

Kayla Collins

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Hiring Team
Ballotpedia — Policy Team

Dear Hiring Team,

I'm applying for the Policy Staff Writer job.

I like Ballotpedia's whole point: give people straight information and let them decide. That's the kind of writing I want to do more of.

I live in Visalia, California, and I already work remote. For the last year I've been deep in California regulations, agency notices, and rulemaking paperwork. I take messy primary sources and turn them into something a normal person can actually follow. Your posting mentioned the administrative state, rulemaking, and programs like public assistance — that's the lane I've been in.

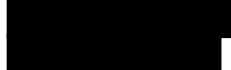
I'm not coming from a newsroom. I am coming from a lot of careful reading, deadline writing, and the habit of checking whether the document in front of me actually says what people claim it says. I can write neutrally. I know how to lay out background, define terms, and show more than one side without pushing an outcome.

Remote work is normal for me. I stay organized, I don't need someone standing over me, and I revise when feedback says the draft isn't clear enough yet.

Résumé and a short neutral writing sample are attached (same file). Happy to do a trial page if that's useful.

Thanks for reading.

Kayla Collins


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Neutral Writing Sample — Kayla Collins

For Ballotpedia Policy Staff Writer · written as a neutral explainer, not an advocacy letter

Ability-to-pay rules for California DUI programs

In California, people convicted of driving under the influence are often required to finish a state-licensed DUI program before they can reinstate a license or satisfy court requirements. DHCS regulates those programs under Title 9 of the California Code of Regulations.

Fees can be high. Title 9, section 9878 is the main statewide rule on ability to pay. In general, it requires programs to assess what a participant can afford and limits fees based on that assessment. Other Title 9 sections cover financial assessments, payment agreements, and completion paperwork. How this plays out can still differ by program and county, even though the regulation is statewide.

One side of the debate focuses on participants. The argument is that ability to pay should track someone's real financial situation during the time they're enrolled — not just the day a form gets finished. If an assessment is late, this view says charging full fees in the meantime undercuts § 9878. Supporters want clearer timing rules and more consistency across counties.

The other side focuses on the existing system. The argument is that the regulations already require assessments and already limit fees, and that program processes plus participant requests are how problems get fixed. From this view, more statewide mandates could mean more paperwork and costs that agencies or programs say they can't absorb.

California's Administrative Procedure Act lets the public petition an agency to change regulations (Government Code § 11340.6). Agencies have to respond in writing. In 2026, a petition asking DHCS to clarify parts of the financial-assessment rules was published in the California Regulatory Notice Register and denied. Whether someone agrees with that outcome or not, it's an example of how rulemaking petitions get used when people disagree about what a regulation means in practice.

Useful terms: ability to pay; financial assessment; petition for rulemaking; California Regulatory Notice Register.

Main sources: Cal. Code Regs., tit. 9, § 9878; Cal. Gov. Code §§ 11340.6, 11340.7; California Regulatory Notice Register.

Neutral sample for a job application. Not legal advice. Not an argument for a policy result.