

5 Years of Impact: Building On the Aspen Tech Policy Hub



Over the last 5 years at the Aspen Tech Policy Hub, we've taught policymaking skills to hundreds of science and tech experts. In 2024, we decided to expand on that work by launching the Aspen Policy Academy. Building on the successes of the Hub in tech and science, the Academy will give an even broader community of experts the tools to craft outside-the-box solutions to society's problems.

This report is a celebration of the Aspen Tech Policy Hub's 5 years of accomplishments, and an opportunity to look forward at how we plan to grow as the Aspen Policy Academy.

Launching the Aspen Tech Policy Hub

Our founder, Betsy Cooper, launched the Aspen Tech Policy Hub back in 2019, on a hunch that there had to be a better way to help technologists get involved in policymaking. Betsy was running a cybersecurity center at UC Berkeley that was supporting faculty research projects. At a seminar focused on one of those projects, the principal investigator revealed research showing that almost half of all websites that targeted children were violating federal privacy laws. Betsy recognized that this research had great potential to have policy impact: it needed to go before the FTC, to be shared with Congress, to be the subject of a *Washington Post* op-ed. But when she asked the principal investigator about his next steps, he had no plans to do any of these things. "I'm going to publish a peer-reviewed paper in about a year," he told Betsy. "What else should I do?"

Building an answer to "What else should I do?" was the driving force behind the Aspen Tech Policy Hub. Betsy wanted to create a path for someone like this PhD research scientist to take his findings and impact policy for the better. Most subject-matter experts weren't going to spend 2 years getting a master's in public policy. They weren't going to upend their lives and move to DC. But their work needed to be shared with the world outside the ivory tower. They needed an accessible way to learn how to impact policy.

In 2019, nothing like that existed. So Betsy looked for other models for teaching professionals how to apply their expertise in new fields. She zeroed in on startup incubators like Y Combinator and 500 Global. She saw how those incubators taught real skills, encouraged collaboration, and had a high tolerance for failure. Betsy realized she wanted to build an incubator as well, but for teaching tech leaders how to be policymakers.



Path to Policy: Our Journey

1.18.19

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is founded in January 2019.

The San Francisco-based policy incubator, part of the Aspen Institute's Aspen Digital program, begins accepting applicants to its inaugural policy training fellowship.



Real World Impact

That incubator became the Aspen Tech Policy Hub. We launched just over 5 years ago, and we've accomplished so much since then.

We have trained more than 500 technology experts on policymaking.

- More than 100 of them have gone on to work in government, from [staffing the White House](#) to winning elected office in the New York Assembly.
- We've also empowered our alumni to impact policy without needing to work in government. One group of Hub alumni built a tool that the [City of Oakland used to provide homeless services](#). Another group developed a [race equity-centered certification for education](#) technology.
- And we've built up a database of resources on important policy topics, like [regulating data brokers](#) and [developing skills for new government hires](#).

Over the last 5 years, we learned that our curriculum is our special sauce. We teach participants how to engage in policymaking in a practical, engaging way. And we give them leadership skills that they can take forward and use in their own way, on their own time.

“Policy will be forever ingrained in what I do now.”

KORENE STUART, VP OF OPERATIONS AND SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, CARTER DEVELOPMENT GROUP

6.17.19

The Hub's first fellowship begins.

The fellowship's ultimate goal is to empower technologists with the tools to impact policy—bridging the gap between Washington, DC and Silicon Valley. It aims to help policymakers better understand today's technologies and challenges, and help technologists recognize the important role they can play in policymaking.

10.10.19

The Hub releases first policy projects from Hub fellows.

Covering topics ranging from a loophole in the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) to defining tech buzzwords, data-driven school safety in Florida, digital ad-buying systems, and the technology industry gender gap, the projects are presented as part of the Aspen Tech Policy Hub's Demo Day event in DC.

1.13.22

The Hub and Aspen Institute's Energy and Environment Program launch Climate Policy Training.

The launch of the joint Climate Fellowship marks an expansion into training for environmental and STEM experts to better translate their ideas to policy.

7.10.23

Hub programming expands to train and support public interest organizations in achieving policy impact.

The creation of the Nonprofit and Public Interest Fellowship marks a significant milestone in expanding policy training efforts from individuals to organizations. This program is specifically designed for US-based organizations working in the public interest.

Growing the Aspen Policy Academy

This is why in October 2024, the Aspen Tech Policy Hub became part of a broader initiative, the Aspen Policy Academy. The Aspen Institute's Policy Academy is a nonpartisan initiative that turns professionals of all stripes into policy advocates. We offer programs to train leaders across sectors—from tech to the environment, from science to social impact—and we help them build the practical policy skills they need to craft solutions to society's most pressing problems.

Rest assured: Our work on tech continues. The Tech Policy Hub will live on as one pillar of the Academy's work, where it will continue to support cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and other tech professionals in having policy impact. But we have also launched initiatives in 2 new areas beyond tech.

First, building on our successful partnership with the Aspen Institute's Energy and Environment Program, as well as our 2022 Climate Fellowship, we launched a pillar focused on supporting professionals working on environmental issues.

Second, we've developed a new stream of programming focused on nonprofit and foundation capacity-building. This pillar will draw from our experience working with nonprofits and funders to build in-house policy advocacy operations. We'll support nonprofits that provide direct services—and the organizations that fund them—in figuring out how to develop effective advocacy strategies.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. We're planning to open new streams of work in other areas, including education and health, in the future.

As part of our move to the Policy Academy, we're not just expanding the kinds of programming we're offering. We're also expanding the amount. In the fall of 2024 we launched 11 new programs.

These included the Policy Primer, a part-time, virtual program that teaches professionals how to impact policy through a 4-week bootcamp and a policy project; short courses focused on various aspects of engaging in policy, including policy communication skills and adaptive advocacy tactics; and public webinars on topics such as Policy 101 and writing a public comment and an op-ed.

We hope you will stand alongside us in democratizing the policymaking process. To get started, we invite you to apply to one of our programs and [check our website](#) regularly for new offerings.

“Being able to have this magnitude of impact—I never thought I could do this.”

MARCELA ALAVA, FORMER SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY, THE WHITE HOUSE

10.22.24

The Aspen Policy Academy launches.

The Tech Policy Hub is integrated as one pillar of the new Aspen Policy Academy, ushering in a new era of transforming expertise into impact and codifying our work in the technology, science, environment, and civic engagement spaces.



Why We Need a Policy Academy

We need better policy, and we need people to feel that their voices matter in government. By equipping new voices to enter the policy arena and elevating their voices to have an impact, the Aspen Policy Academy builds both.

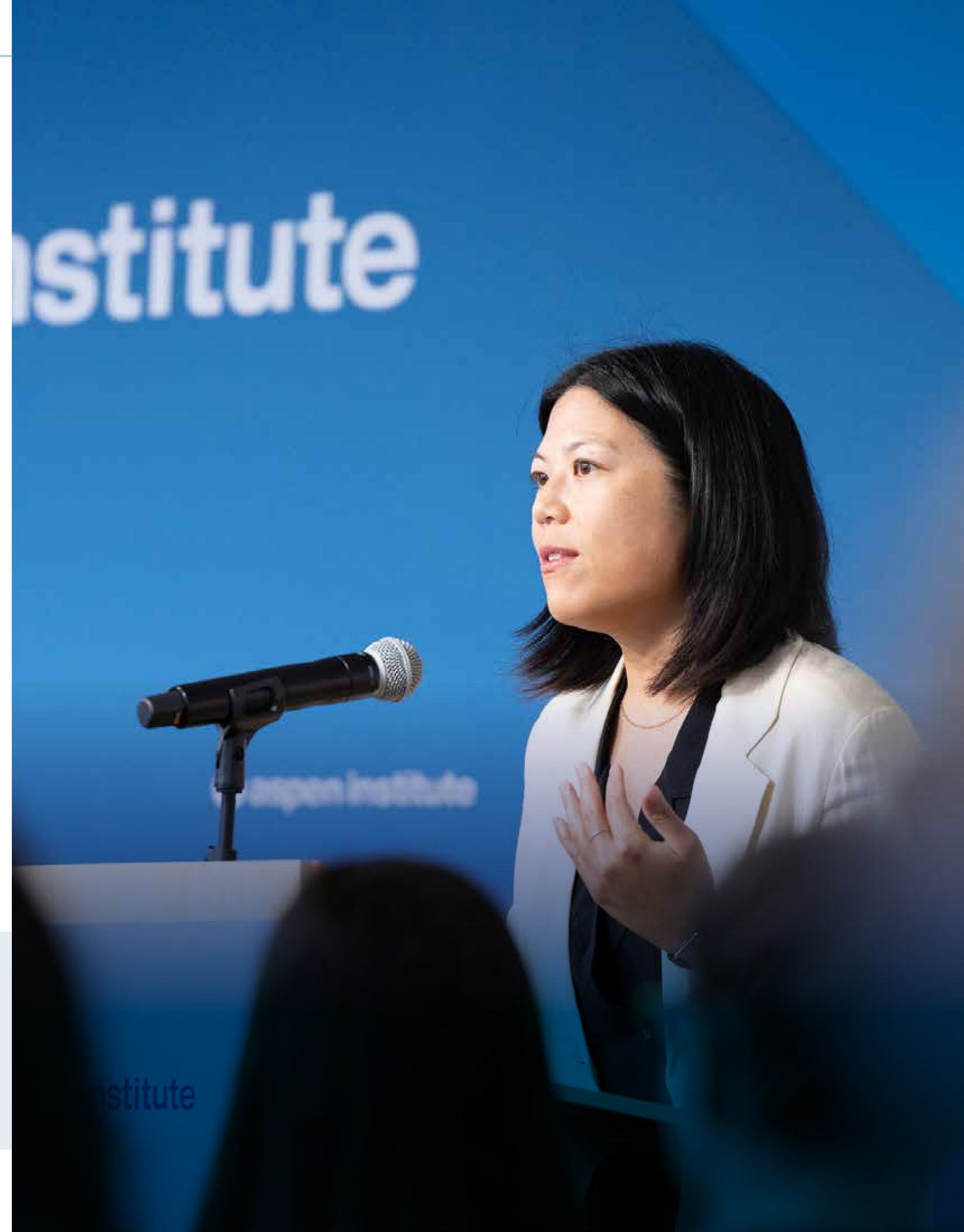
In a world that's changing quickly, crafting thoughtful policies is more important than ever. Companies and governments alike are struggling with [how to ethically deploy artificial intelligence](#). Communities are struggling to [manage rising housing costs](#). School districts are debating whether to [fund more charter schools](#). The people with the most knowledge on these topics—artificial intelligence experts on tech policy; home builders and realtors in the housing market; teachers and principals in education—need to contribute their experience to inform policy decisions.

At the same time, we need to help people get involved in policy for another reason: so that they believe in the power of democratic institutions. [Only 22 percent of US adults](#) trust the federal government “to do the right thing just about always or most of the time.” Yet the more people engage with government institutions, [the more likely they are to have confidence in them](#). By giving citizens the tools to not just study civics but to participate in the democratic process, we're helping rebuild public trust.

The Aspen Policy Academy democratizes policymaking by bringing new voices into the policy conversation. We make sure people with the right experience—on everything from artificial intelligence to local education—have the right tools to contribute to key decisions that affect the direction of our society.

“Policy is a team sport; you need to assemble partners to make a difference. The Aspen Policy Academy knows how to build that team.”

NABIHA SYED, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MOZILLA





Our priority areas include:

Tech

We continue to take STEM experts, teach them the policy process, and encourage them to develop outside-the-box solutions to society's problems.

Environment

We offer programs to equip environmental advocates with the skills they need to help guide and shape environmental policymaking when we need it most.

Civic Engagement

We give community leaders the skills to take an active role in the policymaking process and strengthen democratic governance as a result.

“We need more leaders equipped to bring their skills into public service, and our partnership with the Aspen Policy Academy is making that happen.”

JENNIFER ANASTASOFF, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TECH TALENT PROJECT

5 Years of Impact: By the Numbers

In the 5 years since launching, the Hub has trained more than 550 technology experts on policymaking. More than 100 of them have gone on to work in government. Other alumni have driven policy impact from outside of government by building tools and organizations to support the policy ecosystem.

550+
STUDENTS

90
FELLOWS

Throughout this progress, the Hub's uniquely hands-on curriculum has continually defined our work. Learning from the success of our Tech Policy Fellowship, each year the Hub experimented with bringing our signature lessons to new audiences. In 2020, we launched the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative to expand senior executives' professional toolkits to tackle public-sector challenges. Then, in 2022 and 2023, respectively, we launched our Climate and Nonprofit and Public Interest Fellowships. These new programs, alongside diverse publications and partnerships, were steps toward our aspirations of scaling up.

10
NEW COURSES
DEVELOPED

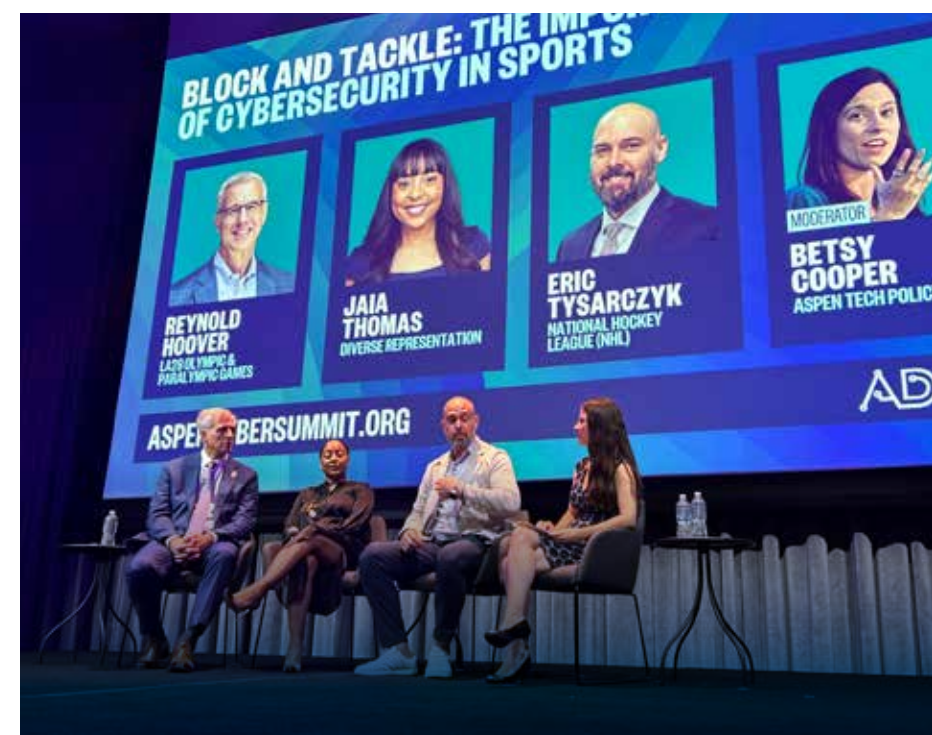
23
COURSES RUN

Forging lasting partnerships and integrations with other organizations has been key to expanding our reach within the policy ecosystem. Since 2020, we have partnered with the [Tech Talent Project](#) to launch 5 cohorts of our Tech Executive Leadership Initiative, graduating more than 100 senior technologists poised to drive policy change. We have also solidified our reputation as effective policy trainers, having engaged in multi-year partnerships with the Federation of American Scientists and its Policy Entrepreneurship Fellowship, as well as with the Horizon Institute for Public Service. Additionally, we have leveraged the Aspen Institute's convening power and partnered with Aspen programs on several initiatives. For example, we hosted our 2022 Climate Fellowship in partnership with the Aspen Institute Energy and Environment Program, successfully piloting a new curriculum for environmental scientists. Moving into 2025, we anticipate continuing to lean into collaboration to maximize our programming's impact.

30+
PARTNERSHIPS

Over the years, we have seized opportunities to bring together our policy community and contribute to partner events. From our first demo days in 2019 to our 2024 multi-city Action and Impact series, our events have sparked meaningful dialogue and helped grow our network.

30
EVENTS HELD





The Academy's alumni, staff, programming, and publications have been featured in the media more than 700 times since our founding. Alumni and staff have also authored more than 80 articles and op-eds. The following are highlights from some of our best stories over the last 5 years:

700+
MEDIA HITS

2019

["Silicon Valley's Toxic Culture Requires a Legal Fix"](#)
op-ed by alum Ginny Fahs in *The Atlantic*

2020

["It's Bush v. Gore, but Worse"](#) op-ed by
Director Betsy Cooper in *The New York Times*

2021

["Investors Still Engage In Racist Redlining. Why Haven't We Done Something About It?"](#) op-ed by alum
Mariah Lichtenstern for *Fortune*

2022

["Floods Are Trapping Americans In More Ways than One"](#)
op-ed by alum Nadia Seeteram for *The Hill*

2023

["I Declined to Share My Medical Data with Advertisers at My Doctor's Office. One Company Claimed Otherwise"](#)
op-ed by alum Alex Rosenblat for *STAT*

2024

["Bus Lanes and Driverless Cars Are Not Being Used As Much As They Should Be. Why Not Integrate Them?"](#)
op-ed by alum Awad Abdelhalim for *The San Francisco Chronicle*



["The Fellowship broadened what I thought was possible when it came to ways to impact and influence policy."](#)

JESSICA COLE, CO-FOUNDER AND FORMER CEO OF US DIGITAL RESPONSE

In conjunction with the Policy Academy's launch, we began publishing a series of [Impact Case Studies](#). These short documents showcase our trainees' experiences with and impacts from Academy programming. We are proud to have played a role in our alumni's changemaking and look forward to releasing more case studies throughout 2025.

40+
INSTANCES OF
POLICY IMPACT

[Jumpstarting a Career In Public Service—Marcela Alava](#)

After participating in the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative (TELI) program in 2020, Marcela shifted her career to public service and became a leading official at the White House. Marcela came to the Policy Academy with experience as a leader of information technology initiatives both in the private sector and for nonprofit organizations, and she wanted a role that would allow her to have a greater impact. Through TELI, she discovered how government technology positions could make a difference and connected with federal technology leaders. Following her work at the White House, Marcela became the Chief Information Officer at the Social Security Administration, overseeing technology strategy, implementation, solutions, and more for the 60,000-person agency.

70+
CAREER CHANGES

3
ORGANIZATIONS
FOUNDED:

US DIGITAL
RESPONSE

THE EDTECH
EQUITY PROJECT

ABOBOTECH

[Advancing Cybersecurity on a National Level—Anil Dewan and Alexander “RoRo” Romero](#)

In 2020-2021, Policy Academy alumni Anil and RoRo led the effort to expand the scope of the Department of Defense (DoD)'s Vulnerability Disclosure Program (VDP). This critical cybersecurity program provides legal safe harbor to researchers who find and report vulnerabilities in DoD information systems using established protocols. The original VDP only applied to public-facing DoD websites. Applying skills they learned at the Policy Academy, Anil and RoRo successfully expanded the policy to apply to all publicly accessible DoD information systems. This policy change allowed for more vulnerabilities to be reported and increased security of DoD systems and, as a result, the security of our nation.



[Transforming Carbon Dioxide Research Into Impact—Emma Crow-Willard](#)

2022 Climate Fellowship alum Emma convinced the Livermore Lab Foundation, with support from the Department of Energy (DOE), to fund a \$750,000 engagement strategy for disseminating findings on a major report about regional carbon dioxide removal (CDR) options. The Lawrence Livermore National Lab was leading a study funded by the DOE that looked at 4 different methods for CDR at a county level. Using her Academy training, Emma wrote a convincing memo to the Foundation and the DOE recommending that instead of simply publishing a report, they should fund a broader engagement campaign.



Emma then led the development of [roads2removal.org](#), a website helping communities understand potential CDR options via interactive maps, explainers, and videos.

Policy Academy trainees have produced more than 60 policy projects as part of our fellowships and executive leadership programs. These projects advocate for innovative policy change across the federal, state, and local levels. Below are just a few examples of projects spanning our key program areas.

[EdTech Equity Project—Nidhi Hebbar and Madison Jacobs, with support from Matthew Volk and Elizabeth Allendorf](#)

2020 Tech Policy fellows Nidhi and Madison saw that AI and machine learning edtech products can amplify and introduce biases against Black and Brown students in public schools. In response, the team produced a Racial Equity Toolkit for AI in Edtech, enabling companies to mitigate racial bias during product design and development, as well as procurement guidelines to help schools assess edtech platforms before purchasing. Their outputs grew into the Edtech Equity Project, which went on to work with Digital Promise on launching Product Certifications for prioritizing racial equity in AI design.

[Improving the Outcomes of Youth Aging Out of Foster Care—the Winter 2023 TELI Cohort](#)

This Tech Executive Leadership Initiative (TELI) cohort developed solutions to help the State of Oklahoma's Department of Human Services better connect aging-out foster care youth to existing government and community resources. Their policy proposals included using a self-service online portal to improve outreach to foster youth and developing a web app that would allow these youth to be more in control of their transition into adulthood.

[Transforming Agriculture In Washington State—Nicole Jain Capizzi and Mira Chokshi](#)

2022 Climate Fellowship fellows Nicole and Mira came together to address the fact that, of the millions of acres of cropland in the state of Washington, only a small percentage used climate-smart practices such as cover crops and no-till farming. At the same time, Washington state government and corporations pledged to reduce 95% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Their policy project proposes that Washington establish a revolving loan fund to help farmers transition to greener agricultural solutions.

68
PROJECTS
PUBLISHED

FOCUS AREAS:

FEDERAL
20

STATE
14

LOCAL
9

CORPORATE
5

TECH
51

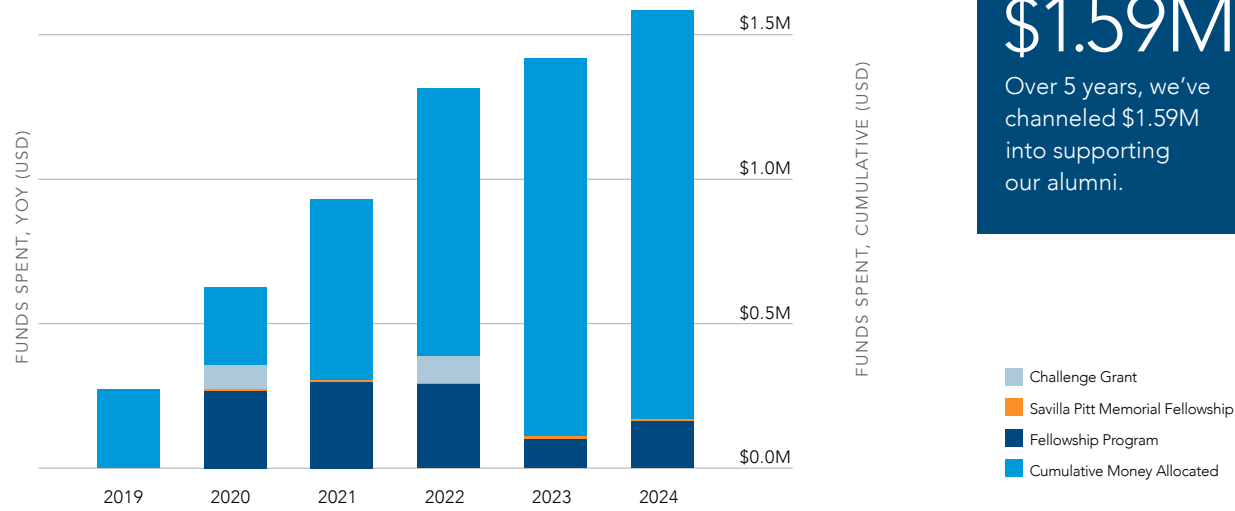
ENVIRONMENT
9

CAPACITY
BUILDING
8



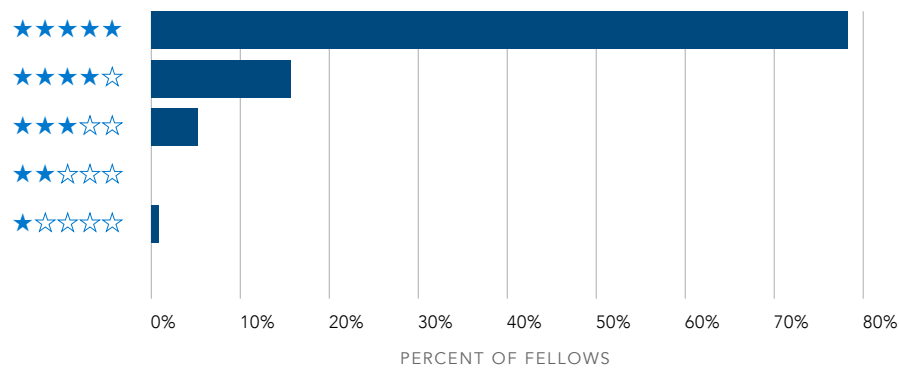
We are proud to share that since 2019, we have allocated \$1.59 million in the form of stipends, scholarships, and grants to our students and fellows. These funds support their training and policy work, and we are grateful to our funders and partners for enabling this impact.

Total Funds Spent to Support Fellows



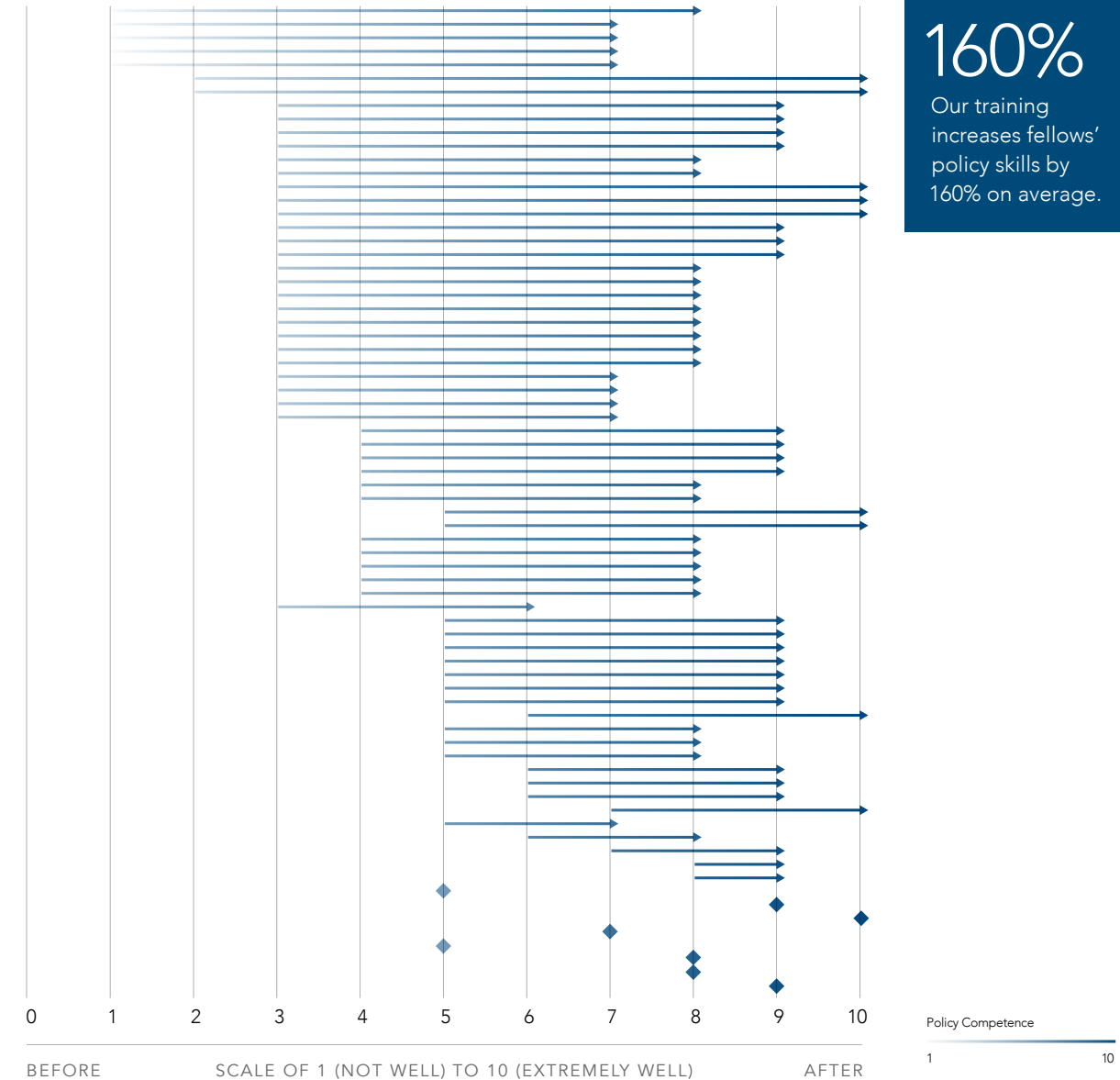
We are also thrilled to see that our alumni find our programming valuable and effective, and that they are able to take their policy skills into their work beyond the Academy.

How Satisfied Were You with the Fellowship Program?



78%
of our alumni give the Fellowship program 5 stars.

How Well Would You Say You Understood the Policy Process Before vs. After the Fellowship?

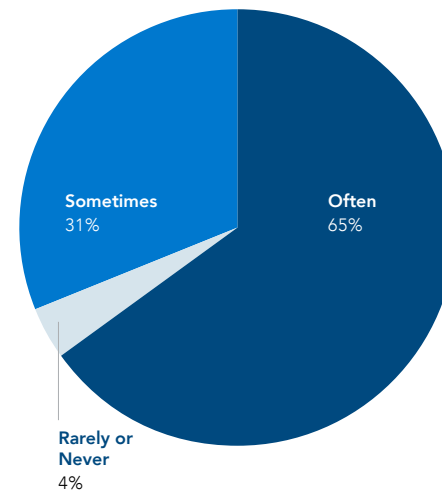


“The Fellowship was clearly life changing for me and I don't think you can say that about many fellowship programs.”

HILARY BRASETH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT OPENSECRETS

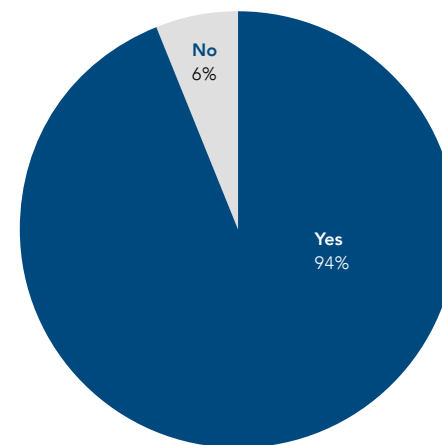


How Often Do You Use Your Academy Training In Your Job?



65%
of alumni say they often use their Academy training on the job.

Has Your Academy Experience Influenced the Trajectory of Your Career?



94%
of alumni say that their experience with the Academy has influenced the trajectory of their career.



“The Hub Fellowship was a pivotal experience that helped me transition into a policy career.”

MATTHEW ZHOU, ASSISTANT CHIEF DATA OFFICER, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

2024 Recap and Impact

Building on the momentum of the previous 4 years, in 2024 we continued offering robust programming to train technology, environmental, and nonprofit leaders in policy impact. We equipped more than 200 changemakers with the tools to affect policy through our core policy programs and a new webinar series. Through this programming, we have incubated new policy projects addressing important topics such as fair housing in Georgia, the spread of misinformation online, the protection of sensitive healthcare data, workers' rights against harmful corporate AI surveillance, and data centers' impact on natural resources. We also launched new resources to support our alumni in their continuing policy work, and helped nonprofits respond to changes in the federal policy landscape.

Here is a recap of the programs we ran, the experts we trained, and the impact they had over the last year.

TELI

We started 2024 on a high note, running the fifth iteration of our Tech Executive Leadership Initiative (TELI) in partnership with the [Tech Talent Project](#). The Winter 2024 TELI cohort brought together 31 leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds, ranging from start-up executives to product chiefs to engineering leads and more. During the virtual program's first 4 weeks, these executives engaged in lectures and interactive sessions featuring 9 guest speakers, strengthening their leadership and policy skills. They then had the opportunity to apply their new knowledge in teams and tackle real life policy projects in partnership with 3 state-level government clients.



11
PROGRAMS RUN
200+
TRAINEES

Science and Technology Policy Fellowship

In June 2024, we built on the successes of our cornerstone fellowship model and launched the inaugural Science and Technology Policy Fellowship. This full-time, paid program welcomed a cohort of 15 experts from across the country, including professionals in the emerging technology, cybersecurity, and environmental fields. Over the course of an intensive month-long policy boot camp in San Francisco, the fellows engaged in hands-on experiences to hone their policy skills. From a 48-hour policy sprint to a day trip to Sacramento to talks with 9 guest speakers, they acquired essential tools for policy writing, public speaking, stakeholder mapping, how to scope policy solutions, and more. Ninety percent of fellows gave the program at least a 9 out of 10 for overall satisfaction.

Awad Abdelhalim
Urban Mobility Researcher at
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Temiloluwa Adeniyi
Data Engineer, Developer, and Medical
Device Specialist

Tiffany Chioma Anaebere, MD
Emergency Medicine Physician and
Assistant Professor of Emergency
Medicine at St. Joseph's Medical Center

Mary-Clare Bosco
Product Manager at Routeware

Evîn Cheikosman
Advisor on Urban Transformation and
Systems Change

Laura Dabbish
Professor in the Human-Computer
Interaction Institute at Carnegie Mellon
University

Jonathan Gilmour
Data Scientist and Future Leader Climate
Fellow at Aspen Institute

Rohaina Hassan
Digital Strategist and Program Manager

Jeanette Jordan
Executive and Leadership Coach at Skye

Rebecca Kilberg
Public Service Software Developer and
Researcher

Jordan Loewen-Colón
AI, Ethics, and Data Justice Coordinator
at Centre for Health Innovation

Zach Nandapurkar
Sr. Solutions Engineer, Public Sector at
Axonius

Ayodele Odubela
Executive Director at the AI ALT Lab

Lillie Penley
Trust and Safety Policy Specialist

Marilyn Zhang
Product Manager at Google Search



Cyber Civil Defense Policy Training Series

In the fall, we ran a new Cyber Civil Defense Policy Training Series, featuring 3 webinars and 2 rounds of office hours. The series covered how cybersecurity professionals can impact policymaking through effectively communicating to key stakeholders. More than 60 attendees participated in the webinars, 80% of whom reported that each session was “very useful” or “extremely useful.”



Influencing AI from the Outside

Our new short course, Influencing AI from the Outside, premiered in December 2024. Throughout the 5-day virtual training, more than 40 AI experts underwent a bootcamp on writing and speaking strategies to improve their policy communications. The course culminated in each participant writing either a public comment or a letter to a government stakeholder to impact AI policy.



Webinars

Beyond our specialized training courses, we hosted an array of free, open-enrollment webinars to introduce the public to policy change. These hour-long sessions, including Policy 101 and Communicating for Policy, brought in more than 160 attendees and a wave of positive feedback. In response to continued demand for beginner-level offerings, we look forward to repeating these core webinars on a quarterly basis in 2025.

We also experimented with hosting webinars covering current events in the policy space. In September, we ran “Beyond Chevron: Advancing Nonprofit Advocacy In a New Legal Landscape.” This webinar helped more than 70 advocates understand the recent Supreme Court ruling that ended Chevron deference and how nonprofit organizations can champion policy change under its new conditions.

Savilla Pitt Memorial Fellowship

In loving memory of our colleague Savilla Pitt, we award the Savilla Pitt Memorial Fellowship to the member of each Hub cohort who best exemplifies Savilla’s selfless spirit and passions. Summer 2024 Science and Technology Policy fellow Jonathan Gilmour became our newest Memorial Fellow and received a paid trip to Washington, DC with 2023 Memorial Fellow Nannette Cutliffe. There, the fellows met with leaders in the policy ecosystem and Aspen Institute executives. You can learn more about the Savilla Pitt Memorial Fellowship—and read about the signs for pancreatic cancer—[here](#).



Celebrating the Policy Academy Launch

To commemorate the launch of the Policy Academy, we hosted an [Action and Impact Event Series](#). These open-to-the-public events brought together thought leaders, community members, academics, students, traditional policy folks, and innovators who are approaching policy change from new angles.

Supporting Alumni Leaders

As our programming grows, so does our vibrant alumni network. We support these alumni and their career development by hosting events and offering year-round virtual resources. This year, we continued our Policy Pulse newsletter, providing alumni with opportunities to directly impact policy through public comments. We also launched virtual office hours in September so that alumni can benefit from tailored, one-on-one mentorship with senior staff.



Our Impact

We measure our impact in 2 significant ways: changing the trajectory of our alumni's careers and making a difference on key policy issues. Several of our alumni took on policy roles in 2024, and we published fellow projects that succeeded in impacting policy. Here is a snapshot:

People Impact

Patrick Beckley transitioned from an engineering role to being a Congressional and Intergovernmental Liaison within the Environmental Protection Agency.

Christian Crumlish became the Director of Product at 18F.

Bindu Gakhar became the Special Assistant to the President for Chief Enterprise Applications at the White House, replacing alum **Marcela Alava**, who joined the Social Security Administration as its Chief Information Officer.

Lili Gangas joined the Federal Communications Commission's Consumer Advisory Committee.

Susan Hendrickson became the interim president and CEO of Human Rights First.

Vanessa Kaskiris was hired as Chief Technology Officer for the City of Boston.

Alex Lee accepted a role as Head of AI Innovation at WOO, a crypto futures and spot trading platform.

Ivy Teng Lei became the Chief Digital Strategy Officer for the State of California.

Rebecca Peters joined NASA as the Earth Action Lead at the Goddard Space Flight Center.

Lana Ramjit joined AEquitas to create a National Resource Center for Cybercrimes against individuals.

Nadia Seestram became the Director of the Blue Buffers Program at the New York Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

Jane Yang became the Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer at the Administration for Children and Families.

15

FELLOWS IN NEW
POLICY JOBS

5

PROJECTS
PUBLISHED



Policy Impact

2024 Science and Technology Policy Fellows Mary-Clare Bosco, Jonathan Gilmour, and Rebecca Kilberg convinced the State of Utah to [adopt their policy recommendations](#) around water usage in the Great Salt Lake Basin. The region is seeing an uptick in new data centers, which need vast amounts of water to cool their servers, at the same time that the Great Salt Lake is hitting record-low water levels. Their policy project recommended that the State set water efficiency targets for the tech sector, and collaborate with local partners to collect new data on the centers' water usage. These actions could help protect the Great Salt Lake and exemplify sustainable tech growth for our drought-prone regions. You can read more in their op-ed in [The Salt Lake City Tribune](#).



"The [Aspen Policy Academy] has been very valuable in my policy work and instrumental in this stage of my career."

EMILY DOYLE, SENIOR ADVISOR, INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND SCIENCE,
NETHERLANDS CONSULATE, SAN FRANCISCO

Leadership and Supporters

The key to our success over the last 5 years has been the strength and dedication of our internal team. Since 2019, the team has grown to include 7 full-time staff members and 7 part-time team members, deepening our toolbelt and increasing our capacity to deliver diverse and effective training programs.



Betsy Cooper
Director



Gloria Molina-Estolano
Associate Director of Programs



Laura Franzini
Strategy and Operations Manager



Mai Sistla
Senior Climate Policy Advisor



Andrew Lewis
Policy Advisor



Kateri Gajadhar-Smith
Program Manager



Connie Moore
Events and Communications Coordinator



Kate Green
Program Assistant



Brooke Hunter
Senior Advisor



Nicole Tisdale
Senior Advisor



Jessica Cole
Senior Advisor



Kaia Roede
Communications Intern



Saabiah Hussain
Design Intern



Emma Calkins
Part-time Program Coordinator

We could not do this work without the support of our talented contractors, who help with everything from ensuring our website functionality, to copy editing and designing our outputs, to supporting our communications. We are so grateful for their work, as well as the work of countless individuals who have supported the Academy in other capacities, such as by serving as guest speakers, reviewers, and mentors.

We also extend our gratitude to our funders and partners, who have made these 5 years of immense growth and impact possible. We could not do our best work without you.



“I’m proud to support the Aspen Policy Academy’s work to advance #CyberCivilDefense through policy training.”

CRAIG NEWMARK, FOUNDER, CRAIGSLIST AND CRAIG NEWMARK PHILANTHROPIES

The Way Forward

2024 was a year of political change worldwide, and the United States was no exception. President Donald Trump and Congress recently took office and are promoting an ambitious agenda promising sweeping change in areas from public health to immigration to the organization of the federal government itself. The legal landscape is also dramatically different than it was a year ago. In its June 2024 Loper Bright decision, the Supreme Court overturned Chevron deference, giving federal courts the power to independently overrule the views of agency experts and determine for themselves the best reading of laws and regulations. Courts have already begun to flex their new authority, such as by overturning the Federal Communication Commission's 2024 order restoring net neutrality.

We believe that nonpartisan policy training is more important than ever in this new environment. Subject-matter experts on everything from AI to health care will need the skills to share their ideas more effectively with stakeholders across all parts of government. And underrepresented voices—veterans on defense policy, or refugees on immigration policy—will need to learn how to grow their policy voice. By providing new communities with skills they need to become effective advocates, we can democratize the policymaking process as a result.

At the Aspen Policy Academy, we are optimistic about the future, and ready to help. We want to make it possible for current and aspiring public servants, nonprofit advocates, philanthropic funders, and ordinary people to get things done, regardless of politics or party. We are growing our programs focusing on policy communication and skills and, in 2024, we launched multiple courses focused on leveling up nonprofits to engage in policy advocacy at the state, local, and federal levels. We've also supported our alumni taking positions with the former and incoming administrations, as well as in state and local governments around the country. We are hopeful that our efforts to empower and guide advocates in taking on bigger roles in the policy landscape will continue to bear fruit and contribute to informed policymaking at all levels of government.



Our 2025 Programs and Events

The Policy Academy's 2024 relaunch reaffirmed our eagerness to reach new audiences and explore new types of programming. Moving into 2025, we not only anticipate running our tried and true fellowship but also dedicating ourselves to a steady rhythm of webinars and tech, environment, and civic engagement short courses. This agile programming will be responsive to the ever-evolving policy landscape and help broaden our impact to a wider pool of policy-curious experts. We look forward to extending this exciting chapter of growth and welcoming more new voices to the policy space.

2025 Webinars:

- Policy 101
- Writing a Public Comment
- Communicating for Policy
- Writing an Op-Ed
- Scoping a Policy Problem
- Getting a Job In Policy
- How to Tell Governments What You Think
- State and Local Government Advocacy
- And webinars on current event topics

2025 Short Courses:

- Nonprofits In an Age of Policy Change
- Policy Impact for Emerging Climate Leaders
- Rising Civic AI Leaders, in partnership with Aspen Digital

2025 Bootcamps:

- Policy Primer
- Science and Technology Policy Fellowship



For more information, visit our new website: aspempolicyacademy.org.

