

## **Process for Generating SCRA Position Statements**

### **Overview**

Position statements are one means SCRA uses to communicate its perspective on pressing social issues and matters of public health and well-being. The goal of such statements is to provide clear, succinct summaries of scientific research and accumulated knowledge from practice accompanied by recommendations to policy makers and the general public.

### **Content and Format**

Statements should summarize scientific and practice knowledge in clear, accessible language. Each statement should be no more than 3000 words plus references. Each statement should begin with an executive summary (250-750 words), and should end with a recommendation for action or a series of recommendations for action. In addition, each statement should include specification of target audiences and possible means of advocacy (e.g., press releases; policy papers; model legislation; briefing events), and identification of current or future policy activities to which it is most relevant (e.g., proposed legislation; upcoming court decision). Although statements must arrive at clear positions and recommendations, authors should strive to present the available knowledge in an objective, unbiased manner.

Statements are typically co-authored. Using two or more authors with somewhat different (though overlapping) areas of expertise helps to ensure full coverage of the topic area.

Statements approved by the SCRA Executive Committee must be submitted to the American Psychological Association (APA) for review. The APA will respond with feedback, potentially including requests for changes. Because of this requirement authors should include information regarding the APA's past and current stance on the issue, either in the position statement itself (if appropriate) or in a cover letter.

Approved statements are published in the American Journal of Community Psychology (AJCP) and authors are expected to review the standards of the Journal and write the statement accordingly.

### **Procedures**

Usually, proposals for new policy statements are solicited by the SCRA Policy Committee (PC) or SCRA Executive Committee (EC), although SCRA members are also encouraged to propose new statements on important issues. The expectation is that there shall be one or more policy positions adopted each year. Here are the steps in producing a SCRA Position Statement. The Appendix provides an example of the tracking cover form:

1. PC and EC solicit proposals for new position statements. Solicitations may be open, or on a specific topic of interest. The PC and EC should consider issues of human diversity and culture, and reach out internationally, when soliciting proposals.
2. Proposals for new policy statements come to the PC for review. Criteria for review include:
  - a. the significance of the issue,

- b. timeliness of the proposal,
  - c. qualifications of the authors,
  - d. strength of the evidential base (and discussion of its limits),
  - e. identification of clear and realistic policy action steps,
  - f. quality of the writing, and
  - g. consistency with SCRA mission and vision, including attention to issues of diversity (e.g., ethnicity/race; gender; culture; economic status; age; sexual orientation; national or international identity, origin or location).
3. The PC votes to authorize a statement and submits to EC for approval.
4. If approved, the statement is written within five months after the statement is first authorized. The authors submit the statement to the Chair of the PC via email along with one or two suggested reviewers.
5. The Chair of the PC will send the statement and the names of the suggested reviewers to the AJCP editor. The statement will then be reviewed according to AJCP procedures. If additional reviewers are necessary the AJCP editor will select those in consultation with the authors of the position statement. The reviewers will be reminded that a policy position statement will be different from other AJCP articles, but will still be expected to meet an appropriate level of scholarship.
6. Once the AJCP editor has determined that the statement meets AJCP criteria, the statement is sent to the PC for review.
7. The statement is presented at a PC meeting. PC members have the opportunity to comment on and suggest revisions to authors. Any necessary changes from the PC review are made by the authors of the statement.
8. The PC conducts a formal vote to approve the statement, and two-thirds of members must vote for approval for the statement to be forwarded to the EC for review and approval.
9. The PC submits the statement to the EC for review and approval along with a cover page documenting the history of the statement (date proposal approved by EC, a statement from the AJCP editor summarizing the review process, etc.). The EC may approve the statement or send a request for revisions to the authors.
10. The authors of the statement make any necessary changes from the EC review. The authors then send the statement back to the EC and the chair of the Public Policy Committee with an explanation of how the EC concerns were met. Once any EC concerns have been addressed, the statement is formally approved by the EC.
11. The statement is then sent to APA for review. The APA will provide feedback to the authors, which the authors are free to incorporate or not as they feel appropriate. If the statement includes a call for action related to a legislative issue that must be approved by the APA.
12. The approved statement is posted on the SCRA website and listserv and published in the American Journal of Community Psychology (AJCP). A summary is published in the Policy Column of The Community Psychologist (TCP).
13. The PC submits the statement to the EC for review and approval along with a cover page documenting the history of the statement (date proposal approved by EC, the names of reviewers, etc.).
14. The authors of the statement make any necessary changes from the EC review. The authors then send the statement back to the EC and the chair of the Public Policy Committee with an explanation of how the EC concerns were met.

15. The statement is sent to APA for review. The APA will provide feedback to the authors, which the authors are free to incorporate or not as they feel appropriate. If the statement includes a call for action related to a legislative issue that must be approved by the APA.
16. New statement is posted on the SCRA website and listserv and subsequently published in the American Journal of Community Psychology (AJCP). The executive summary is published in the Policy Column of The Community Psychologist (TCP).
17. PC develops a plan to disseminate and advocate for the new position.

### **Development Costs**

After a new statement topic is authorized by the EC, statement authors can request up to \$500 to support the development of the statement. This money is intended to help cover the cost of supplies and to encourage authors to meet if such a meeting is geographically possible. The upper yearly limit of money available for development of policy statements will be \$2,500 (five statements).

### **Publication**

After approval by SCRA, the position statement is “published” on the SCRA Website in conjunction with its publication online in AJCP, an SCRA sponsored journal. Publication in AJCP helps to disseminate the statements to SCRA members, and allows interested scholars to write responses to the new statement.

