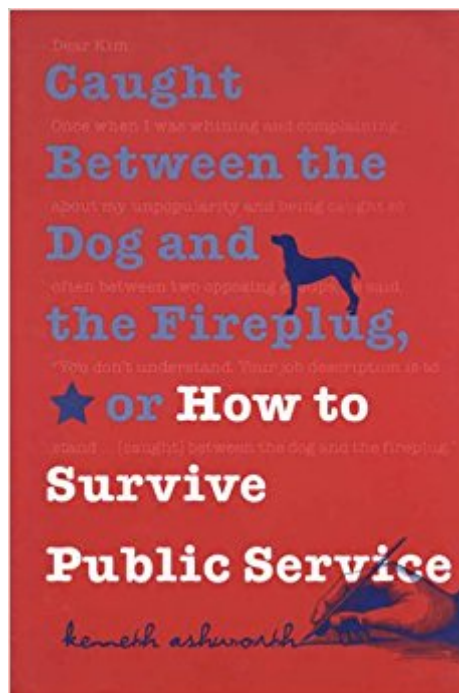




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# Caught Between The Dog And The Fireplug, Or How To Survive Public Service (Text Teach / Policies)



## Synopsis

Replete with practical advice for anyone considering a career in federal, state, or local government, *Caught between the Dog and the Fireplug, or How to Survive Public Service* conveys what life is really like in a public service job. The book is written as a series of lively, entertaining letters of advice from a sympathetic uncle to a niece or nephew embarking on a government career. Kenneth Ashworth draws on more than forty years of public sector experience to provide advice on the daily challenges that future public servants can expect to face: working with politicians, bureaucracy, and the press; dealing with unpleasant and difficult people; leading supervisors as well as subordinates; and maintaining high ethical standards. Ashworth relates anecdotes from his jobs in Texas, California, and Washington, D.C., that illustrate with humor and wit fundamental concepts of public administration. Be prepared, says Ashworth, to encounter all sorts of unexpected situations, from the hostile to the bizarre, from the intimidating to the outrageous. He shows that in the confrontational world of public policymaking and program implementation, a successful career demands disciplined, informed thought, intellectual and personal growth, and broad reading. He demonstrates how, despite the inevitable inefficiencies of a democratic society, those working to shape policy in large organizations can nonetheless effect significant change-and even have fun along the way. The book will interest students and teachers of public administration, public affairs, policy development, leadership, or higher education administration. Ashworth's advice will also appeal to anyone who has ever been caught in a tight spot while working in government service.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A 'must' for anyone aspiring to a career in public service at any level, *Caught Between the Dog And The Fireplug* is highly readable yet filled with sensible observations and recommendations." •Wisconsin Bookwatch "Quite often an academic assumes that a book of anecdotes provides 'war stories' but little insight. This book, however, richly combines real experience with solid advice that would benefit even the most experienced public administrator. Ashworth's book performs the rare feat of providing an amusing look at public service while maintaining the importance of service to the commonweal." •Public Administration Review

"Kenneth Ashworth's letters...are a wonderful, witty, and literate distillation of a distinguished career in public service." •Bill Hobby, former Lieutenant Governor of Texas and former Chancellor of the University of Houston System "I would recommend this book to any student of public service. Kenneth Ashworth tells it like it is, using a rich collection of experience, anecdotes, and lessons in the real-life workings of our government." •Charles B. Reed, Chancellor, California State University

This book is excellent for anyone starting in public service and especially starting in public service in Washington, DC. Advice from this author is written in letterform from Uncle Ken to an androgynous niece or nephew, Kim, who has chosen public service as an honorable career choice. In monthly letters to Kim, Uncle Ken tells stories of his years as a public servant. Each monthly letter has a theme on how to succeed in the life of social engineering; another term for public service that isn't used as much as it used to be. The book is filled with personal stories of success and failure and quotes from many notables and legends. Tidbits such as "You cannot walk with kings more than very occasionally if all you know is your area of specialization, regardless of how thoroughly you may know it;" and F Scott's Fitzgerald "You must have the ability to hold two opposing ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function;" and the more down to earth quote from a boss who was upset with him at the time, "When I agree with you, you are operating within the power we have delegated to you. When I disagree with you, you are exceeding your authority." This book will make you smile and shake your head at the same time. Anyone who has been in public service will read the stories and say, "yep, been there, done that, got that tee shirt." It's a good book that I enjoyed.

Thank You Mr. Ashworth for giving public administration students a "real" viewpoint. So many times as students we are bombarded with the rosier pictures of the field that we have chosen. While it is discouraging to know that there is much to overcome as a public administrator, I have a renewed fervor to see it through. I can hope that those whom your book was read by walked away with the many jewels that it had to offer. You are very funny and honest Thank You.

Letters from the author that he wrote to his niece about various scenarios about dealing with difficult situations within the public service.

Excellent read. It was an assignment for a course in Public Administration, however, I kept it due to the information for survival. I will pick it up & read some of the sections I have marked. They are often helpful with many situations. I highly recommend this book for anyone venturing into management or public service.

This is written in the form of a series of letters from an experienced, high level manager in government service to a relative who is just starting out. It is an easy read but is jammed full of excellent advice. I have now read it 6 times and have loaned out my copies (3) many times. Most of those who have read it have bought their own copy. I highly recommend this book!

I love Ken's mechanisms for coping with the Texas Legislature and others you meet when you are active in Texas government.

All good.

Insightful

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