

Publication Outline for Grantees

CHCF asks grantees to answer these questions and provide a draft outline before writing the first draft of an issue brief or paper. The outline should provide enough information to enable CHCF staff to have a clear idea of what you are trying to achieve with this paper, what the key ideas and/or findings are, and how you will structure the paper. Our hope is that this process minimizes future questions and revisions, making the writing process easier and more efficient for grantees and program staff.

1. Who are you trying to reach with this publication (audience) and what do you want them to do or think because of this publication (goal)? For example, are you trying to influence the decisionmaking of a policy audience, or provide a clear understanding of a complex issue? You can list a few different audiences and goals, but please indicate THE most important (primary) audience/goals.

- Primary Audience:
- Goal(s):

- Secondary Audience:
- Goal(s):

- Secondary Audience:
- Goal(s):

2. If a reader remembers nothing else but a few key points after reading your publication what do you want those points to be?

- Key Point #1
- Key Point #2
- Key Point #3

3. Provide an initial outline of your paper. In a few sentences or short paragraph describe the key points you'll make in each section, or the key findings (if you know them at this point). Generally, papers contain these sections, although they do not have to follow this model exactly.

- Executive Summary (if paper is longer than 20 pages)
- Introduction or Background (setting the context – why is this important now?)
- Key Findings
- Recommendations (if applicable)
- Conclusion
- Appendix:
 - Methodology or Description of Study (if appropriate)

The next page contains a hypothetical submission from a grantee. Don't feel like you must follow it exactly. It's simply intended to give you an idea of the type of information and detail we are looking for at this stage in the process.

Background from Program Officer

The program officer should insert a paragraph about the paper: We asked a grantee to produce a paper on X.

Sample Outline

1. Who are you trying to reach with this publication (audience) and what do you want them to do or think because of this publication (goal)? You can list a few different audiences and goals, but please indicate THE most important (primary) audience/goals.

Primary Audience: Leadership in the California Department of Health Care Services

Goals: We want DHCS leaders to: (1) understand that Medi-Cal members are frequently confused by the Medi-Cal written notices they receive and that this impedes members ability to access services; (2) implement rewrites to these documents based on extensive user testing with members; and (3) make policy and process improvements internally to ensure future written materials meet these higher standards.

2. If a reader remembers nothing else but a few key points after reading your publication what do you want those points to be?

- Based on user testing, the way Medi-Cal notices are currently written often causes confusion, frustration, and distrust among members.
- User testing of the materials showed how to make the materials much clearer and more accessible. A few of the key recommendations include:
 - Minimize use of acronyms and jargon.
 - Provide consistent messaging that minimizes fears about losing Medi-Cal coverage.
 - Use language that offers reassurance and provides the reason for requesting specific information.
- DHCS should implement internal policy and process changes to improve the accessibility and quality of written materials going forward. This can be an important step in improving the Medi-Cal member experience.

3. Outline the major sections of your paper. Briefly describe the purpose of each section, or the key findings in each section (if you know them at this point).

Section 1: Introduction (3-4 paragraphs)

- Will explain the rationale and goals of the project. Will include a few relevant data points for context (e.g., low literacy levels among Medi-Cal members).

Section 2: Process (1 page)

- Will describe at a high-level the steps in the user testing process, including the selection of materials, recruitment of Medi-Cal members, and review and approval of revisions to

materials. More detailed information (demographics of Medi-Cal members) will be placed in the Appendix.

Section 3: Key Findings and Action Steps (5-7 pages)

- This section will synthesize the user testing research into 5-8 broad findings (TBD). Under each finding we will propose an action step(s) to improve materials and provide concrete “before and after” examples. Below is an example:
 - Finding: The documents often contained acronyms and jargon that confused members.
 - Action Step: Minimize use of acronyms. If they must be used, clearly define them.
 - Example:
 - Original text: “If you have been screened for breast cancer by a provider not with EWC or FamPACT, you can still be referred to the BCCTP.”
 - Suggested revision: “Ask your doctor if you are part of the *Every Woman Counts* or Family PACT program. If they are, they can apply for you...if you want help finding a participating doctor, you can”

Section 4: Policy and Process Recommendations (2-3 pages)

- We will list recommendations that DHCS can implement internally that can improve the quality of Medi-Cal written communication beyond this study. We are currently finalizing these recommendations, but they are likely to include things such as:
 - Create a style guide that adheres to the best plain language and health literacy practices.
 - Create a consistent policy to ensure the creation of user-friendly documents for applications and members.
 - Include stakeholders throughout the process of developing and reviewing materials.

Section 5: Conclusion (3 paragraphs)

- Reiterate the problem the study was addressing.
- We will reiterate 3-4 of what we think are the paper’s most important recommendations.
- End with how implementing these recommendations will help DHCS achieve its mission and improve the Medi-Cal member experience.

Appendix A

- Demographics on Medi-Cal members participating in the study. (Demographics, age, gender)

Appendix B

- Copies of written materials tested.