Central States Communication Association 95th Annual Conference

Program Planner Guide

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## Conference Planner and CSCA 1st VP:

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## Central States Communication Association 2026

## Call for Papers & Panels

***Translate!***

**Hyatt Regency Minneapolis**

**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

**April 14th – 19th, 2026**

You are invited to submit competitive papers, panel discussions, and performance sessions for our 95th Annual Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Members are encouraged to reflect on the theme of *Translate!*

CSCA members make a difference from changing the lives of students to changing the world through public policy. Our teaching, research, and/or service have the potential to enlighten and foster change when we generate knowledge and share it with others. Yet, unlike other disciplines with clinical arms or systematic paths to the public, communication teacher/scholars might fail to reach this potential, despite having some of the most important and timely information. Thus, this conference theme is a call to consider how we can communicate what we know to people outside of the academy walls.

Most often, the academy functions to reward those who disseminate knowledge through scholarly publication. In this system, what we know can be, at worst, locked behind a journal paywall and, at best, trickled to the public via those students who (can afford to) attend our classes. Albeit very important, journals also often prioritize theory advancement, at the expense of other types of knowledge contributions. Yet, some communication scholars have begun to innovate ways to reach extended audiences and communicate what they know about communication.

In embracing the theme of Translate!, we consider how our research and teaching can make a meaningful difference outside of the academy. Is there space in our writing, teaching, and thinking that promotes engagement with others? Can we imagine innovative ways to share what we know to the public in ways our institutions recognize? How might our research improve when others have access to it and how might other people’s lives improve if they had access to our research? How could our students participate in sharing knowledge with others? Who can we partner with to help us put theory into practice? And – importantly, what kinds of ethical considerations must we take into account when we provide recommendations? These are just some questions we might have the opportunity to engage with as we imagine ways to share our expertise with others.

With these guiding questions in mind, this conference theme encourages members to make connections with instructors, scholars, the communication literature, community members, public policy makers, and practitioners examining related issues of interest in different ways. Translating what we know to the public might highlight community engaged research, interdisciplinary collaborations, or innovative strategies that help everyday people learn practical ways to address their most pressing issues.

I encourage each one of us to use the sessions of this conference to consider how we might create positive change. Seek out opportunities to [[1]](#footnote-1)collaborate not just with other communication scholar/teachers but with people from K-12 schools, members of the private sector, health institutions or practitioners, community members, or even other communication professionals. During the conference, also consider attending an interest group or caucus that you ordinarily would not attend. Translate your theoretical and methodological expertise to encourage innovative thinking and new approaches to engaging in research and teaching.

Faculty, students, independent scholars, and community members are encouraged to submit and attend the convention. Institutional and community partnerships are particularly welcome.

Submissions inclusive of all methodological perspectives in the communication discipline are expected and embraced.

Look for specific calls and submission information from each of the CSCA Interest Groups, Caucuses, and Sections.

**Questions about the general call or the 2026 conference:**

* Contact Kristina M. Scharp, 2026 primary program planner
* kristina.scharp@gmail.com
* Deadline for Submissions: October 10, 2025, 11:59 pm CDT

# Hotel Information

**Hotel Address and Contact Information**

Hyatt Regency Minneapolis

1300 Nicollet Mall

Minneapolis, MN 55403

[(612) 370-1234](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=hyatt+regency+minneapolis&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8)

https://www.hyatt.com/hyatt-regency/en-US/msprm-hyatt-regency-minneapolis

**Rate Information**

### Room Rates: $159

Taxes: 14.025%

\*Valet Parking: $49 per day

\*Self-Parking: $25 per day

Rates include complimentary wifi.

More information to come about the hotel this summer.

\*Current pricing, subject to change

**CSCA 2025-2026 Interest Group Planners**

1. **Activism, Communication Ethics, & Social Justice**: Heather Walters, Missouri State University
2. **Adjunct and Temporary Faculty**: Kate R. LaPierre, University of Nevada, Reno
3. **Argumentation and Forensics**: Ryan Scott Rigda, Saginaw Valley State University
4. **Basic Course**: Kathryn B. Golsan, University of Northern Iowa
5. **Communication Education**: Kyle R. Vareberg, Northeastern State University
6. **Communication & Technology**: Xialing Lin, University of Central Florida
7. **Communication Theory**: Austin Beattie, Hope College
8. **Community College**: Tammie Wiebers, North Central Missouri College
9. **Ethnicity, Race, International, & Class Concerns**: Anjana Mudambi, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
10. **G.I.F.T.**: Tracie Devault, Missouri University of Science and Technology
11. **Graduate Student Caucus**: Abigail Olajire, University of Missouri
12. **Health Communication**: Jessica Rick, Illinois State University
13. **Instructional Resources**: Stephen A. Klien, University of Missouri
14. **Intercultural Communication**: Jennifer Willis-Rivera, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
15. **Interpersonal and Family Communication:** Natalie Pennington, Colorado State University
16. **Media Studies:** Tasha Riggins, Baker University
17. **Organizational & Professional Communication**: Abigail Kingsford, Drury University
18. **Performance Studies and Autoethnography:** Vianna Isbister, Independent Scholar
19. **Political Communication:** Xavier Lee Scruggs, Wake Forest University
20. **Popular Culture:** Tyler Donavon Curran, Missouri State University
21. **Rhetorical Theory and Criticism:** Alexandra Parr Balaram, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
22. **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**: Danielle M. Stern, Christopher Newport University
23. **Sports Communication**: Emily Sauter, University of Nebraska Omaha
24. **States Advisory Council**: Gayle M. Pohl, University of Northern Iowa
25. **Strategic and Applied Communication**: Khairul Islam, State University of New York at Oswego
26. **Undergraduate Education & Administration**: Xinyue Liu, North Dakota State University
27. **Women’s Caucus:** Kristin Fitzsimmons, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

# CSCA 2026 Unit Slot Projections

CSCA 2026 will use the system for assigning slots introduced in 2021. The Executive Committee approved a unit slot projection process in November 2019 that is very similar to the process used by the International Communication Association. The First Vice President/Primary Planner (Kristina Scharp) and Executive Director (Deb Ford) will allocate slots for your unit based upon your total number of 2026 submissions. Below is the policy.

First, all Interest Groups, Caucuses, and Sections will be given two convention slots (one for the group’s business meeting and one for panels, discussions, and papers), if the group meets the required number for membership.

Second, after submissions close, the Executive Director and First Vice President/Primary Planner will inform unit planners of their respective total number of convention slots. The number is calculated based upon the number of submissions (your group’s submissions as a percentage of total conference submissions) divided among the available conference rooms and time slots. For example, if your group receives 5% of the submissions, your group will receive 5% of the available session slots. These slots are in addition to the two automatic slots.

**CSCA 2025-2026 Program Planner Dates and Responsibilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Responsibility** |
| May 1, 2025 | **Deadline:** Submit Unit Leadership Form F to Deb Ford by email. If youhave not done so, please email this form immediately. |
|  |  |
| June 2-6, 2025 | Review Program Planner GuideWatch email for Zoom Planner Meeting to be held week of June 3rd and attend Zoom session, if possible. (Email with link will be sent.) |
| June 6, 2025 | Submit Unit Call for CSCA website to Kristina Scharp and cc: Deb FordSend Unit Call to unit members and encourage submissions |
|  |  |
| August 11-22, 2025 | Submit Unit Call to NCA COMMNotes, social media, etc. |
|  |  |
| September 2, 2025 | Send Unit Call to unit members and encourage submissions (1st reminder) |
|  |  |
| September 15, 2025 | Contact reviewer volunteers and verify service |
|  |  |
| September 29, 2025 | Contact unit members reminding them of upcoming deadline (Oct. 10) |
|  |  |
| **October 10, 2025** | **Submission Deadline.** Receive submissions and prepare for review |
|  |  |
| October 15, 2025 | **Deadline:** Send submissions *to* reviewers for review |
|  |  |
| October 29, 2025 | **Deadline** to receive reviews *from* reviewers |
|  |  |
| November 12, 2025 | **Deadline:** Submit unit panel/paper rankings, awards, etc., to Kristina Scharp |
|  |  |
| December 6, 2025 | Receive program proofsContact submitters with acceptance or rejection |
|  |  |
| December 12, 2025 | **Deadline:** Respond to Kristina Scharp re: approval of/changes to program proofs |
|  |  |
| January 2, 2026 | **Deadline:** Submit Unit Planner’s Report to Deb Ford, cc: Kristina Scharp Contact unit members: Encourage them to register and book hotel |
|  |  |
| February 6, 2026 | Contact unit members and encourage attendance |
|  |  |
| February 20, 2026 | Verify respondents possess papers for review and act accordingly |
|  |  |
| April 14th - 19th, 2026 | Enjoy the conference! See you in Minneapolis! |

# CSCA 2026 Program Planner Responsibilities – Explanations and Tips

First, thank you for your important service to CSCA. The program planner plays such a fundamental role in making a great conference. I look forward to working with you in preparation for the 2026 convention. I will do my best to answer any questions you might have. If you have any questions, please contact me, Kristina Scharp, at kristina.scharp@gmail.com.

### Attending the Unit Meeting / What to do in this year’s circumstances

The program planner is the incoming chair of the Unit and normally takes over the meeting once previous and present business has been addressed. It is the responsibility of the newly- established chair to address new/upcoming business which includes planning for the next convention. Please watch your email for announcements. If you have any questions, please contact me, Kristina Scharp, at kristina.scharp@gmail.com

### Submitting the Unit Call

Your unit most likely has a call that has been passed down and is slightly modified each year. Feel free to modify the document as you see fit. It is your opportunity to make a positive contribution and impact on the unit. However, please make your guidelines (like the due date) and procedures consistent with those of other units and with the general call to minimize confusion.

For consistency, each unit call must include the following centered at the top of the page (see page 11):

### [YOUR] INTEREST GROUP

Call for Papers and Panels

Central States Communication Association (CSCA) Annual Convention-Minneapolis, MN

April 14th -19th, 2026

*Translate!*

Include a paragraph or two explaining the purpose of your Unit, conference theme, what types of proposals you are seeking, and what types of topics you are seeking. A list of the most common panel formats is located on Page 17. You might simply solicit topics of a general nature (see the example provided below), or you might wish to provide specific examples of topics, perhaps those generated through your business meeting emails. Indicate that strong preference will be given to those panels that include panelists from multiple institutions. Finally, if your Unit has established awards, include that information here as well.

*The [your named] Interest Group invites the submission of competitive papers, panels, roundtable discussions, and innovative programming for the 2026 CSCA convention in Minneapolis, MN. The purpose of the [your named] Interest Group is to promote [xyz]. A range of topics encompassing [xyz] are welcome, and we especially encourage members to address issues related to the convention theme, Translate! Submissions that reflect the conference theme are especially welcomed. Regarding panels, preference will be given to those with panelists representing multiple institutions rather than representing a single institution.*

Next, include submission details for your interest group. Submission details must be included for both competitive papers and panels. For papers, remember to specify that only completed papers will be accepted and that author name(s) and identifying information must be removed.

*Papers: Only completed papers will be accepted.*

* *Include a title and a brief abstract (required).*
* *Graduate students should type “STUDENT” on the upper right-hand corner of the title page.*
* *If the paper will be a single authored graduate student debut, please type “DEBUT STUDENT” in the upper right-hand corner of the title page.*
* *To be considered a graduate student debut paper:*
	+ *the author must be a graduate student,*
	+ *the paper must have single authorship, and*
	+ *the paper must be the author’s first paper to be presented at CSCA.*
* *If you would like your paper to be considered for the Inclusive Scholarship Award, type “INCLUSIVE SCHOLARSHIP” in the upper right-hand corner of the title page.*
	+ *To be considered as an exemplar of inclusive scholarship, the paper must demonstrate academic rigor in the examination of communication and historically marginalized communities/populations.*

Next, include notice that technology requests must be made at the time of submission. The association’s complete technology policy can be found below. Finally, include the deadline for submissions and where to send submissions.

*All technology requests must be made at the time of submission. Submissions must be received by* ***11:59 PM, CDT, October 10, 2025.*** *Send submissions electronically through our CSCA online submission system site.*

Please encourage submitters to be sure that all potential presenters create a profile on the CSCA online submission system site. Membership is not required to create a profile. This will make later steps in the process much easier.

### Contacting Unit Members

Some units maintain a dedicated social networking site page. This is a helpful way to provide information about the convention, to enable members to maintain contact as well as to generate and collaborate on ideas, and to provide information about the convention and to encourage attendance. If your unit does not have such a site, you may want to consider developing one while you serve as program planner for your group.

At minimum, you should maintain contact with your group through email. Correspondence through email is encouraged even with the above resources, since many members may not visit the social networking site page or participate in the listserv.

To contact all members of the Unit, all you must do is submit your message to Kristina Scharp at kristina.scharp@gmail.com. She will forward your message to Kathie Cesa.

Any documents that you are sending me (or Kathie through me) should have hyperlinks to documents but not attachments. It takes a step out of the process if I can receive the information in a PDF. We avoid posting Word documents as a security measure.

Tips:

* Encourage potential submitters to put people representing multiple institutions on their panels. Additionally, no one person should serve more than one role on a panel. For example, a chair should not be a paper presenter or discussant on the same panel.
* It is good to keep in contact with members, but do not overwhelm them with messages. Keep in mind that our members have multiple Unit affiliations and receive emails from all of them.
* Be sure to provide members with relevant information but also be sure to generate excitement and encourage participation. This is an opportunity for you to assist the association and to develop the presence of your group.

### Submitting Unit Call to COMMNotes

CSCA is always looking to attract new members and to include people from beyond the region. COMMNotes (https://[www.natcom.org/commnotes-subscription-page)](http://www.natcom.org/commnotes-subscription-page%29) is one way to reach nonmembers of the association. Also feel free to submit the call for your unit to other listservs associated with the focus of your group and to send the call for your unit to scholars who may be affiliated with your area but who are not members of the association.

Tips:

* When submitting the call on COMMNotes or other listservs, do not just use *Call* or *Call for Papers and Panels* or something similar as your title, since such titles will likely not catch the attention of interested parties when presented at the top of the message. Instead, use a title that ensures readers will know what your announcement entails. For instance: CSCA 2026 “Translate!” Call for Papers and Panels. You might also want to include the name of your unit in the title.
* Note: when submitting the call on COMMNotes or other listservs, be aware that formatting (bolding, italics, and tabs) might not transfer and might interrupt the spacing of your post. Accordingly, it is best to remove such formatting prior to submitting your post.

### Receiving Submissions and Preparing for Review

For competitive papers, verify that the paper does not include an author name or any other identifying features (be sure to check the Properties). If the online submission is incomplete, or if the paper includes identifying material, notify the submitter what must be done to ensure review. To save time after the submission deadline, consider reviewing submissions then and reaching out to individuals early.

When sending papers and panels to reviewers make sure to include: (a) how many papers/panels are being sent for review, (b) specifications and guidelines for reviewing, and (c) the deadline to submit reviews.

Tips:

* When preparing competitive papers for anonymous peer review, make sure author identification is not evident in the Properties section or in the author signature section of the document.
* One reviewer should be able to handle around 6-8 submissions in the specified timeframe. You are strongly urged to use three reviewers for each submission, if possible. Thus, Reviewers 1, 2, and 3 could review Submissions #1-6. Reviewers 4, 5, and 6 could review Submissions #7-13, and so on. It is important to balance the number of submissions so one person is not reviewing more or less than other members.
* As the deadline for reviews nears, send a reminder to reviewers about the approaching deadline. If you have not received materials from a reviewer by the day after the deadline, it is more than acceptable to contact them.
* Unfortunately, sometimes a reviewer does not complete the assignment. Consider calling upon a unit member who has not reviewed for you to complete the task, being careful not to give them more than they can handle in the extremely short turnaround time. In fact, it might be necessary to split one reviewer’s load among two members.
* Keep all documents related to the programming of your group until after the convention.

### Preparing and Submitting Proposal Forms

Once the reviews are returned, begin preparing and submitting the panel proposals for your group. In doing so, you will: (a) organize your papers into panels in the online system; (b) rank your panels within your division; (c) submit online forms for top competitive paper, panel, and other division/caucus awards; and (d) submit the Student Debut Paper and Inclusive Scholarship Paper.

**Developing Competitive Paper Panels**: First, develop panels for the competitive papers. These panels usually include *at least three but no more than five* papers*.* These panels will also need to have a chair and a respondent. As with the guidelines set for paper panel submissions, a single person should not assume both chair and respondent roles.

Rewarding paper reviewers with these positions is customary, but you may also draw from your list of volunteers from the previous business meeting. In either case, make sure you contact each person to make sure they are willing to serve in this capacity before assigning them the role. You will also need to develop a title and description for each competitive paper panel created.

Tip: When developing titles for competitive paper panels, strive to develop titles which include the conference theme, are memorable, and are likely to draw an audience. This same advice applies to the descriptions of these panels.

**Ranking Your Panels**: To help me slot your panels, you must rank all the panels you are submitting from the highest-rated to the lowest-rated. The highest-rated panels will usually receive the most favorable time slots, while the lower-rated panels will usually receive less favorable time slots. Generally, competitive papers, especially those featuring top-ranked or award-winning papers, are ranked near the top of this list.

However, the ranking of your panels is based on your discretion.

Tips:

* Although it is advisable to pay close attention to the feedback of your reviewers, *you ultimately decide the rankings of your group*. Accordingly, if you disagree with how the rankings turn out, you are not bound by them. You are the program planner for your unit and are ultimately responsible for what is moved forward.
* As program planner for your group, it is also your prerogative to develop a premier panel or panels of your own. These panels should include the best of the best scholars in your area and ideally correspond with the convention theme.
* Make sure you include your unit’s business meeting on this list.

**Organizing Panels in Online System:** In the online system, you will be able to create the paper panels (i.e., put the papers into groups). This will include a program copy of the panel, exactly as it might appear in the program. A discussion panel model and a paper panel model are included on this form to help guide you in the completion of the program copy.

Tips: You can use your editorial license to rewrite the program descriptions and program titles as you see fit so that they are grammatically correct and clear.

* Be sure to remind members to include accurate information in their online submission site profile. This is how names and affiliations will appear in the program.

**Reviewers for your Group**: In the online system, you will be able to assign reviewers.

**Top Paper/Panels**: If your group has an award for the top competitive paper and/or the top panel, we will ask you for this information in one place either online or in a form that I will provide. If you have a Top Paper Panel, be sure to name it Top Paper Panel and the name of your Interest Group/Caucus/Section.

Tips:

* When completing the paper awards, include all authors if the paper is a co- authored piece. When completing the panel award, include all participants (i.e., chair, presenters, and respondent, if applicable).
* Make sure names and affiliations are consistent as discussed above.

**Top Graduate Student Debut Paper:** Submit this information only if your Unit received graduate student debut paper(s). Send the completed form and an electronic copy of the paper so that it may be considered for the Past Officers’ Graduate Student Debut Program award. To be eligible for participation in the Debut Program, (a) the author must be a graduate student, (b) the paper must have single authorship, and (c) the paper must be the author's first paper to be presented at CSCA.

**Submitting all this information**: These forms are due no later than **November 7, 2025**. However, please send them as soon as they are completed; the earlier the better.

### Receiving and Responding to Program Proofs

You will receive program proofs on or about **December 6, 2025** and will need to return them with corrections by **December 12, 2025**. It is very important that these proofs are reviewed carefully and completely.

**Contacting Submitters with Acceptance or Rejection**: Once you have received and reviewed the proofs, you will be able to contact submitters about the status of their submissions. It is imperative that you contact *everyone* who submitted. Failure to do so is extremely unprofessional and discourteous. In the online system, you should be able to assign the respondents so that they can see the papers they need to respond to electronically. *Do not let anyone know about days and times of panels, since these might change between this point and the final version of the program.* Remember to contact chairs and respondents of competitive paper panels as well.

Tips:

* When contacting submitters be sure to include the specific title of the submission and the Unit you are representing.
* Regardless of the status of their submission, genuinely thank the person for their submission.
* Use tactful professionalism when rejecting a submission. When you reject a competitive paper, include a rationale for the rejection. Be kind, informative, and supportive. Encourage revision and resubmission for CSCA 2027. The same approach applies, although to a lesser degree, when rejecting panels. People will remember how you offer rejection of a submission more than how you offer acceptance of a submission. When rejecting a submission, indicate that you still hope to see the person at the conference and encourage their attendance.
* Let all submitters know that they will receive information about the conference program, registration, and hotel registration in January. Remind them that the conference hotel will fill quickly, so they should reserve as soon as possible if they wish to stay at the official conference hotel.

### Submitting Your Unit Report to the Executive Director

Each Unit must send the **2026 Program Planner’s Report** to Deb Ford, CSCA Executive Director, by **January 2, 2026**. Failure to do so means that your Unit will not have award certificates for the convention, nor will your Unit be able to spend any of its $100 allocation. See this form for more details, including Deb’s contact information.

# Technology Policy

CSCA will provide multimedia projectors in all breakout room spaces.

CSCA is unable to approve requests for equipment such as personal computers, laser printers, satellite links, teleconference equipment, DVD players, or Internet access. CSCA members or individuals attending the convention may bring their own equipment, unless prohibited by the convention hotel. (Please check beforehand with the Executive Director about the convention hotel policy). If individuals provide their own equipment, the hotel may elect not to assist if service is needed. If the hotel does assist and assesses a fee, the individual requesting assistance is responsible for all charges.

Any technology request made by CSCA participants at the convention that was not requested at the time of the program submission cannot be charged to CSCA.

# Panel Formats

The most common panel formats are listed below along with their descriptions. However, feel free to be creative in the design of the panels that are developed and proposed.

**Competitive Paper Panels** are those including competitively-selected papers grouped together by the program planner. These panels must have a *chair* to introduce each paper and to moderate the discussion, as well as a *respondent* to discuss connections between the papers and to provide supportive criticism and guidance. Scholars filling these roles will be selected by the program planner. Generally, these panels will include at least three but no more than five papers. It is especially important to limit the number of papers included so that sufficient time is allowed for the delivery of the papers, for the respondent’s feedback, and for the audience to provide questions and reactions following delivery of the papers and the response.

**Paper Panels** are those including completed papers encompassing a specific topic. These panels must have a chair, but a respondent is not always necessary. Generally, these panels will include at least four but no more than five panelists. Audience questions and reactions usually are reserved until after everyone on the panel has presented their paper.

**Discussion Panels** are those including 4-7 panelists who provide a brief opening statement concerning a topic and then engage in discussion. These panels must have a chair to introduce the panelists and to moderate the discussion. Audience questions/participation are encouraged.

**2025-2026 UNIT LEADERSHIP (Form F)**

*Please submit to Deb Ford at* csca.ed@gmail.com *by* ***May 1, 2025****.*

**Unit Name**:

### Chair

**Professional Name**:

**Affiliation**:

**Address**:

**Email**:

**Telephone**:

### Vice-Chair

**Professional Name**:

**Affiliation**:

**Address**:

**Email**:

**Telephone**:

### Secretary

**Professional Name**:

**Affiliation**:

**Address**:

**Email**:

**Telephone**:

### 2026 Planner’s Report to the Executive Director

*Please submit to Deb Ford at* csca.ed@gmail.com *by* ***January 2, 2026****.*

**Planner Name:**

**Planning Unit:**

**Email: Phone:**

**UNIT AWARD INFORMATION.** *If you do not offer an award in a specific category, please mark with N/A.*

1. Top Paper Title:

Author(s), title(s), and institution(s):

Quote about paper from planner (to be used in press releases):

1. Top Student Paper Title: Author(s), title(s), and institution(s):

Quote about paper from planner (to be used in press releases):

1. Top Panel Title:

Author(s), title(s), and institution(s):

Quote about paper from planner (to be used in press releases):

### EXPENDITURES.

Do you give cash awards for your awards? If so, please list the amounts for each here and who should receive the check. This information should be in your Unit bylaws. *Remember, only one check can be written for each award.*

Do you have any other expenses you wish to have covered? *Remember, unless you have an endowed award within your Unit, you are limited to $100 worth of expenditures each year. Please review the bylaws (online – see the CSCA website) to examine how money can be spent.*

**Failure to submit by the January 2, 2026 deadline will result in forfeiture of awards and funds. Unfortunately, no exceptions can be made for this rule.**

1. All conference costs are paid by attendees, regardless of their status as members of the public or private sector. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)