CENTER FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND SECURITY
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Building the Knowledge and Networks that Safeguard the Nation | In Partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security | chds.us

MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's National Preparedness Directorate, FEMA, and the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) are collaborating to provide graduate education programs for homeland security. Since 2003, CHDS has built a cadre of graduate education programs and resources used by universities and agencies across the country. The Master of Arts in Security Studies (MA) degree program is offered at no cost to eligible local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal officials. To accommodate participants' time constraints, students are in residence just two weeks every quarter during the 18-month program. Students complete the remainder of their coursework via network-based learning. The degree is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and is awarded by the Naval Postgraduate School.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The MA degree provides leaders with the knowledge and skills to:

- Develop policies, strategies, plans, and programs to prevent terrorist attacks within the U. S., and reduce America's vulnerability to the full range of other homeland security threats and potentially catastrophic events.
- Build the organizational and interagency arrangements needed to strengthen homeland security.
- Help mayors, governors, other elected officials and federal leaders improve homeland security preparedness by developing actionable policies and strategies.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The degree program requires 18 months of continuous enrollment, coursework, and a thesis. It involves a significant commitment on the part of the participants and their agencies. The courses are organized into quarters rather than semesters. Each quarter requires two weeks in residence at the NPS campus, located in Monterey, California. The remainder of the coursework is completed via network-based learning. Participants spend an average of 15-20 hours per week during the network-based learning periods of study–reading assigned materials, participating in online discussions with faculty and other participants, preparing papers, and projects. Participants and their agencies must be cognizant of this commitment and should view it as an investment in enhancing the individual's and the jurisdiction's homeland security capabilities.

The thesis is a qualitative or quantitative research project on a significant homeland security topic. The thesis may, for example, have a strategic planning focus, a model-development perspective, or a threat-risk assessment concentration. The thesis should be of significant benefit to the participant's agency or jurisdiction.

COST

All costs associated with participation—tuition, books, and travel – are covered by CHDS through its sponsor, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's National Preparedness Directorate, FEMA. All other federal agencies except DHS pay tuition, travel, and lodging.

COHORTS 2025

COHORTS
5

PARTICIPANTS
127

SINCE INCEPTION JANUARY 2003

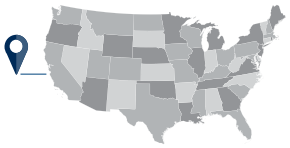
COHORTS
63

ALUMNI
1,638

ALUMNI REACH

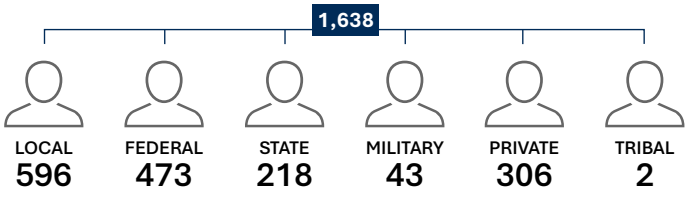
TOTAL AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND DIVISIONS
939+

LOCATIONS



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
MONTEREY, CA

ALUMNI BY JURISDICTION



Statistics are based on alumni self-entered data as of 09/04/2025

ANNUAL APPLICATION DEADLINES

May 1st, Fall Start
December 1st, Spring Start
Apply Now www.chds.us/masters

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MA PROGRAM
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