Admission

Peabody College’s CDA program reflects the diversity that our graduates will encounter in the community and organizational environments they will be entering. For this reason, no specific undergraduate major is required for study in CDA. Any applicant who has manifested a strong interest in community development will be considered for admission.

Applications may be submitted online, free of charge. In addition to the application, you will need to submit three letters of recommendation and provide GRE scores and transcripts of previous academic work.

For additional information, please contact:
Professor Sharon Shields
Department of Human and Organizational Development
Peabody #90
230 Appleton Drive
Nashville, TN 37203-5721
615-322-6881
sharon.l.shields@vanderbilt.edu

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Program of Studies
CDA’s balanced curriculum provides breadth and depth while allowing room to pursue issues of personal interest. You will learn fundamental concepts in community psychology, discover ways to become an agent of change, and understand the global dimensions of community development. Studying with Peabody faculty who are experienced in social policy, project design, and evaluation in all sectors of community development, you will find your professional path and make invaluable lifelong connections. The CDA program requires a minimum of 30 credit hours, and students typically graduate after three or four academic semesters.

Practicum
CDA students must complete a practicum—300 hours of practical field experience—prior to graduation. The practicum, which can be done concurrently with your studies, may be fulfilled in a variety of organizations, programs, and environments. Students volunteer in local non-profit organizations, work in paid or unpaid internships, participate in research projects or grants, and pursue international and/or domestic field school opportunities. The practicum provides the opportunity to connect coursework to real community settings and to develop your professional profile.

Field Schools
CDA students may also have the opportunity to participate in a summer “field school.” Students work on teams, collecting data and learning such skills as participant observation, focus group management, and preliminary data analysis.

Take the Next Step
For more information on CDA, visit peabody.vanderbilt.edu/cda.xml

We also invite you to call the Office of Graduate Admissions at 1-866-PC ADMIT (toll-free) and speak with one of our counselors.

“CDA students have diverse interests, but are united by a desire to make positive changes in communities. My career goals have led me to pursue a doctoral degree.”
—Laurel Marie Lunn, M.Ed.'07, Ph.D. student, Community Research and Action

Previous field schools have been located in Ecuador, Argentina, and China, while future sites may include Australia and New Mexico. Students may choose a field school experience to complete their practicum requirement.

Potential Careers
CDA will prepare you for a rewarding career in a setting where your expertise can make a positive difference. Recent CDA graduates have served as executive directors of nonprofit agencies and program managers for educational institutions, nonprofits, or state government. The CDA master’s program also offers ideal preparation for further doctoral study.

"We create an academic, scholarly, and professional practice environment for individuals who desire to acquire knowledge and skills that will move students into leadership positions in community organizations, agencies, and programs.”
—Sharon L. Shields, professor of the practice of health promotion and education

There is no better place to learn to be a leader than at Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College, internationally renowned for its excellence in education and human development. Our master’s program in Community Development Action (CDA)—which covers such topics as research, community and organizational change, consultation skills and human development ethics—provides a broad understanding of social, organizational, and community issues. As a CDA student, you will learn to see communities as complex systems of interacting components and will develop the professional skills necessary to effectively communicate, collaborate, facilitate change, and lead in for-profit and nonprofit settings.

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