



# Community Action Project

## Members Starting January 2006

*Policy Analysis Projects*

*Sections 2-3:  
Analysis, Alternatives, and Conclusion*

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## How this Guidebook Works

This is the guidebook to the rest of your Policy Analysis CAP. It will guide you through planning your project, building public support, conducting your project, and concluding it afterwards. This guide is specific to Policy Analysis and will not work with Direct Service or Education and Outreach projects.

Like the form you completed with your proposal, this guidebook also contains the pieces you will need to report on to NWSA. As with the first section, you're responsible for completing the steps by the due dates listed below.

**PLEASE FOLLOW THIS GUIDEBOOK AS YOU WORK ON YOUR PROJECT INSTEAD OF AFTER THE FACT.** It is designed to guide you through the process. Doing the project and then doing the reporting later will create some extra work for you, and may make you back up and re-create steps that you missed.

## Reporting

The grey boxes like this one contain the questions you will need to answer. Type your answers in the box and save this file. This is the file you will email to the Member Development Coordinator. Create as much extra space as you need.

<b>Basic Information</b>		
<b>Names of people working on this CAP:</b>	NAME	TEAM OR REGION

## Due Dates:

<b>April 10, 2006</b>	CAP Proposal Due	<i>Complete at least through Step 3</i>
<b>May 15, 2006</b>	CAP Mid-Report Due (Project Planning)	<i>Complete at least through Step 5</i>
<b>November 13, 2006</b>	<i>Completed CAP due</i>	<i>Completed CAP through Step 7</i>

## Section 4: Looking at Policy

### Policy Research and Policy Levels

When you pick a policy or rule, you will also have a choice to pick the level on which you want to analyze the policy. For instance, policies and rules regarding access for those with disabilities operate on a variety of levels: there are laws on the federal; state; county; and city level, as well as policies of individual organizations. Some policies are set by one institution and given to another to implement or adhere to (such as the Clean Water Act, which is a federal law that is implemented and enforced by the states.) You can choose to look as broadly or as specifically as you want for your CAP.

### Where to Find Information

You may quickly discover that finding and understanding our laws and regulations is no easy task. They are very complex, sometimes unclear, and difficult to interpret and often appear to be a tangled web between different levels of government. This is one reason that so many Americans are disengaged from policy issues. It also reinforces the importance of being a knowledgeable citizen. Many political campaigns (including disingenuous ones) are based on the assumption that the public does not understand the issues.

Listed below are some resources for helping you find information that is clear.

- *Knowledgeable people* will be a valuable source of information. You probably interviewed some of those people during Section 2 of the proposal process. Unlike web sites or documents, they can also speak to history, intent, and answer questions you may have.
- *Local branches of government* (state, regional, county, and city) and their staff are the most knowledgeable about their policies. The staff is a good source for information. For instance, the Multnomah County Health and Human Services Dept. will have the best information on county laws and resources about homelessness.
- *Non-governmental Community Groups* that work on these issues are also a source of knowledge. Depending on the issue, these may be environmental groups, social service organizations, neighborhood associations, and others.
- *State and Federal Representative Offices* exist to serve constituents. Your State Representative and Senator and U.S. Congressman/woman and U.S. Senators have staff and/or offices that help constituents with their needs. These are separate offices from any campaign or electoral functions. They can be a source of information on laws on the state and federal level, respectively. If you contact them, please state clearly that you are looking for information rather than policy change so you avoid the appearance of lobbying.

- *Libraries:* Libraries have many legal policies on file. Talk to the reference librarian.
- *Websites:* There is a great deal of information on the web. This is also a good way to identify other resources and find out how to contact government agencies and local nonprofits.

Be aware the every source will have its own bias.

### **Looking at Policy**

**4P-A Describe the policy(s) that you are going to analyze. (For instance, City of Portland’s incentives for installing renewable energy sources.)**

**4P-B What issue(s) or problem(s) was the policy designed to address?**

**4P-C Summarize briefly the key provisions of this policy.**

**4P-D Who benefits from this policy?**

**4P-E Who is negatively impacted by this policy?**

**4P-F What other laws or policies guide, enforce, fund, or are otherwise linked to this one?**

**4P-G Complete the following chart for each policy in question to identify and distinguish the policy maker(s) from the policy implementer(s). This will help you focus your energy in a productive way on the area and people that have the ability to make the change you desire.**

### **Who Makes (and changes) Policy?**

Policies are created by a variety of players depending on the organizations. Government policy is created by elected officials by agency heads appointed by elected officials and confirmed by a legislative body. Some agencies also have commissions that must approve policy changes, made up of members of the public representing different stakeholders. Public agencies are also required to go through a ‘Public Involvement Process’ that is shaped by sets of laws. This process may require them to hold public meetings, publish notice in the paper, and take public comments for a certain period of time.

In some cases, laws are created by the voters via the initiative process.

Policies in nonprofits are established by the Board of Directors, a set of volunteers that govern the organization.

<b>Policy/law/rule</b>	<b>Policy Maker(s)</b>	<b>Implementer(s) or</b>	<b>Where can a copy of</b>
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List the law or policy and its purpose	Who is responsible for creating the law or policy? (Boards, agencies, state or federal legislators, etc.)	<b>Enforcer(s)</b> Who is responsible for administering or enforcing?	<b>this policy be found?</b>
<i>EXAMPLE:</i> City of Portland Clean Energy Ordinance	Portland City Council (elected)	Bureau of Sustainable Development staff	Bureau of Sustainable Development Website ( <a href="http://www.ci.portland/sustainable.gov">www.ci.portland/sustainable.gov</a> )

(Add lines as needed)

## Step 5: Community Stakeholders

How does the community view the policy you are analyzing? There will be beneficiaries and those who are impacted negatively.

**Revisit key contacts from Step 2**

You may want to get in touch with some of your key contacts from your interviews in Step 2. Now that you have a specific policy you are working on, you can ask them for help with technical questions, referral to others, and to put you in contact with some of the key stakeholders.

**Identify and Know Your Stakeholders (5P-A)**

Stakeholders are anyone with an interest in the policy and its effects. Their interest may be financial, philosophical, etc.

Keep in mind that many stakeholders may have a benefit that they do not recognize yet. For instance, many people might not know that the creek even exists, or that healthier creeks tend to increase the property values of the land around them compared to polluted creeks.

Your list of stakeholders will include agencies, organizations, and individuals from many sectors of society.

### 5-A: Policy Stakeholders

List as many stakeholders for this policy as you can. Include at least five.

*Example: for a policy requiring 100 feet of vegetative buffers for any construction along streams in the City of Portland*

Stakeholder	How they are affected
<i>Example: Oregon Homebuilder's Association</i>	<i>Requirements would reduce buildable land and restrict views from homes. Likely to oppose buffer requirement.</i>

#### If working in a CAP team:

Discuss these questions as a team. You can answer in summary for the whole group or individually.

**5T-A** What do each of you like about working on a team?

**5T-B** What are you apprehensive about working on a CAP team?

**5T-C** How have group decisions been made up until now? Are you satisfied with the ways they've been made?

**5T-D** How are you going to hold each other accountable for tasks? (Check-ins, etc.)

**This is the mid-project report for you Policy Analysis CAP. Please submit the reporting form to the NWSA Member Development Coordinator by **May 15** by e-mail.**

## Section 6: Policy Alternatives

In this section, you will develop some ideas about policy alternatives and decide which of these alternatives (or the existing policy) would be most effective.

### Learning About Policy Alternatives

In many cases, you will have ideas of your own about what changes to policy or implementation would work well. If you do not, or you need more ideas, many of the community groups that work on this policy issue will have policy changes that they are promoting and pursuing. For instance, on transportation issues in Portland, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance and the Oregon Environmental Council both suggest policies that fit within their mission of promoting non-motorized transportation. Be sure to get all sides of the story.

### Developing a Recommendation

After brainstorming at least three alternatives, we'll ask you to choose one that you feel most meets the community needs. As you continue with your Policy Analysis CAP, you'll be thinking about how policy change happens.

*Depending on the policy you're working on, AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities against lobbying may prevent you from actually pursuing this change on AmeriCorps time. However, it will still be a useful exercise in understanding how policy change and public outreach occurs.*

### Identifying Decision-Makers

Who would you approach if you wanted to change this policy?

During Section 4 (Building Public Support) you identified stakeholders with an interest in this policy. This section identifies who actually has the power to change policy and how you can affect the decisions they make.

### Public Decision-Making

When he was President, Franklin Roosevelt once told a petitioner "Okay, you've convinced me. Now go out and bring pressure on me!" This indicates that at most levels of government, convincing someone of the facts may not be enough because the opposition is also being active and putting pressure on policymakers based on their interests. Affecting policy is not only about having great ideas—it is about generating community support and mobilizing people to bring about change.

### Developing Your Message

Now that you know what policy you are recommending and whom you are trying to convince and mobilize, it is time to think about how you would articulate your project to the community. (Why should we change this?)

One trick is that you should be able to explain what you're doing to someone who knows very little about it in less than 30 seconds. Here's one suggestion for how to phrase this:

1. What's the problem? What's the need you're trying to address? (Refer to your answers in section 3)
2. How will your suggestion solve the problem?

3. What can the listener do to help? (Change their support, help spread the word, etc.).

### **Policy Analysis: Decision Makers and Influence**

**5P-A: Describe the alternative you are suggesting.**

**5P-B: Why do you support this alternative?**

**5P-C: Who would benefit from this change?**

**5P-D: Who would be affected negatively?**

**5P-E: Identify the decision-maker (person, people, group, legislative body, etc.) for this policy that has the ability to make the change(s) you are recommending.**

**5P-F: How are these decision-makers influenced (public pressure, advisors, staff, etc.)?**

**5P-G: What groups might oppose the changes you're making? What tactics do you think they might use?**

**5P-H: What strategies might you use to get the attention and support of the decision-maker(s)?**

**5P-I: Draft a short message aimed to the general public about why this policy and/or policy change is important.**

## Step 7: Concluding the CAP

Evaluation, reflection and celebration are critical to any project.

### Debrief & Evaluate

Evaluation is a critical tool to help you recognize what worked and what could be improved in the future. After the project, return to the goals you set in your proposal (question 3-D and 3-E.). Answer the questions below. If you're working in a team, answer them as a group with everyone's input.

Good evaluation takes into account your experience and the experience of everyone involved: volunteers, partners, and people affected by the issue your project tried to address.

- 7-A Did you achieve the goals you set out in 3-D and 3-E?
- 7-B: Summarize the feedback from partners, volunteers, and others associated with your project.
- 7-C -If you feel you achieved your goals, what do you think is a next step? (You are not required to take it.)  
-If you feel you did not achieve your goals, what would you do differently next time (knowing what you know now)?
- 7-D What impact do you believe you had on the community in the short and long term?

### Reflection

If evaluation is looking at the impacts of our actions on the community, reflection is the process of thinking about the impact our actions have on *ourselves*. Community work without reflection is a recipe for burnout, frustration, and well-intentioned, talented people dropping out of civic life.

- 7-E What was challenging about your project and how did you respond?
- 7-F What was most rewarding for you about this project?
- 7-G What is the most significant thing you learned?

### If working in a CAP team:

- 7T-A How did your team work together?

### Celebration

Celebration is the act of doing something to thank yourself and others for the work that has been done. Like reflection, there are many ways to celebrate. Work without celebrating becomes overwhelming and leads to burnout.

Ironically, as people become more experienced in community activism, they usually become not as good at taking time to celebrate. Many veteran community activists develop an “it’s never enough” feeling of never being satisfied or feelings that lead to frustration with and from others. So get in the habit of celebrating now!

Like reflection, there are many ways to celebrate. How you do it is less important than simply being sure that you celebrate somehow, in a way that you find reinvigorating.

You will have a chance to share your CAP project, experiences, and to reflect and celebrate with other NWSA members as your year of service comes to a close.

7-H What were some of the highlights for you?

7-I Having completed the CAP, how do you feel differently about how you will be involved in your community?

7-J Creatively imagine and write possibilities for how the project might benefit you, others, the community, or the environment three to five years in the future.

**Congratulations, you are done! Please submit your CAP (responses to all the steps) to the NWSA Member Development Coordinator by **November 13, 2006** by e-mail, disk, or CD.**

## Some Useful Sources

A short list of guides, organizations, and web sites that may help you:

- A Guide to Effective Citizenship through AmeriCorps, Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org). Prepared by the Constitutional Rights Foundation, [www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org)
- Roadmap to Civic Engagement, Service-Learning Northwest, Educational Service District 112, [www.servicelarningnw.esd112.org](http://www.servicelarningnw.esd112.org)
- How to Save a River, by David Bolling, published by River Network, 1994
- “Organizing for Social Change”, Midwest Academy Manual for Activists, Seven Locks Press
- Many of the ideas around strategizing for policy/law change are taken from Nonviolent Communication theory. See [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)
- For inspiring behavioral change on things like recycling, alternative transportation, etc.: Community – based Social Marketing, by Doug McKenzie-Mohr, provides a great set of strategies, approaches, and case studies. Visit [www.cbsm.com](http://www.cbsm.com)
- Tools of Change ([www.toolsofchange.org](http://www.toolsofchange.org)) also provides a set of experiences around behavior change.
- SOLV ([www.solv.org](http://www.solv.org)) provides assistance with on-the-ground projects and can also provide funding. It is a great guidebook to planning specific to any kind of on-the-ground project involving volunteers. SOLV also provides small grants of up to \$125 for some projects via the Project Oregon Program. Contact Patty Terzian SOLV at (503) 844-9571, or [www.solv.org](http://www.solv.org). The guidebook is also available online.