10 Steps to a Successful Action Paper

An Assembly Action Paper is successful only if it gets results. Passage in the Assembly is the first level of success, but it's only the beginning. Here are some suggested ways to achieve what you set out to do**. These are helpful hints; only certain steps (marked with a **) are required.** What follows is meant to help Action Papers accomplish their aims, not to discourage innovation.

1. Start early, well before your interim Area Council meeting.

2. Follow the standard Action Paper format** carefully. Make your paper as clear and concise as you can.

3. Research any previous or current actions on the issue. Use the [Action Item Tracking System](#) (AITS) to perform a keyword search for related actions in the past few years. Central Office staff may also be able to help you find actions taken on similar issues in the past and current APA activities that are relevant.

4. Consider carefully what you are asking others to do. Are you assigning work to a component (committee or council)? Are you asking the APA to influence an outside organization, government body, or corporation? Is the Action Paper focused, realistically feasible, and consistent with the interests of the target component or organization?

5. Refine your recommended Be it Resolved so that it is a clear statement of the desired action of the Assembly.

6. Consider the administrative pathway for referral of the Action (e.g., Joint Reference Committee to Council or Committee; Board of Trustees; Assembly Executive Committee or other Assembly committees).

7. Test the idea with others by sending your draft to other interested members for comments and suggestions.

• Contact the chair and the staff of the target APA component. They will welcome the opportunity for input. Explain your intentions, learn what the component is now doing about the problem, and discuss the recommended Action.
• Bring the Action Paper to your interim Area Council meeting for discussion, changes, and (hopefully) endorsement. If your Area does not meet until after the Action Paper deadline, try to get feedback over the Area Listserv.
• Feel free to post your draft action paper to the Assembly Listserv for feedback.
• Send the Action Paper to the Rules Committee representative from your Area Council. He or she is there to help you achieve success. The chairperson of the Rules Committee of the Assembly will give you additional assistance if necessary.

You may wish to revise your Action Paper in the light of your new knowledge, in consultation with other authors and collaborators in your enterprise.

8. Send the revised Action Paper to the Assembly staff office by the Action Paper deadline, along with a cost estimate worksheet**.

9. At the Assembly meeting, be prepared to go to the reviewing Reference Committee or Area Council(s)** to explain your Action Paper and work on modifications if needed.

10. Work with Assembly officers and staff to follow your Action Paper's progress to the component(s) to which it is referred after the Assembly passes it. Be prepared to correspond with the component or even to attend a meeting to help them understand your intent and get the job done. The Assembly tracking document can be helpful in following up on an Action Paper, but your active, personal involvement is the best way to assure a successful outcome.

Additional information on action papers, including the deadline for the upcoming Assembly meeting can be found on the APA website at [Action Paper Central](#).