtain advice on the Engagement, and address any barriers to the success of the Project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Step 7: Prepare a draft Practicum Report and PowerPoint Presentation for review and comment by the Practicum Instructors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Step 8: Deliver the Practicum Report to the Practicum Client and a formal presentation to the Client's designated audience.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Step 9: Meet with the Practicum Instructor(s) to discuss final feedback on Practicum Report and presentation. The Practicum Report and related student work will be graded on a 100-point scale (see below).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## II. Competencies

The Practicum provides each student with an opportunity to hone key competencies developed in the MAPP Program, including the ability to work effectively with a team, while performing valuable work for a public service organization.

The six key competencies to be demonstrated in a successful the Practicum project are:

1. Analyzing organizations and their environments from multiple perspectives and applying that analysis in assessing alternative courses of action.
2. Knowing and applying public service values, legal and ethical principles, and a client-focused approach to problem solving.
3. Creating and using project management and program plans.
4. Effectively defining and executing roles and responsibilities on the Project Team.
5. Reading, listening, and thinking critically.
6. Writing and speaking clearly, concisely, and unambiguously.

### III. Prerequisites

The Practicum provides students an opportunity to reflect on how they apply and integrate their learning from their previous MAPP courses. Students must have completed (or be concurrently taking) at least three MAPP core courses to be eligible to participate in the Practicum.

**Table 2: Prerequisites**

The three prerequisite courses may be chosen from among the following MAPP core offerings:

- PBPL 800 Public Policy: Principles and Practice
- PBPL 840 Budget Management in Public Policy
- PBPL 846 Policy Analysis
- PBPL 860 Public Management
- PBPL 869 Leadership in the Policy Arena

For CUP students, an additional qualifying core course is:

- URST 833 Introduction to Urban Planning

### V. The Engagement Letter and Scope of Work

Each Project Team will prepare an Engagement Letter, including a specific scope of work (“SOW”), following initial consultations with the Practicum Client. The Engagement Letter will be signed by each member of the Project Team, the Practicum Client, and the Practicum Instructor(s).

Each Team will be assigned and report to a supervisor within the Practicum Client’s organization. Each Project Team will be assigned a specific research, data collection and analysis, and/or strategic planning project, reflected in the agreed-upon SOW.

**Table 3: The Engagement Letter**

The Engagement Letter will:

- Describe the situational and/or historical context of the Engagement;
- Clarify the purpose of the Engagement, its audience and/or stakeholders in the outcome (e.g., the Client Organization’s own “clients”);
- Set forth the agreed-upon SOW;
- Outline the expected deliverables from the Practicum; including the due date(s) for the Practicum Report and Presentation;
- Identify and introduce the Practicum Team;
- Specify the informational or other support commitments made by the Client Organization, including the client contact/input expectations for the Project (e.g., preferred timing, scope, and mode of client meetings and other contact); and
- Identify and provide contact information for the organization (address and website) and the Project Team’s Client supervisor.

## **V. The Project Report and Presentation**

Each Project Team will complete a final report and provide a formal presentation of the material to the client organization.

**Table 4: The Final Report**

The Project Report will include the following sections:

- *Summary*: Provide an overview or “executive summary” of the report.
- *Background*: Describe the problem and provide a review of previous research.
- *Data*: Describe the data (quantitative and/or qualitative) collected for the report.
- *Analysis*: Analyze the data using appropriate research method(s) and policy-making framework(s).
- *Recommendations*: Provide a set of recommendations responsive to the issues set forth in the Engagement Letter.

## **VI. Grading**

The grading scale for the Practicum Report and related student work will be based on the 100 total points possible; letter grades will be assigned as follows:

|                 |                |                 |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| A+ = 97.5-100   | A = 93.5-97.49 | A- = 89.5-93.49 |
| B+ = 87.5-89.49 | B = 83.5-87.49 | B- = 79.5-83.49 |
| C+ = 77.5-79.49 | C = 73.5-77.49 | C- = 69.5-73.49 |
| D+ = 67.5-69.49 | D = 63.5-67.49 | D- = 59.5-63.49 |
| F = 0-59.49     |                |                 |



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### **Appendix 1: Past Practicum Placements**

#### ***Spring 2019***

City of Hartford—Small Business and Community Development Division

*The team worked with the Frog Hollow Neighborhood Revitalization Zone board on an update of their 2011 strategic plan, which will provide input to the City of Hartford in preparation for an update of its Plan of Conservation and Development.*

Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA)

*This team was engaged by the SINA to research and prepare a report on the Learning Corridor's impact to date and its future potential in supporting the broader revitalization of the Trinity College neighborhood.*

Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC)

*This team was engaged by the PSC to research and assess potential approaches to nurturing (or preserving) mixed-income residential neighborhoods while pursuing broad-based economic and community revitalization. In other words, what approaches have helped communities mitigate the potential negative impacts of neighborhood redevelopment on lower income residents (i.e., gentrification)?*

#### ***Spring 2020***

Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA)

*This team was engaged by CHFA to explore the economic development “spin-off” effects of urban housing revitalization, with a particular focus on the rehabilitation of small to medium-sized multifamily housing.*

City of Hartford—Department of Development Services (“DDS”)

*This team will be engaged by DDS to explore workforce education opportunities in Greater Hartford.*

The Hartford Land Bank

*This team will be engaged by the Hartford Land Bank to explore best practices in the approaches of urban land banks to blight remediation and urban neighborhood revitalization. The team will survey land bank programs across the United States to identify and analyze innovative and successful initiatives that may provide useful insights as Hartford’s Land Bank begins operations.*

## ***Spring 2021***

The Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust [now Building Neighborhoods Together] (BNT)  
*This team was engaged by BNT to study the impact of the Trust's investments in the East End and Downtown West neighborhoods of Bridgeport in achieving community development goals, including the improvement of street conditions, economic development, and public safety.*

City of Hartford—Office of Sustainability

*This team was engaged by the City of Hartford's Office of Sustainability to explore homelessness prevention measures related to eviction moratoria, utility shutoff protections, and other supports. The team researched the potential effects of the expiration of such pandemic-related measures and seek to identify most at-risk community members.*

Trinity College Athletic Department

*This team will be engaged by the Trinity College Athletic Department to explore the College's approaches to COVID-19 as it impacted student athletes and intercollegiate athletics with the approaches of peer institutions, including other NESCAC colleges and universities. The team also explored the lessons learned from COVID-19 outbreaks linked to Trinity athletic teams to determine best practices going forward.*

## ***Spring 2022***

Partnership for Strong Communities ("PSC")

*This team was engaged by the PSC to study the impact of zoning restrictions on the creation of housing disparities and such disparities' impact on public health. This research supported the PSC's role as a board member of the new [Racial Equity in Public Health Commission](#) established by the State of Connecticut in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Hartford Land Bank

*This team was engaged by the Hartford Land Bank to explore innovative approaches to improving existing housing stock and funding multifamily affordable housing in pursuit of sustainable economically diverse neighborhoods, including the development of innovative financing instruments at the state level.*

Naugatuck Valley Community College ("NVCC")

*This team was engaged by the Theater Department of Naugatuck Valley Community College to explore the role of Arts education at community colleges and, specifically, the impact of Arts education on the likelihood of students going on to earn a four-year college degree or other higher education.*

## ***Spring 2023***

### **Capital Region Development Authority (“CRDA”)**

*This team was engaged by the CRDA to analyze the historical and potential future economic and community impacts on Downtown Hartford of the XL Center, in the context of the currently proposed renovations to the facility.*

### **For All Ages**

*This team was engaged by the not-for-profit organization For All Ages, which seeks to address the epidemic of loneliness by bringing generations together, to provide strategic analysis and make recommendations on (i) innovative fundraising strategies and (ii) proven approaches to volunteer recruiting.*

### **Partnership for Strong Communities (“PSC”)**

*This team was engaged by the PSC to study the effectiveness of Community Land Trusts (“CLTs”) in expanding the availability of affordable housing in Connecticut and to propose, based on a nationwide literature search, measures that could broaden the use of CLTs or increase their effectiveness in this State.*

## ***Spring 2024***

### **Partnership for Strong Communities (“PSC”)**

*This team was engaged by the PSC to study the effectiveness state-based Rental Assistance Vouchers in Connecticut and other jurisdictions in support of the Partnership’s advocacy for the adoption by the Connecticut General Assembly of a best practices approach to expanding this form of Affordable Housing funding.*

### **City of Hartford-Office of the Mayor**

*This team supported the Mayor’s Office in designing and planning for the roll-out of a “Where Your Tax Dollars Go” campaign to accompany the City’s 2024 Property Tax bills.*

### **U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”)**

*This team was engaged by the Hartford Field Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) to evaluate HUD’s [Continuum of Care](#) program priorities (aimed at assisting state and local governments in addressing homelessness) and develop recommendations to improve HUD’s funding process and project outcomes.*

*Spring 2025*

State Of Connecticut, Office of Health Strategy (“OHS”)

*This team was engaged by the CT Office of Health Strategy to research state-by-state best practices relating to the tracking and enforcement of “community benefit” requirements imposed on not-for-profit hospitals as a condition of tax-free status.*

U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”)

*This team was engaged by the Hartford Field Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (‘HUD’) to undertake a nationwide survey of the Opportunity Zone tax program instituted in 2017 to encourage private investment in struggling neighborhoods.*