

Manuscript Preparation Guidelines for the *CURA Reporter*

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) connects the resources of the University of Minnesota with the interests and needs of urban communities and the region for the benefit of residents of the state of Minnesota. CURA pursues its urban and regional mission by facilitating and supporting connections between state and local governments, neighborhoods, and nonprofit organizations, and relevant resources at the University, including faculty and students from appropriate campuses, colleges, centers or departments. CURA delivers timely and innovative research and technical assistance, offering solutions to critical issues by working to:

- Collaborate with communities and agencies to define and address their research and technical assistance needs
- Assist faculty to produce high-quality, applied research on critical issues
- Expand the education and professional experience of students through applied research projects
- Disseminate research results to the community, policy makers, and academics
- Convene public events for the discussion of issues, the exploration of policy alternatives, and the identification of new research opportunities

Articles that appear in the *CURA Reporter* are summary reports of some of the more than 100 collaborative research projects CURA sponsors each year. Projects featured in the *CURA Reporter* are expected to meet the following criteria:

1. The project is based on good, solid research.
2. The project or project findings would be of interest to a wide audience of readers, both academic and nonacademic.
3. The project has clear intrinsic value worth highlighting (e.g., the project yielded significant and identifiable outcomes, the research process is one that others could emulate or learn from, the project was an impetus for a larger initiative, the research findings fill an important need in the community, etc.)

Although authors retain the copyright to their individual articles, be advised that CURA has a standing policy of granting permission to reprint, reproduce, or redistribute complete articles from the *Reporter* for educational and noncommercial purposes. If this policy presents a problem, please advise the CURA editor when you submit your manuscript for review. Once the manuscript has been accepted for publication, CURA's assumption is that you agree to this permissions policy. Authors should not submit for publication elsewhere substantially similar versions of articles that appear in print in the *CURA Reporter* without first contacting the CURA editor.

Our Readership

The *CURA Reporter* is published quarterly, and currently has a circulation of about 6,000. Our general readership includes state legislators, employees of public agencies and institutions, practitioners, staff at community and nonprofit organizations, private citizens, and other individuals without advanced academic training who have an interest in local, state, and regional public policy issues that affect Minnesotans. We encourage authors to create a report that is specifically geared toward this audience—that is, a report that is grounded in sound research and written for an informed audience, but one that is also more “readerly” and informal than the typical scholarly report. The following are some ways in which a *Reporter* article differs from a traditional scholarly report or academic journal article:

- Use of first person voice is encouraged.
- A literature review is unnecessary. *Reporter* readers are interested in the practical policy implications of your research, not its contributions to academic literature on the subject.
- Although it is important to describe the methodology used in your research, technical jargon should be clearly defined and kept to a minimum.
- Complex mathematical formulas should be avoided; if they are used, the function they represent should be described in plain language understandable to nonspecialists.
- Generally, bibliographies, lists of works cited, author-date citations, etc. are not used in the *Reporter*. If you must cite another work, do so informally in the text of the manuscript or, if necessary, in a footnote. (NOTE: References cited in footnotes do require full bibliographic information, including complete first and last names of all authors and complete publication information, as well as volume number, date of publication, and inclusive page numbers for journal or periodical articles.)

- Footnotes should be minimized. Where possible, try to directly incorporate footnoted material into the text of your article.

In short, the content and language of a *Reporter* article should be interesting and understandable to an intelligent lay audience who may not have special knowledge or academic training in the topic area you discuss.

Tables, Figures, and Photographs

As you will notice from past issues of the *Reporter*, we encourage authors to include tables, figures (charts, graphs, maps, etc.), and photographs that help readers to better understand the content of their article. These are often convenient devices for simplifying complex ideas or summarizing large amounts of data that would otherwise be difficult to incorporate. If you have ideas for such items for your article, our staff would be happy to work with you to create an appropriate figure or arrange for a photograph shoot. *Please be aware that we are rarely able to use figures or photographs in the original form supplied by authors.* Consequently, you may be asked to work directly with our staff to supply files or raw data in the necessary format, review redrawn figures, provide contacts or possible locations for photo opportunities, etc. The [handout "Preparing Tables, Photos, and Figures for the CURA Reporter"](#) provides additional information that will be of use in preparing these materials for submission.

Note that you must obtain written permission to reproduce all figures or photos that are not the original work of the author(s). Please contact the CURA editor if you need assistance with the permissions process.

Manuscript Formatting

The manuscript you ultimately submit to CURA should be typewritten and double-spaced. Please use a clear and consistent numbering or lettering scheme throughout the manuscript to indicate the relationship between headings and subheadings. Keep other formatting to a minimum. Do not use styles, text boxes, or frames.

Deadlines for Manuscripts

Deadlines for submission of draft manuscripts for the *CURA Reporter* are as follows:

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>In Print</u>
September 15	Spring	March or April
January 15	Summer	July or August
May 15	Fall/Winter	November or December

Please note that submission of a draft manuscript by these deadlines **does not guarantee** publication in the corresponding issue of the *Reporter*. Our editorial staff makes every effort to publish manuscripts as quickly as possible once they are received.

Submitting Your Manuscript

The manuscript you submit to CURA should be roughly 3,500–4,000 words in length (approximately 12 double-spaced pages). We frequently help authors edit lengthier submissions to produce a manuscript of appropriate length. The order of the manuscript you submit should be as follows:

- **Separate cover page** listing the title, author(s), and, in the case of multiple authors, the primary contact during the editing process (see below)
- **Text of article**, including clearly and consistently **numbered and/or lettered** headings and subheadings
- A **brief biography** for each author (including current title and institutional affiliation, status/title and institutional affiliation at the time the research was undertaken, and general research interests)
- **Figures, tables, and original photographs**—including source information, captions, and legends where applicable (all original figures and photos will be returned upon request)

If the manuscript was written by more than one individual, it is important that the authors choose one person to act as the *primary contact* between the CURA editor and the other authors. The primary contact will be responsible for coordinating all further work on the manuscript, including supplying files, answering author queries, and coordinating manuscript revisions among the other authors at each stage of the editorial process.

When you have a draft manuscript ready for review by CURA, **please submit it to Jonathan Miller, CURA's publications editor, at jrmiller@umn.edu.**

The Review Process

Once we receive your submission, the editorial staff at CURA will review the manuscript. Depending on our publication schedule, the backlog of manuscripts we have on hand at the time, and the time-sensitivity of the material, this review process may take anywhere from a few weeks to several months. If your manuscript requires significant revision or substantive development based on this initial review, it will be returned to you by the CURA editor along with specific suggestions for revision, and you will be asked to submit a revised manuscript within a specified time period (usually four to six weeks). We will continue to work with you on development of the manuscript until we have a product that is satisfactory to both you and CURA.

Revised manuscripts, as well as initial submissions that do not require significant revision or development, will be copyedited by the CURA editorial staff and returned to you. You will be asked to review the edited manuscript, answer all author queries, and then return a hardcopy of the manuscript with your final changes indicated. This will be your last opportunity to make significant changes to the manuscript. Generally authors are not asked to review page proofs before publication unless they specifically request to do so.

Our staff make every attempt to ensure that submissions appear in the *CURA Reporter* as soon as possible. However, many variables affect how quickly a manuscript appears in print. We would appreciate your patience and cooperation in the event that publication of your manuscript is unexpectedly delayed.

If you have questions or concerns after reviewing these guidelines, or at any time during the preparation or review of your manuscript, **please contact Jonathan Miller, CURA's publications editor, at 612-625-9094 or jrmiller@umn.edu.**