



American Journal of Public Health

Open Access Supplements Program

Roles and Process for AJPH Supplement Development

Purpose

This document provides funders, guest editors, and *AJPH* staff who are supporting development of supplements with a description of roles and responsibilities, as well as a high-level overview of the supplement development process.

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Roles

Associate Editor or Invited Editor: The Associate Editor or Invited Editor focuses on the following areas of responsibility:

- Leads development of supplement
- Attends meetings with Deputy Editor, Journal Project Manager, and Guest Editor, including initial onboarding meeting to clarify roles and develop timelines, and standing check-in meetings with Guest Editor throughout supplement development
- Reviews Call for Papers/Abstracts drafted by Guest Editor
- Supports dissemination of Call for Papers/Abstracts
- Works with Guest Editor to review list of articles planned for submission, if applicable
- Informs Deputy Editor of potential or actual conflicts during process for support
- Reviews submissions and recommends reject/peer review to Editor-in-Chief
- Oversees peer review process
- Works with Guest Editor to determine whether rejected articles can be revised and resubmitted as another article type as appropriate
- Enforces journal policy and formats (with support from Deputy Editor)
- Develops supplement “road map” editorial article describing supplement content
- Identifies articles for development of Continuing Education (CE) module
- Supports development of APHA Annual Conference presentation, if applicable

Guest Editor: The Guest Editor is assigned by the funding institution or related partner organization and focuses on the following areas of responsibility:

- Works with Deputy Editor and Journal Project Manager to identify potential funders for supplement proposals without committed funding
- Attends meetings with Deputy Editor, Journal Project Manager, and Associate Editor, including initial onboarding meeting to clarify roles and develop timelines, and standing check-in meetings with Associated Editor throughout supplement development
- Develops draft Call for Papers/Abstracts for review and final approval of Deputy Editor
- Supports dissemination of Call for Papers/Abstracts
- Reviews list of articles planned for submission with Associated Editor, if applicable
- Provides Associated Editor with list of potential peer reviewers
- Works with Associate Editor to determine whether rejected articles can be revised and resubmitted as another article type as appropriate
- Develops “Editor’s Choice” editorial article related to supplement topic

- Supports authors to meet journal standards and expectations, if possible
- Supports communication to authors about journal standards, the peer review process, and AJPH editorial independence
- Supports development of APHA Annual Conference presentation, if applicable

Deputy Editor for Open Access Supplements: The Deputy Editor represents the *AJPH* Editorial Office and focuses on the following areas of responsibility:

- Evaluates external supplement proposals
- Guides development of internal proposals, often in collaboration with Associated Editors
- Represents the journal in meetings with supplement proposers/funders
- Works with Editor-in-Chief and Deputy Editor to identify Associate Editors to lead supplement development
- Supports connecting Guest Editor and Associate Editor and onboarding to supplement roles and development process
- Advocates for Associate Editor during process and supports conflict resolution as needed
- Enforces journal policy and formats
- Supports identification of Editorialists as needed, but does **not** participate in recruitment
- Does **not** manage submissions directly or oversee peer review
- Works with Journal Project Manager to track supplement progress and provides updates to Editor-in-Chief as needed
- Works with Journal Project Manager to ensure supplement deadlines are maintained
- Oversees peer review of regular issue manuscripts at the discretion of Editor-in-Chief

Journal Project Manager: The Journal Project Manager represents the *AJPH* Business Office and focuses on the following areas of responsibility:

- Handles contract negotiation and finalization (with input from Deputy Editor)
- Develops and maintains relationships with funders
- Explores funding opportunities for supplements of interest and applies for funding (in collaboration with Deputy Editor)
- Sets and compiles necessary publication information, including funding level, timelines, Guest Editor information, funding statement, and conflicts of interest
- Schedules meetings with Deputy Editor, Associate Editor, Guest Editor, and funder, and provides all relevant materials and updates for these meetings
- Tracks progress of supplements and attends production meetings to report progress and updates to journal office staff

- Works with the Special Publications Associate Production Editor to ensure timely production of articles and publication of supplements
- Assists with resolving production issues as needed

Associate Production Editor of Special Publications: The Associated Production Editor of Special Publications focuses on the following areas of responsibility:

- Oversees copyediting, proofreading, composition, and publication of supplements
- Manages supplement production timelines and works with Journal Project Manager to ensure deadlines are met and issues publish as scheduled
- Ensures *AJPH* style and formatting are followed at all times and performs quality control checks post-publication
- Manages outside vendor relationships as needed
- Secures covers for issues as supplied by *AJPH* Image Editor
- Secures historical snippets for Editor's Choice article
- Attends supplement development meetings as needed
- Manages and schedules weekly production meetings with journal office staff

AJPH Deputy Editor: The Deputy Editor focuses on the following areas of responsibility:

- Recommends Associate Editor to lead supplement development based on topic expertise
- Supports triage of submissions and assigns articles that pass triage to Associate Editor
- Monitors Associate Editor progress with article review and peer review

AJPH Editor-in-Chief: The Editor-in-Chief focuses on the following areas of responsibility:

- Supports review of supplement proposals and makes final determination
- Reviews Calls for Papers/Abstracts
- Supports triage of submissions
- May recommend revise and resubmit determinations for rejected articles as appropriate
- Advocates for Associate Editor during process and supports conflict resolution as needed
- Provides final approval of all articles recommended for publication

Detailed Process

Below is a step-by-step description of the supplement development process once a supplement proposal has been approved and funding secured. The description clarifies roles and tasks for all involved but may vary depending on preferences of Associate Editor and Guest Editor.

Acronyms:

DE = Deputy Editor for Supplements Program

JPL = Journal Project Liaison

AE = Associated Editor

GE = Guest Editor

EIC = Editor-in-Chief

1. **Introductions and roles:** Journal Project Liaison (JPL) schedules meeting between JPL, Deputy Editor for Supplements Program (DE), Associate Editor (AE), and Guest Editor(s) (GE) to make introductions and review roles, responsibilities, and timeline. In particular, DE describes editorial independence, *AJPH* article types, and process for reconsidering rejected submissions to GE.
2. **Single point of contact:** *If multiple GEs*, identify a GE single point of contact for the supplement. This contact will receive all email communications from the AE and other *AJPH* staff with other GEs copied. DE informs relevant *AJPH* staff of GE name(s).
3. **Call for papers or abstracts:** GE drafts “Call for Papers” or “Call for Abstracts” for review by DE, AE, and Editor-in-Chief (EIC). The decision to publish a Call for Papers versus a Call for Abstracts is determined by GE, DE, and AE. JPL can provide GE with example Call for Papers/Abstracts, if needed. GE may go through several iterations of the Call with DE, AE, and EIC before finalizing for publication and dissemination.
4. **Call published and disseminated:** The finalized Call for Papers/Abstracts is published in a regular issue of *AJPH* at least 2 months before submissions are due. The Call is disseminated through other APHA communication channels (e.g., twitter account, mailer, Inside PH newsletter) and through communication channels available to the GE. DE informs AE, GE, and other relevant *AJPH* staff when Call is published.
5. **Potential peer reviewers:** GE prepares list of potential reviewers for supplement submissions by a date agreed upon by GE and AE. The list includes name of person, affiliation, email, and brief area of expertise.
6. ***If Invited Editor (IE)*, provide access to and train on Editorial Manager:** JPL provides IE access to Editorial Manager and JPL or DE trains IE on use of Editorial Manager to facilitate review of submissions that pass triage; management of peer review process; and submission of final article recommendations to EIC. JPL ensures supplement articles submitted to Editorial Manager are flagged for easy identification.

7. **Initial submission triage:** EIC reviews initial submissions and either: 1) rejects; 2) requests inputs from the AE before deciding to reject; or 3) sends to AE to review and decide whether to send to peer review. EIC copies AE and GE on submission decisions. For submissions that do not meet journal standards (e.g., old data), EIC clearly describes reason for rejection of submission in its current form.
8. **Reconsidering initial submission rejection:** If EIC rejects initial submission (outright or after discussion with AE), AE documents submission title and provides to GE to concur or request reconsideration. The process by which AE provides rejected submissions and discusses reconsideration with GE is determined by AE and GE in advance. If GE is interested in maintaining rejected submission, GE communicates to author that rejection is being discussed with *AJPH* and authors should wait to hear back whether submission can be reconsidered as another article type.
9. **Confirming submission “fit” with supplement theme (if applicable):** AE may provide GE with list of submissions deemed suitable for peer review for GE to screen for “fit” with supplement theme and confirm with AE. Authors of submissions deemed a poor fit are informed by AE and GE that rejection is not a reflection of submission quality but rather poor fit with supplement theme and recommend other journals for submission. EIC may decide to include submission in regular *AJPH* issue and send for peer review.
10. **Peer review process:** Submissions not rejected by EIC or AE and deemed a good fit by GE and AE sent for peer review by AE. AE manages peer review process in Editorial Manager and reviews manuscript revisions if peer reviewers recommend revisions.
11. **Recommendation after peer review:** AE recommends accept, revision, or rejection of manuscripts to EIC. AE may include “key takeaways” of manuscripts recommended for acceptance to be used for later social media or other promotion.
12. **Review manuscripts recommended for acceptance:** AE, GE, and EIC meet periodically (typically once per month) to review list of manuscripts recommended for acceptance to make final decisions on manuscript inclusion and to develop the table of contents. If too few manuscripts are deemed acceptable, AE and GE may solicit additional papers from authors with content expertise and known capacity to produce acceptable manuscripts. If too many papers are deemed acceptable, then either: 1) the GE may decide to increase the size of the supplement by providing additional funds; or 2) some of the manuscripts may be used in the regular issue of *AJPH* rather than being included in the supplement.
13. **Editorials:** After accepted manuscript are known, AE prepares one “road map” editorial that provides high-level review of supplement content and highlights key themes; and GE prepares one “Editor’s Choice” editorial related to supplement theme and content.
14. **Cover image:** *AJPH* Image Editor proposes cover image options to be approved by EIC. The partner organization is required to fill out a cover image questionnaire which will indicate their preferences and any image/licensing policies that *AJPH* must adhere to.

15. **Media communications:** *AJPH* informs GE of timing for release of supplement information to press outlets. GE to aid in response to related press and other inquiries. *AJPH* Media Communications contact person introduced to GE.
16. **Continuing education:** AE, DE, and EIC determine if supplement content can be included as continuing education (CE) bundle. AE identifies six articles for inclusion in CE bundle and contacts relevant authors to develop questions for CE assessment.

Overview of Tasks and Timeline

Below is a table to support tracking of tasks and timelines for supplement development.

#	Task	Lead	Completion Date
1	Meet for introductions and roles	<i>AJPH</i>	07/01/2024
2	Identify GE single point of contact	GE	07/15/2024
3	Draft Call for Papers/Abstracts	GE	07/20/2024
4	Publish and disseminate Call for Papers/Abstracts	<i>AJPH/GE</i>	08/13/2024
5	Develop list of peer reviewers	GE	09/01/2024
6	Training on Editorial Manager	<i>AJPH</i>	09/08/2024
7	Initial submission triage	<i>AJPH</i>	10/01/2024
8	Review rejections for reconsideration	<i>AJPH/GE</i>	10/08/2024
9	Confirm submission “fit” with theme	<i>AJPH/GE</i>	10/08/2024
10	Manuscripts undergo peer review	<i>AJPH/GE</i>	10/2024 – 03/2025
11	Recommendations after peer review	<i>AJPH</i>	03/01/2025
12	Submission due for: 1) “Road Map” editorial and 2) “Editor’s Choice” editorial	<i>AJPH/GE</i>	03/01/2025
13	Review manuscripts recommended for acceptance and finalize table of contents	<i>AJPH/GE</i>	03/08/2025
13.5	Final acceptance date	<i>AJPH</i>	04/01/2025
13.6	Papers undergo copyediting and page proof composition	<i>AJPH</i>	04/2025 – 07/2025
14	Cover image prepared and approved	<i>AJPH</i>	05/01/2025
15	Media communications plan developed	<i>AJPH</i>	06/01/2025
16	Issue finalization	<i>AJPH</i>	07/01/2025
17	Online publication and limited-edition print run produced	<i>AJPH</i>	07/23/2025

Example High-Level Supplement Development Timeline

Below is an example timeline for supplement development. In this example, developing the supplement took about 11 months, from finalizing the Call for Papers to publication.

By 8/13/2024: “Call for Papers” finalized.

By 8/31: “Call for Papers” disseminated.

On 9/29: Meeting of JPL, DE, AE, and GE.

By 10/15: GE Single Point of Contact sends list of potential peer reviewers to AE.

By 10/25: Manuscripts due.

Week of 11/1: Teleconference with JPL, AE, and GE to discuss manuscripts received. JPL sends titles and abstracts of all manuscripts to AE and GE as a background information for the discussion.

By 11/15: EIC (together with AE, if needed) makes decision to reject or send manuscript for peer review. GE consulted on rejected manuscripts.

By 11/22: AE sends manuscripts for peer review.

By 12/20: First round of peer reviews back and authors are requested to revise manuscripts, if needed (about 80% of manuscripts will need some amount of revision).

By 1/15/2025: Authors return revised manuscripts

By 1/28: Second round of peer reviews back.

By 02/01: Third round of peer review (if necessary)

By 02/08: GE writing “Editor’s Choice” and AE writing “Road Map” editorial based on active articles in the supplement

By 03/01: AE completes the “Road Map” editorial, and GE completes “Editor’s Choice” editorial.

Week of 03/08: AE and GE (and EIC if requested) meet to discuss final manuscripts to be included in the supplement and develop Table of Contents.

04/01: Final decision by EIC on manuscripts to go to production.

04/01 – 07/01: Completed Supplement Issue undergoes production

By 5/01: Cover image approved by the EIC.

By 06/01: GEs and partner institution meet with JPL and AJPB communications team to write and review the supplement's press release.

July 2025: Publication of supplement.

Note: It is understood that throughout the process, the JPL, DE, AE, and EIC will be in contact with the GE to keep them informed of the progress and to seek assistance as needed.