



# HOW TO JOIN THE SCHOLARS STRATEGY NETWORK

The [Scholars Strategy Network](#) (SSN) is an organization of university-based scholars who are committed to using research to improve policy and strengthen democracy.

In order to be eligible for SSN membership, you must meet all of the below criteria:

- I am affiliated with a college or university.
- I am pursuing or currently hold an advanced degree.
- I conduct or have conducted peer-reviewed research.
- I am committed to sharing my expertise with policymakers, journalists, & civic leaders.

To join, eligible scholars must complete a **profile** and draft a **short written contribution**. If you are not eligible or unsure about your eligibility, please reach out to [Membership@scholars.org](mailto:Membership@scholars.org).

## STEP 1: FILL OUT THE ACADEMIC & CIVIC PROFILE FORM

The profile form gives scholars an opportunity to build their [www.scholars.org](http://www.scholars.org) page. A well-curated profile helps policy stakeholders find the expertise they need. To complete the first step of membership, fill out the profile form here: <https://scholars.org/new-member-survey>.

## STEP 2: DRAFT A SHORT WRITTEN SUBMISSION

In order to effectively share research with policymakers, civic leaders, and journalists, it is essential for scholars to write concise, research-based pieces in compelling everyday language. In lieu of monetary dues, all incoming members are required to draft one of the below policy or media documents with the strategic support of our national staff:

- [Policy Brief](#) that either summarizes findings from the applicant's own peer-reviewed research or their area of expertise of no more than 1200 words
- [Research-based OpEd](#) or blog post *published* by a media outlet
- [Written or Oral Testimony](#) to be submitted to a government body
- [Public Comment](#) on proposed rule or regulation changes
- [Policy Memo](#) *at the request of* a journalist, policymaker, or other civic leader

Previously published documents (i.e., those that have been drafted without the support of SSN staff) are only acceptable under limited circumstances.

### WRITING FOR IMPACT

When deciding which contribution is best suited to highlight your expertise, it is important to consider some of the below questions:

- What are the policy implications of my research?
- Who are the key decision-makers on my policy issue? Who is responsible for implementing? Who are key advocates working on this policy issue?
- Which branch and level of government are my findings most relevant to?
- When will my policy issue be considered by policymakers or in the news cycle?
- Why should the audience care about my policy issue?

If you are unsure about any of these questions, you may consider reaching out to civic organizations, which often serve as brokers between the academic and policy spaces, working in the policy space most related to your research. SSN staff can also offer strategic support in determining which contribution will most effectively highlight your expertise.

### SSN COACHING AND FEEDBACK

As part of the joining process, SSN staff and network leadership provide feedback and strategic advice on your written contribution. Though incoming members typically submit a draft contribution before SSN staff provide feedback, please reach out if you'd like staff support as you decide which contribution type might be best for you or if you have questions about how to make your contribution most impactful to key decisionmakers.

### FINALIZING SSN MEMBERSHIP

**Please submit drafts of written contributions to [Membership@scholars.org](mailto:Membership@scholars.org).** Within a week of submission, an SSN staff member will be in touch with a timeline for feedback. Please let us know if there is a fast-moving news or policy opportunity that requires more urgent attention; we will do our best to respond promptly to these requests.

**Membership is finalized when both the profile and SSN written contribution are completed.** Members are then officially welcomed to the network, introduced to their local chapter leaders, and become eligible to receive the full array of resources offered by the network. In order to maximize the impact of your written contribution, incoming members are also strongly encouraged to use their written policy or media pieces to connect with journalists, policymakers, and other civic leaders.

### QUESTIONS

With questions about membership, please email SSN's Director of Member Engagement Danielle Mulligan ([Danielle@scholars.org](mailto:Danielle@scholars.org)).

