

Introduction to Public Policy Analysis Program Transcript

MALE SPEAKER: In this video program, John Kobara explains public policy and how it affects the lives of public administrators working in a partisan environment.

JOHN KOBARA: The study of public policy is such an extraordinary topic in these times right now. It connects the public administration in this way. Change is really connected to public policy. If you can't change public policy, you're not going to really do things, systemically, that are changed in society. So the students of public administration have to study public policy to really study change, because that's what we're all about, is how to transform our problems and get solutions for society.

The problems that are happening to people are happening on the street level, and people that are homeless, or people that are being impacted by the environment, or people that are dealing with the educational system, or in the schools. And so you have, at the bottom levels of society, the customers, the voters, they're being impacted by public policy.

And then the top of it is, really, who's making these judgments? Who's interpreting what's going on at the street level, the needs and challenges and problems, and trying to craft solutions. That's where public policy folks come into play, is looking at the landscape and the environment and scanning things and saying, hey, how do we make this better? How do we fix the problems?

They've got to listen, they've got to interpret, and they've got to craft policies. And then it has to go through the political machinery, the machinery of creating legislation, and that involves representatives of government and bureaucrats and a whole host of people that have to weigh in on how that policy actually gets created.

In the public administration profession, the way public policy, you would interact with it, is really depending on what your role is. Because if you're at the ground level, you're working in implementation public policy-- that is, you're running the school district, you're helping to run a city government, you're at a county government or a federal office of some sort-- public policy gets handed down to you. Public policy is coming from a state capital or from the federal government or from the office of the school district, and they have told you how to implement this public policy.

Now you have a budget, personnel that has to actually carry this out and actually make the public policy happen. How would that be, for example, in school districts across America where they're facing budget shortages and they have to make decisions about laying off teachers, for example. Very difficult decisions

that they have to do. So there's different interpretations of the budget and priority setting that they have to make.

One of the policies that they have to deal with is the seniority of teachers. The most senior teachers have preference in jobs without regard to their performance, without regard to anything, their knowledge, whether they know math or science, just if they're senior. Number of years that they've served, that's a public policy. It comes out from the state and the local district has to interpret it, and they have to carry it out because it is the law.

When you're interested in the arena of public administration, public policy, you really are someone who cares deeply about our society and how our society will evolve and become better. And I think one of things is we tend to tweak things. We tend to look at problems and see the symptoms, and address the symptoms. And the symptoms are very prominent to us. Symptoms about crime and gangs.

We say, well, my gosh, we have to crack down on gangsters because they're committing these crimes. And of course, that's a problem, but it's a symptom, probably, of something else. Of poverty, of a lack of education. We have to step back and say, what is the public policy problem here, and how can we prevent these things from happening and address the symptoms of it. And that's where public policy really matters.

Introduction to Public Policy Analysis Additional Content Attribution

Sherurcij, Joshua (2006). Homeless man under an overpass [Photo]. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Homesless_in_Roma.jpg

Shankbone, David (2006). Homeless man sleeping in makeshift tent [Photo]. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Street_Sleeper_2_by_David_Shankbone.jpg

U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. MS-13 suspect [Photo]. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Marasalvatrucha13arrest.png>

MUSIC:

Creative Support Services
Los Angeles, CA

Dimension Sound Effects Library
Newnan, GA

Narrator Tracks Music Library

Stevens Point, WI

Signature Music, Inc
Chesterton, IN

Studio Cutz Music Library
Carrollton, TX