

OIL AND GAS. WATER QUALITY. VACCINATION. CLIMATE CHANGE. FOOD SAFETY. SELF-DRIVING CARS. CYBERSECURITY. RENEWABLE ENERGY. CHEMICAL LABELING. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT.

The Problem

When bills with complex science behind them start to pile up on your desk, who do you trust to analyze each proposal for policy implications and fact-check for critical shortcomings?

State legislators are increasingly faced with policy issues that require an understanding of technical information or new scientific knowledge. Yet, few state legislators have a professional background in science, tech, engineering, or medicine. There is a clear need to recruit technically trained advisors to serve personal offices and legislative committees — and provide reliable analyses and recommendations independent of outside lobbies.

The Innovation

Modeled after similar Federal-level programs and a successful California example, a movement is afoot to establish “science policy fellowships” around the United States — training and placing PhD scientists as staff advisors within state legislative offices.

Talented scientists and engineers gain valuable career training in public policy — while lawmakers gain access to science-savvy staff to help them make critical decisions for their state’s future.

ATTEND OUR SESSION

“Science Advice for State Legislators”
An NCSL Ancillary Meeting
Tuesday, August 8th, 2017
Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel
Harbor Wing - Lewis Room

8:00 a.m.

Overview on science advising for state policymakers

8:10 a.m.

Legislator’s Perspective: How a policymaker views staff support from a scientist

8:25 a.m.

Science Fellow’s Perspective: What a PhD scientist learns from working a year as a legislative staffer

8:35 a.m.

Q&A

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“HELP! WHERE’S MY SCIENTIST?”

**EXPLORING THE ROLE
OF SCIENTISTS AS
STAFF ADVISORS
IN A STATE LEGISLATURE**

An NCSL Legislative Summit 2017
Ancillary Meeting

Tuesday, August 8th, 2017
8:00 - 8:45 a.m.

Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel
Harbor Wing - Lewis Room



THE CCST SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY POLICY FELLOWSHIP

“One of the most surprising things that I learned is how many different ways science can be used and applied in government and policy.”

– Debra Cooper, PhD

Principal Consultant, California State Senate
2015 CCST Science & Technology Policy Fellow

A Year of Public Service and Government Leadership Training for Scientists and Engineers

Established via the California State Legislature in 1988, the [California Council on Science and Technology \(CCST\)](#) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization which responds to the Governor, the Legislature, and other State entities who request independent assessment of public policy issues relating to science and technology.

As part of this mission, [CCST sought opportunities to increase science advice capacity within State-level policymaking](#). Science policy fellowships have been successful in Washington DC, in particular the program operated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In 2009, CCST launched its own program in Sacramento.

Ten PhD scientists and engineers are now recruited each year for the [CCST Science & Technology Policy Fellowship](#). They first undergo a “policy boot camp” to learn the history, process, and nuance of California policy and politics. Then, in coordination with State Assembly and State Senate leadership, these “CCST Science Fellows” are matched with personal or committee offices, working directly as legislative staff for a one-year term. Upon completing the fellowship, CCST Science Fellows are often recruited by legislative or agency offices — and several have become seasoned staffers in their own right within California’s Capitol community.

[Read perspectives and success stories from CCST Science Fellows and alumni: fellows.ccst.us/blog](#)

BRIDGING THE SCIENCE/POLICY GAP

“CCST Science Fellows bridge the gap between science and politics, and are helping to increase the opportunity for policy to be informed by science in California.”

– Sam Blakeslee (R)

Former California State Senator
Former California State Assembly Minority Leader

Making California’s Policies Stronger with Science

Through the CCST Science Fellows program, PhD scientists have had a direct hand in key elements of the legislative process, including:

- Organizing informational hearings
- Writing bill analyses
- Initiating bill ideas and carrying bills
- Understanding and managing stakeholder interests
- Representing Members at committee hearings

More Than Just Science

[CCST Science Fellows can apply the lens of scientific thinking to any area of public policy](#), not just science and technology. Scientists bring unique perspectives and experience to solve big-picture, system-scale questions and to make evidence-based decisions, and alumni have gone on to roles such as legislative director, Appropriations Committee consultant, and Department of Finance analyst.

850+ 

BILLS, HEARINGS, AND
ACTIONS IMPACTED BY
CCST SCIENCE FELLOWS
(2009-2016)

50% 

OF CCST SCIENCE
FELLOWS HAVE
BEEN HIRED BY THE
CALIFORNIA STATE
LEGISLATURE OR
STATE AGENCIES
SINCE COMPLETING
THEIR FELLOWSHIP

THE STATE FELLOWSHIPS PLANNING GRANT

“Science and policy – in an ideal world – are joined at the hip. It’s difficult to enact sound policy without understanding the underlying science, and the creation of new knowledge blossoms under a supportive policy regime.”

– Gwen Holdmann

Director, Alaska Center for Energy and Power
CCST State Fellowships Planning Grant Recipient

Enhancing Science Policy Capacity at the State Government Level Around the United States

Encouraged by the CCST example, the [Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation](#) and the [Simons Foundation](#) enabled a planning grant to help establish similar science policy fellowships around the nation.

In February 2017, teams from [Alaska](#), [Colorado](#), [Connecticut](#), [Idaho](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Michigan](#), [New Jersey](#), [North Carolina](#), and [Washington](#) received these awards via CCST and began work. The groundwork and partnerships they are building now will someday strengthen the access to impartial science advice for their state legislatures.

[Find contact information for the nine State Fellowships Planning Grant recipients: www.ccst.us/beyondca/statefellowships](#)

JOIN OUR CONVERSATION!

Come Talk with Us at CCST

Whether you are curious about the challenges of informing policy with science, or if you are interested in becoming a part of our national discussions and networks, we’ll be excited to hear your perspectives and questions.