



AUTHOR GUIDELINES

POLICY & PRACTICE is the magazine for administrators and managers of state and county social services and programs. The professional magazine of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), **POLICY & PRACTICE** reaches the desks of decision-makers in state and county departments of human services, as well as private and voluntary social service agencies, educators and students in schools of social work, and others responsible for programs and services that serve our nation's most vulnerable citizens.

Published six times a year, **POLICY & PRACTICE's** articles combine thoughtful commentary and in-depth analysis on current issues and future trends in public human services. **POLICY & PRACTICE's** articles do not necessarily reflect the views of APHSA. Your article, if published, will be read by administrators and managers of social services and programs across the country. As an audience, they possess a wide range of expertise, as well as a keen interest in information that has an impact within the public human service field. Generally, our readers do not look to **POLICY & PRACTICE** for news or technical information as they would with other trade publications. Rather, they turn to **POLICY & PRACTICE** for an overview of public human service issues and trends, and an analysis and insight into public human service issues. We are happy to consider your manuscript. We are always looking for new ideas and fresh perspectives. Please keep the following guidelines in mind as you prepare your manuscript.

TOPIC

Your topic should hold the immediate interest of administrators and managers of social programs and services. It should address an issue or set of issues that has or will have an impact on the public human services field. (While case studies are welcomed, we are more generally interested in articles that have a broad application.) You may also discuss programs and products that have broad application in the field. In past issues, for example, **POLICY & PRACTICE** has featured articles on welfare reform, child support, TANF, health care for low-income families, SNAP, child welfare, information technology, housing for low-income families, Medicaid and Medicare, marriage promotion and family formation, and faith-based social services, to name a few.

Highly technical articles will not be considered. For instance, while we would consider an article on purchasing information technology systems, we would not consider a detailed discussion of a particular system's operating procedures. Nor would we consider an article that is primarily political or polemic in nature. By the same token, we are not a research or academic publication, and do not carry articles written in that prose or style.

STYLE

You are writing a feature article, not a white paper or thesis. Your reader is looking for a good read, something that will be informative and useful as he or she thinks about the many issues involved in his or her daily work. Also, the reader values substance over assertion. We ask that you please support what you say with data, research, quotations, or examples.

You should strive for an informative, approachable style in your writing. You will be speaking to readers who do not have time to wade through complex, technical or social science jargon but who demand well-reasoned, intelligent discussions. Also, please keep in mind that not every reader will be familiar with some well-used acronyms and terms used among practitioners.

POLICY & PRACTICE looks for a conversational style, but not an overly familiar one. Here are some basic considerations:

- ◆ Stay away from the passive voice.
- ◆ Use news reportage style. You will get a sense from *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report*.
- ◆ Avoid using jargon without explanation and do not assume comprehensive technical knowledge. This does not mean, however, that you must over-simplify your language or explain everything “from the beginning.”
- ◆ Use concrete examples. Our readers want to see how issues apply to the real world.
- ◆ Avoid legal and academic phrases and jargon.
- ◆ For general editorial style, **POLICY & PRACTICE** requires that authors refer to the *Associated Press Stylebook*.

FORMAT

Your article should be about 800 words. Do not furnish headlines. We will write a headline that’s appropriate when we finish editing. If you have lists in your text, steps in a program or a number of reasons for a situation for example, separate the items with bullets, not alphabets or numbers. Your manuscript should include

- ◆ A title (for our record, not for the purpose of the headline)
- ◆ A byline
- ◆ Author(s) biography and a digital photo of the author’s headshot
- ◆ If necessary, include figures and illustrations on separate pages at the end of the article (but please refer to figures and illustrations in text as well.) Include source documentation if necessary.
- ◆ Do not use index, references or footnotes. If necessary, incorporate the substance of endnotes and references in the main text.

Your article should show orderly development and coherent flow. Your article’s central point should be clear from the beginning. Articles should contain an introduction; a main body, usually with several subsections; and a conclusion that does not simply restate or summarize the main ideas of your article, but rather explains the importance of the article itself and the significance of the ideas it presents. As a rule, your conclusion should answer the reader’s question, “Why did the author want me to read this?” Do not say “summary” or “conclusion.”

RIGHTS

POLICY & PRACTICE retains all rights to published articles. We also reserve the right to edit articles to meet the needs of the journal’s audience, editorial style, and space requirements; and to illustrate the articles as we deem appropriate. **POLICY & PRACTICE** cannot consider manuscripts that are simultaneously submitted elsewhere for review.

TO SUBMIT YOUR MANUSCRIPT

We prefer to receive manuscripts electronically, preferably as a Microsoft Word or otherwise PC-compatible file attached to an e-mail. If you want to e-mail a letter of inquiry and a one-page abstract of your proposed article, you may. An entire manuscript is better, though. It is easier for us to react to a finished product than a proposal, but we recognize it might not be easier for you. Editorial submissions and inquiries may be sent to **Amy Plotnick, POLICY & PRACTICE, American Public Human Services Association, 1133 Nineteenth Street, N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036, or to amy.plotnick@aphsa.org**