

# Connecting Policy & Research to Practice

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The following ideas are meant to provide field agencies with learning tasks that address research and policy learning objectives. Please adapt them to meet your agency's needs.

## State & Federal Policy

Identify a piece of legislation (at the state or federal level) that has been proposed or passed that may have an impact on clients served by your agency or resources for service delivery.

- Have students identify the legislation and create a one page fact sheet, describing the legislation and the benefits/consequences to share with staff at the agency
- Examine agency policies, and research whether it is congruent with potential legislation or legislation that created the need for the agency policy
- Consider identifying a legislative bill that will impact your client population and organize an agency wide advocacy campaign (write letters to legislators, consider how you might educate the community about the impact, etc. ). The student could do a presentation for staff, clients, or the community at large.
- Students have an assignment in their policy class that asks them to analyze a policy and advocate for it. Ask the student to share with you and agency staff the policy they have chosen and their advocacy plan to help educate other staff about policy advocacy.

## Budgetary Impacts

Explore learning tasks that might help a student understand the funding streams for your agency and how state and federal budgets impact direct services

- Consider having your student interview a member of your agency's administrative team that has knowledge about the budget to provide some basic understanding of how services are funded. Have them report back to you about the information that was presented to them.
- The policy analysis assignment in their policy class also requires them to look at how this policy will impact the budget. Ask them to share this part of their assignment and consider having them share with your agency staff if it is a policy that pertains to your agency.
- Consider providing the student with internship hours to attend Legislative Lobby Days in Sacramento in March. They could then come back and present to you and/or your staff about the legislative bills that they lobbied for and provide an overview of those pieces of legislation.
- If there is a local budget issue that is likely to impact your agency consider what efforts your agency might take on and have the student help organize this (phone calls or

letters to your board of supervisors, holding community meetings to educate others about the impact of this budget decision, etc.)

- Have the student attend a board of supervisors/advisory board meeting where the budget for your agency is being discussed.

## Election Year

As an election year you may consider the following as a way to help students understand how elections impact direct service

- Have the student explore if your agency can serve as a voting site for local and federal elections
- Have your student put together a one page informational flier about where clients/staff can vote and important dates for voter registration, etc.
- Consider having your student provide a community education forum for clients about the importance of voting and help them register to vote and/or sign up for absentee ballots
- Have the student attend candidate debates

## Current & Future Research

There are frequently lots of opportunities for research in the field and for this research in turn to inform direct practice

- Have the student interview your colleagues to see what areas or topics they would be most interested in having more information on ( a particular practice model, an issue that a number of clients seem to be impacted by, or an intervention that they would like to know whether or not it makes an impact, etc.)
- Have your student develop some type of research topic list, and they could share this with their research class to see if others are interested in doing needed research
- Start a binder at the agency of these research ideas to create ongoing documentation
- Consider building a partnership with people at the university to conduct needed research
- Have the student examine some existing research about the problem, population or intervention and prepare a presentation, or discussion on what they learned about research
- Have the student interview colleagues to inquire about what theories inform the agencies' practices and the have them research those theories and discuss them in supervision
- Have the student examine to what extent treatment fidelity is maintained if a particular treatment model is being used in the agency.
- Have the student explore how clients or members of the public are informed about the effectiveness of clinical practices at their respective agencies and if there is not adequate information being shared about this, propose a solution.