



**WASHINGTON
AGRICULTURE AND
FORESTRY
PUBLIC POLICY
PROJECT
GUIDELINES**

**WASHINGTON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM PUBLIC POLICY
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the public policy development projects is to give participants experience in working with other people to analyze a significant public problem and develop a proposal for its resolution, including identifying an appropriate decision-making body, and advocating for the solution before such body.

The objectives of the public policy development projects are as follows:

1. Provide participants an opportunity to identify a problem of importance to people in their industry, their community or society in general.
2. Provide participants an opportunity to get outside of traditional modes of thinking and to be more visionary about ways of resolving public problems.
3. Provide participants an opportunity to develop ideas and proposals that have potential for real pay-off in helping to resolve important public problems.
4. Provide participants an opportunity to apply specific subject matter from seminars to the analysis of public problems and the development of proposals for their resolution.
5. Enable participants to learn a process that can be applied in many situations and towards many problems in the future.
6. Foster feedback among the participants.
7. Provide participants the opportunity to understand the public policy process firsthand through participating in a legislative or rule-making process.

If a project team would like to complete a project that does not involve a legislative or rule-making process, the team may propose such project to their Program Director. The proposed project must meet the above objectives, and the team must get approval from the Program Director before proceeding.

PUBLIC POLICY PROJECT OVERVIEW

As an integral part of the two-year leadership program, members of the class will form four or five public policy development groups. Throughout the two years, each group will work to develop a policy solution to address a specific public policy issue. At the Public Policy Seminar in the spring of the second year of the program, each group will make a 30-minute presentation on a review of the process steps they undertook.

Topics for projects should be carefully selected. The groups should focus on issues that affect some segment of the public and should represent an area where a real contribution can be made to society.

Each group should determine a solution to the identified problem topic. The solution should be tailored to the scope of the problem, and should be addressed to the most appropriate decision-making body to implement the proposal.

Over the two-year program, the group will implement the skills they are learning in order to solve a public policy issue, using resources gained in the program. At each seminar participants should ask, "How would this apply to my public policy topic? What resources am I gaining to help me resolve my public policy issue?"

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC POLICY PROJECT ACTIVITIES

1. Define the problem your group is addressing.
 - a. Provide a clear and concise statement of the problem.
 - b. What are the “public” aspects of the problem (why is this a problem)?
 - c. What are the barriers to resolution of the problem?
2. Identify the alternatives for resolving the problem. Specify the factors (e.g. economic, cultural, administrative, legal, environmental, and political) you have considered in selecting an alternative or the criteria you have used in reaching a decision on an alternative.
3. Identify the most appropriate public body to address the preferred alternative. For example, is the alternative legislative? If so, at what level. Is the alternative administrative? If so, which agency has jurisdiction?
4. Consider the people involved and their relative power.
 - a. Who are the major actors and groups with an interest in your proposal?
 - b. What will their relative influence be on the proposal?
 - c. How will society in general be affected by your proposal?
5. Outline a strategy for getting the proposal passed or adopted by the specific public body you have selected and specify the factors you have considered in developing your strategy.

FORMAT AND TIMELINE FOR PUBLIC POLICY PROJECTS

1. Analyze the problem your group has selected and outline a proposal for its resolution, including the appropriate decision-making body to which it should be presented.
2. Prepare a timeline that identifies the necessary steps and benchmarks that will result in a decision from the appropriate decision-making body prior to the presentation deadline (March of the second year).
3. Prepare a presentation (including a written report) that reflects the process you have gone through to identify and resolve a public policy issue.

Progress reports will be expected from the groups at each class meeting, under the direction of the Class Vice President.

TIMELINE FOR FORMAT AND PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC POLICY PROJECTS

FIRST YEAR:

Seminar 1 – October (Leadership, Communication and Vision)

1. At the first seminar, the class will receive an introduction to the public policy development project.
2. Between the first and second seminars, each class participant will select a topic and prepare a five-minute *persuasive* speech for presentation and review at the second seminar. If the subject of the speech relates to public policy, it may be considered for a public policy project.

Seminar 2 – November (Group Dynamics and Public Speaking)

1. Present, for critique, to class members and AgForestry graduates, a five-minute persuasive speech, which may be on a public policy topic.
2. Present the five-minute speech again, to the full class, for critique.
3. Be assigned to an individual public policy development group.
4. Select an interim leader for each public policy group.
5. Participate in group formation exercises.

Before the December seminar, each group will begin preliminary research to explore and narrow the focus on a chosen topic.

Seminar 3 – December (Working with the Media)

1. Select a permanent group leader.
2. Work on defining the issue.
3. Develop a timeline (showing the path to getting in front of the appropriate decision-making body) and make individual assignments.
4. Provide a written report on the group's plan of work, including assignments for specific elements and possible mentors (people who are familiar with the public policy process, not necessarily the topic). Mentors will help the group draft legislation or rules and help guide the project team through the legislative or administrative process. Consider mentors who are alumni of AgForestry, as well as leaders in your industry or community.

5. The plan will be emailed to the Program Director within a week of leaving the Spokane seminar.

Seminar 4 – January (Social Issues)

Identify people who your group would like to meet with during the state and national government seminars in February/March. Prepare for meetings with contacts for the Olympia and Washington, D.C., seminars. Identify your mentor and schedule meetings as appropriate.

Begin making appointments with elected officials, interest groups and agencies.

Seminar 5 – February (State Government)

Follow up on appointments to meet with elected officials, agency representatives and interest groups.

Seminar 6 – February/March (National Government)

Meet with contacts and develop additional information on who might be affected by your proposal or interested in the outcomes.

Seminar 7 – May (Forestry Issues)

1. Each group will give a progress report to the class. Each group will be given 15 minutes to make the presentation, and 15 minutes for evaluation by Foundation staff.
2. Each person in the group will be responsible for a portion of the presentation.
3. Each group will develop a presentation outline and send it to the Program Director.
4. June 1 – Identify stakeholders and secure stakeholder support of concept.
August 1 – Secure stakeholder support of draft language. Consider agencies, legislators, public interest groups and others who may be affected by the issue.

SECOND YEAR:

As the second year progresses, each group will continue with their research, legislative project development and fine tuning of the proposed solution(s). Participants will have a chance to explore and think about how their topic may be addressed by other countries, specifically the destination(s) of the International Seminar.

Seminar 9 – October (The Columbia River System)

Finalize the public policy project action plan and present your progress to the class.

For example, if the solution is legislation proposed for Washington State, key milestones might look like this:

- a) October 1 – Identify committee pathway for legislation (getting key committee chairs to sponsor will help).
- b) October through January 1 – Access Legislative Assistant for Bill Drafting.
Secure Governor's Office and appropriate agency support of legislation
Secure Sponsor in both House and Senate
Gather bi-partisan co-sponsors
- c) January 1 – Drop Legislation
- d) January through March – Actively lobby and participate in appropriate hearings
- e) March – Achieve decision on legislation

Presentation materials must be sent to the Foundation office by the first week of March, so that the panel of evaluators has time to review the reports.

Seminar 13 – March (Public Policy Presentations)

Each group will make a presentation about their project. The presentation will be given in front of the class and a panel of 3 leaders (who may or may not be graduates of AgForestry). Each group will have 20 minutes for their presentation and 10 minutes on a review of the process the group engaged in.

The written report should include:

1. a clear definition of the project, goals, and the success and challenges your group encountered;
2. the issue(s) being addressed and the reasons for selecting the topic or solution;
3. background information on the issue(s) being addressed (briefly);
4. the state, national, and international dimensions of the issue(s);

5. alternate proposals and solutions, as well as the reasons why they were not pursued;
6. an assessment of the impacts the proposal may have on different sectors and the public in general;
7. a plan showing how the proposal could be adopted by an appropriate legislative or administrative body;
8. tangible outcome (rule, legislation, or other document);
9. mentors for your project.

The written report should be a minimum of five pages. It should include all content of the presentation and all supporting information (further details, contacts, references) in an Appendix.

The written report should include a “one pager” (executive summary or white paper) that gives a concise summary of the report.