

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 Council (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.

There are five general steps in these procedures: solicitation of proposals and approval by the Policy Council and Executive Committee; review by AJCP; recommendation for adoption by the Policy Council; recommendation for adoption by the Executive Committee; review by APA; publication in AJCP and promotion through SCRA websites, social media, and other outlets.

Solicitation and Approval of Proposals

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.

Review by AJCP

5. The Chair of the PC will send the statement to the AJCP editor using the normal submission portal. The cover letter should make clear that the statement is a SCRA Policy Statement and within the letter the Chair can offer the names of the suggested reviewers. 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 if suggestions are needed. The reviewers will be told informed that the submission is a policy position statement and be asked to review accordingly and as quickly as possible. Papers will still be expected to meet an appropriate level of scholarship.
6. The paper goes through the normal review process which includes responding to reviewer comments and revising the submission. Once the AJCP editor has accepted the paper, typically following revisions, the statement is sent to the PC for review.
 - a. The AJCP Editor will HOLD the paper as an “accept with minor revisions” status until ALL reviews are made. Ideally, these additional reviews will not take more than 30 days.

Recommendation for Adoption by Policy Council

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.

Recommendation for Adoption by the Executive Committee

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 Council 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.

Review by the American Psychological Association

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.

Publication and Promotion of the Statement

12. The approved statement is published in the American Journal of Community Psychology (AJCP). A summary is published in the Policy Column of The Community Psychologist (TCP) and on both SCRA websites. The website has a link to the published article.
13. The Policy Council 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

All SCRA policy statements are published 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. Publication in AJCP means that Wiley, the publisher of the journal, holds the copyright to the article and the statement can only be published on websites under the circumstances outlined below. A link to the article will be included on both SCRA websites, but it will direct to the AJCP site on the Wiley platform and will be behind a paywall. Avenues to eliminate the paywall are discussed below.

Once published in AJCP, SCRA works with the authors of the statement to publicize it as widely as possible. An announcement about the statement will be posted the SCRA listserv, on both SCRA websites and on SCRA social media platforms. Authors are encouraged to ask their organizations to develop press releases regarding policy statements. Any press generated by the statement will be promoted on SCRA social media platforms.

It is possible to publicly share versions of the statement, and SCRA works with the authors of the statement to do so. The language below is from Wiley.

1. **Submitted version** (version an author has submitted to AJCP for peer review) or **preprint** (version yet to be submitted to AJCP) – an author can post the submitted version of their paper on a preprint server (including both SCRA websites), personal website, or institutional repository.

2. **Accepted version** (version post peer review but prior to copyediting and typesetting) – an author can post the accepted version of their paper on a personal website or institutional or subject based repository after a 24-month embargo.
3. **Final version** (Version of Record, or the version that is copyedited, typeset, and published online) – can always be linked on any website, but may not be uploaded to a website.

While the final version cannot be uploaded to any website, authors can pay Wiley an Open Access fee of about \$2,250 in order to remove the paywall on the AJCP site. The \$500 in development costs discussed above can be used as part of this fee.