



## Toolkit #2

# Taking the First Steps Toward Policy-Relevant Research

**Developed by**  
**Fostering Policy-Relevant Psychological Research project team members:\***  
*\*Authors listed in alphabetical order*

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This toolkit was designed to complement the second webinar in the five-part webinar series on Fostering Policy-Relevant Psychological Research. To download this toolkit, other toolkits, and to watch all of the webinars as they are released, visit:  
[www.spssi.org/CODAPARpolicyseries](http://www.spssi.org/CODAPARpolicyseries).

# COMMISSION

Commissioned through a 2022 Committee on Division/APA Relations (CODAPAR) grant awarded to:

Division 8	The Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)
Division 9	The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)
Division 27	The Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA)
Division 35	The Psychology of Women and Gender Division
Division 44	The Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity
Division 45	The Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is being led by Division 9 President Abigail (Abby) Stewart, PhD and has team members representing all of the participating divisions, including: Patrick Grzanka, PhD (Division 9), Kevin Carriere, PhD (Division 9), Nathan (Nate) T. Deichert, PhD (Division 8), Julie Garcia, PhD (Division 8), John Paul Wilson, PhD (Division 8), Sara L. Buckingham, PhD (Division 27), Raquel E. Rose, MPhil (Division 27), Jacqueline (Jackie) White, PhD (Division 35), Richard Sprott, PhD (Division 44), Michele Schlehofer, PhD (Division 44), and Helen H. Hsu, PsyD (Division 45). Sarah Mancoll, the Policy Director for Division 9, is providing administrative support for the series.

# TAKING THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD POLICY-RELEVANT RESEARCH

This toolkit complements a one-hour webinar aimed at people who have not yet figured out how to do research that is useful to policymakers and/or practitioners, or who are struggling to do so. Access a recording of the webinar by visiting:

[www.spssi.org/CODAPARpolicyseries](http://www.spssi.org/CODAPARpolicyseries).

## *Panelists:*

- **HELEN A. NEVILLE, PhD**, Professor of Educational Psychology and African Studies and Director of the Liberation Lab at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- **BETSY LEVY PALUCK, PhD**, Professor of Psychology and Public and International Affairs at Princeton University
- **ASIA A. EATON, PhD**, Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Power, Women, and Relationships (PWR) Lab at Florida International University

## *Moderators:*

- **HELEN H. HSU, PsyD**, Director of Outreach at Stanford University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

- **JOHN PAUL WILSON, PhD**, Associate Professor of Psychology, Coordinator of Adjunct Instruction in Psychology, and Director of the Perceiving People Lab at Montclair State University

# INTRODUCTION TO POLICY FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

These readings provide primers on policy, policymaking, and translating research for policymakers. Most are written for psychologists, by psychologists.

## *Books:*

- Bogenschneider, K., & Corbett, T. (2010). *Evidence-based policymaking: Insights from policy-minded researchers and research-minded policymakers*. Routledge.
- Maton, K.I. (2016). *Influencing social policy*. Oxford.
- Tropp, L.R. (2018). *Making research matter: A psychologist's guide to public engagement*. American Psychological Association.

### Articles:

- Scott, J.T., Larson, J.C., Buckingham, S.L., Maton, K.I., & Crowley, D.M. (2019). Bridging the research-policy divide: Pathways to engagement and skill development. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 89(4), 434–441. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000389>
- Shinn, M. (2007). Waltzing with a monster: Bringing research to bear on public policy. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63(1), 215–231. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2007.00505.x>
- Tseng, V. (2012). *The uses of research in policy and practice*. Society for Research in Child Development. <https://wtgrantfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Uses-of-Research-in-Policy-and-Practice.pdf>

## HOW-TO GUIDES

There are many ways for psychologists to better link their research to policy. This includes not only designing and conducting policy-relevant research, but also translating that research for policy makers and educating the general public. These resources will help you get started.

### Advocacy Guides for Scientists and Practitioners:

- [Advocacy Handbook for Social and Behavioral Science Research](#), created by the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
- [Community Advocacy: A Psychologist's Toolkit for State and Local Advocacy](#), created by APA Divisions 17, 27, 36, and 45
- Address by COSSA Executive Director Wendy Naus at SPSP 2023 entitled [A Guide to Advocacy for Personality and Social Psychologists](#)

### Translating Research for Policymakers:

#### How to write a policy brief:

- Wong, S.L., Green, L.A., Bazemore, A.W., & Miller, B.F. (2017). [How to write a health policy brief](#). *Families, Systems, & Health*, 35(1), 21–24.
- [SPSSI's Policy Resources webpage](#), which includes brief-writing guides and brief exemplars

#### How to develop relationships and communicate effectively with policy makers:

- RESULTS's ["Lobbying How To's"](#)

### Translating Research for the Public:

- [The Academic Minute](#) is a two-and-a-half minute daily radio module which features researchers from colleges and universities around the world, keeping listeners abreast of what's new and exciting in the academy.

- The [Women's Media Center's Progressive Women's Voices media and leadership training program](#) can help scholars position themselves as media spokespeople in their fields.

How to write op-eds:

- The [Op-Ed Project's Tips and Tricks](#) for writing op-eds
- [Duke's Communicator Toolkit](#)

How to write letters to the editor:

- The [Community Toolbox's Writing Letters to the Editor Guide](#)

## EXAMPLES OF POLICY-RELEVANT RESEARCH

There are many psychologists and other social scientists out in the world doing policy-relevant research, or using research to inform policy. Here are just a few examples:

- The [California Reducing Disparities Project](#) is a state-wide, cross-agency, culturally responsive mental health initiative that involves many project partners, including universities and the Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition
- [Written testimony from the Asian American Psychological Association](#) (AAPA). In March of 2021, AAPA submitted testimony

before a U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Hearing on “Discrimination and Violence Against Asian Americans.”

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

For many students and psychologists alike, policy work can seem intimidating. Here is a short list of opportunities that incorporate varying levels of mentorship on how to incorporate a policy lens in your work or fully engage in policy work.

*For undergraduate and graduate students:*

- [African American Policy Forum's Fellowship Program](#)
- SPSSI's [Dalmas A. Taylor Memorial Summer Minority Policy Fellowship](#)
- APA's Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) [Psychology Summer Institute](#)
- MDRC's [GSP Undergraduate Internship](#)
- [Research-to-Policy Collaboration Internships](#)
- [Fulbright Public Policy Fellowship](#)

*For postdoctoral professionals, full-time:*

- [APA Congressional Fellowship](#)
- [APA Executive Branch Science Fellowship](#)
- [Jacquelin Goldman Congressional Fellowship](#)
- [Springfield LGBTQIA+ Policy Congressional Fellowship](#)
- [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellows](#)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science ([AAAS](#)) [Science & Technology Policy Fellowships](#)
- Society for Research in Child Development ([SRCD](#)) [U.S. Policy Fellowship Programs](#)
- SPSSI's [James Marshall Public Policy Postdoctoral Fellowship](#)

*For postdoctoral professionals, part-time:*

- [Research-to-Policy Collaboration Internships](#)
- [Fulbright Public Policy Fellowship](#)

CONNECT WITH APA  
DIVISIONS AND  
OTHER  
INTERMEDIARY  
ORGANIZATIONS

One way to get started in bridging the gap between research and policy is by meeting with other psychologists and researchers in your content area.

Intermediary organizations, such as APA Divisions, can provide support. Below are brief descriptions of and links to the organizations involved with the development of this webinar series.

**Division 9: The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues**

welcomes psychologists and allied social scientists who share a common concern with research on psychological aspects of important social issues and social subjects to bring theory and practice into focus on human problems of the group, the community, the nation, and the increasingly important problems that have no national boundaries. Learn more at [www.spssi.org](http://www.spssi.org)

**Division 8: The Society for Personality and Social Psychology**

seeks to advance the progress of theory, basic and applied research, and practice in the field of personality and social psychology. Members are employed in academia and private industry or government, and all are concerned with how individuals affect and are affected by other people and by their social and physical environments. Learn more at [www.spsp.org](http://www.spsp.org)

**Division 27: The Society for Community Research and Action: Division of Community Psychology** encourages the development of theory, research, and practice relevant to the reciprocal relationships between

individuals and the social system which constitute the community context. The Division supports 23 regional groups promoting communication among community psychologists in six U.S. regions, Canada, Western Europe, and the South Pacific. Learn more at [www.scra27.org](http://www.scra27.org)

**Division 35: The Society for the Psychology of Women** provides an organizational base for all feminists, of all genders and of all national origins, who are interested in teaching, research, or practice in the psychology of womxn. To demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity of feminists of diverse genders, we have chosen to use the term “womxn.” The division promotes feminist research, theories, education, and practice toward understanding and improving the lives of girls and womxn in all their diversities; encourages scholarship on the social construction of gender relations across multicultural contexts; applies its scholarship to transforming the knowledge base of psychology; advocates action toward public policies that advance equality and social justice; and seeks to empower womxn in community, national and global leadership. Learn more at <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-35>

**Division 44: The Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity** focuses on the diversity of human sexual orientations by supporting research, promoting relevant education, and affecting professional and public policy. Division 44 has task forces

on accreditation, bisexuality, professional standards, public policy, youth, families, ethnic/racial issues and science. The Division supports the Maylon-Smith Award for student research and presents the annual Distinguished Contribution Awards. Learn more at <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-44>

**Division 45: The Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race** encourages research on ethnic minority issues and the application of psychological knowledge to ethnic minority issues. The division promotes public welfare through research and encourages professional relationships among psychologists who share these concerns and interests. Learn more at [www.division45.org](http://www.division45.org)

The **Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences (FABBS)** advocates for science at the federal level, educates policymakers and the public about science, and provides a wealth of informational resources for scientists who are interested in learning more about how to become advocates. FABBS publishes the peer-reviewed journal *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences (PIBBS)*, hosts webinars and public lectures, and shares teaching resources on its website. <https://fabbs.org/>

The **Scholars Strategy Network** is dedicated to connecting journalists, policymakers, and civic leaders with America’s top researchers to improve policy and strengthen democracy. (They

also provide training on op-ed writing.)  
<https://scholars.org/>

The **Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)** is a nonprofit advocacy organization that promotes the social and behavioral sciences in federal policymaking. Headquartered in Washington, DC, COSSA serves as a united voice for organizations, institutions, communities, and stakeholders who care about a successful and vibrant social science research enterprise. COSSA's policy experts work with a broad network of advocates to ensure sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and the widespread use of our sciences in policymaking. Learn more at [www.cossa.org](http://www.cossa.org)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Often it can be difficult to obtain funding for policy work, particularly as early career scholars and graduate students. However, opportunities do exist! Here are some to consider.

- [Washington Center for Equitable Growth](#) (Graduate and Postgraduate)
- [Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Research Scholars](#) (Graduate)
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- [MDRC GSP Doctoral Fellowship](#)
- [Center for Engaged Scholarship Dissertation Fellowship](#)

## ABOUT THIS WEBINAR AND TOOLKIT SERIES

This five-part webinar and toolkit series on **Fostering Policy-Relevant Psychological Research** covers five topics:

1. Why Policy? Understanding the Critical Link Between Research and Policy
2. Taking the First Steps Toward Policy-Relevant Research
3. How Do You Make Your Research Matter to Policy Makers and Practitioners?
4. How Do You Manage Your Presence to Non-academic Audiences if Your Research Is Relevant to Policy and Practice?
5. Creating a Policy-Relevant Psychology: Best Practices for Research and Mentoring

To access webinars that have already been recorded and toolkits that have already been created, visit:

[www.spssi.org/CODAPARpolicyseries](http://www.spssi.org/CODAPARpolicyseries)