

Housing and Society
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Review of:

BASIC LITERATURE IN POLICY STUDIES: A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY edited by Stuart S. Nagel. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1984.

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Interest in housing policy has steadily increased in recent years. Stimulated by social justice issues that developed during the 1960s and 1970s, government at all levels devoted considerable resources in an attempt to provide suitable housing for American families. During the early 1980s, social justice concerns have been replaced by the governmental goal of implementing a limited range of housing programs that deliver the greatest benefits for the lowest possible costs. Programs based on such cost/benefit decisions offer housing professionals an excellent opportunity to provide input regarding the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of housing policies. Unfortunately, many housing professionals lack the knowledge base to become actively involved in the policy-making process.

Basic Literature in Policy Studies is a reference book that should be helpful in improving the policy knowledge of housing professionals. It is an impressive book that devotes 453 pages to explaining, categorizing, and listing the policy-studies literature. A policy-studies perspective guides the book: "The policy studies perspective involves systematically studying the nature, causes, and effects of alternative public policies, with particular emphasis on determining the policies that will achieve given goals" (p. xiii). Nagel presents the resources necessary to apply such a policy-studies perspective to teaching, research, and service activities.

The book consists of three parts, beginning with the general aspects of policy studies. Topics included in this first section include basic concepts in policy studies, social values in public policy, methods of policy analysis, social indicators data, utilization of policy research, policy formation, and government policy. After exploring the basic policy issues, attention is devoted to specific policy problems which are categorized as having political science, economic, sociological, psychological, planning, or natural science emphases. Of particular interest to housing professionals are the chapters on population, aging, land use, housing, environment, and energy policy. Finally, Nagel presents a bibliographic listing of syllabi for policy-studies courses.

Housing professionals should find *Basic Literature in Policy Studies* to be of great use in studying housing policy issues. The book provides both an understanding of the policy-studies approach and a listing of resources that might be utilized in examining housing policy. A total of 45 experts contributed to the book, including Nagel, who is often considered to be one of the founding fathers of policy

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studies. Bibliographic information contained in the book is carefully categorized and up-to-date. Although the \$95 price tag is relatively high, I feel that department and university libraries serving housing students and professionals should contain copies of this impressive book.

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