

## **Engaging Effectively With County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs)**



### Overview

The purpose of this guide is to give you an overview of your role in facilitating this training workshop. The goal of the workshop is to improve the community's understanding of community engagement and to strengthen their ability to work more effectively with County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs) and their staff.

You will be working with a PowerPoint presentation of 23 slides, which include facilitator's notes. It takes about 25 minutes to cover the slides without interruption. You should expect the entire workshop to last approximately 2 hours, depending on how much time you allow for questions and discussion.



When you see a megaphone icon in this guide, the italicized text next to it is a script that you can choose to use when introducing a topic or providing an opportunity for questions or discussion.

### Before the Workshop

If you are not already familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the CACs, you should spend some time before the workshop gaining a [basic understanding](#) of what they do and the various ways the community can engage with their CACs. It would also be helpful to have some familiarity with the communities you will be training and if/how they have previously engaged with their CAC.

You need to be proficient in working with PowerPoint slides. You also need to be familiar and comfortable with the logistics for the workshop, including how the room will be set up (if the workshop is in-person) or how to lead the presentation and discussion by computer (if the workshop is online). In either case you should do a dry run of the workshop on whatever equipment you will be using.

The hope is that this workshop will not only provide participants with useful information and skills but also provide an opportunity for participants to share experiences and ideas and learn from each other. To encourage this kind of participant interchange, this guide provides you with suggestions, beyond what is in the script, to help you facilitate your session effectively.

For this purpose, the slides are divided into six segments:

- Welcome and Introductions (Slides 1 – 4)
- What Is Community Engagement? (Slides 5 – 8)
- Who Are the CACs and What Do They Do? (Slides 9 – 12)
- Goals of CAC-Community Engagement (Slides 13 – 14)
- What Are Pesticides? (Slides 15 – 18)
- CAC – Community Collaborations: Success Stories (Slide 19 - 20)
- Wrap Up (Slides 21 – 23)

As you complete each segment, you should ask the participants if they have any questions or comments. If there are none, this guide provides you with some possible follow-up questions you might ask to prompt discussion. You may use these or others that make sense to you. Your goal should be to encourage participants to share and learn from each other. Please be mindful of not letting the conversation carry on too long so the workshop stays on schedule.

### Facilitating the Workshop

#### **Welcome and Introductions (Slides 1 – 4; 20 minutes without icebreaker, 30 minutes with icebreaker)**

You should create a welcoming, friendly environment for the participants as they arrive. You should acknowledge or shake hands with all of them and help them to feel comfortable. You should let participants know what, if any, interpretation services are available.

When the group is assembled, thank everyone for coming and then introduce yourself and how the time together will unfold. This should include logistical aspects, such as the session timing and breaks and, if online, instructions about how everyone can interact effectively (e.g., the raise hand feature). It should also include the expectation that the session will be interactive and encourage everyone to contribute their thoughts and ideas in a respectful way. Check in with participants to see if they have any questions at this point.

Have the participants briefly introduce themselves with their name and title.

*Optional: Conduct an icebreaker. Whether to do this or not should be determined ahead of time. If the participants generally know each other it may not be a good use of their time. If the organizers of the workshop suggest that it would be worthwhile, work with them to select an appropriate icebreaker approach. The icebreaker should be done with the full group. If the group is very large, it may not be possible to hear from everyone. You do not want this part of the session to last more than 10 minutes (or less if you are already behind schedule). Here are a few topic ideas:*

- *What is your favorite part of your job?*
- *What is some interesting fact about your life that most people do not know?*
- *Have you engaged with your County Agricultural Commissioner or another county government official before?*

Cover the topics for the day (Slide 3) and play the slideshow on Slide 4.

### **What Is Community Engagement? (Slides 5 – 8, 15 minutes)**



*The next several slides introduce the practice of community engagement. This includes the definition and importance of a strong commitment to environmental justice.*

Follow-up questions:



- *Would anyone like to add to what the slides covered?*
- *What are your top community concerns and priorities? Please write them down in your workbook.*
- *Have you worked with your CAC to engage on topics that affect your community?*

If you are not able to elicit some discussion from the participants, you could say that people may have had different experiences engaging with the CAC office or other local government agencies.



*We all may have had different experiences with local government agencies. Is anyone able to share an experience you had that was confusing, helpful or not so helpful?*



### **Who Are the CACs and What Do They Do? (Slides 9-12, 5 minutes)**



*The purpose of this block of slides is to provide you with information about who the CACs are, what they do, and what they are responsible for.*

Follow-up questions:



- *From your experience, is anything important missing from this explanation of CAC roles?*
- *Before we look at the next few slides about goals and specific examples of engagement approaches, would anyone like to share how you have reached out to your local government office about community concerns or issues?*
- *Now that you have a better understanding of what the CACs do, refer back to your list of community concerns and priorities compiled in section one (page 2). Identify which of the priorities relate to the CACs, and which relate to other agencies and write them down (on page 6).*

### **Goals of CAC-Community Engagement (Slide 13, 3 minutes)**



*This slide explains what the goals of CAC-Community Engagement are, such as the goals to improve communication and work together towards solutions.*

### **Good Examples of CAC-Community Engagement (Slide 14, 7 minutes)**



*This slide provides an overview and understanding of effective approaches and activities for successful community engagement with your CAC office. You may already be doing some of these or have your own approaches to community engagement activities, which you are welcome to share with the group after these few slides.*

Follow-up questions:



- *What community engagement approaches have you found most useful?*
- *What is your preferred style of engaging CACs, and why does that seem to work best?*
- *Who are the CAC staff we currently engage with, and what engagement style seems to work best with them?*

### **What are Pesticides? (Slides 15 – 18, 20 minutes)**



*These sets of slides cover what pesticides are, where pesticides can be applied, common community concerns about pesticides, and who regulates pesticides.*

### **Break (10 minutes)**

### **CAC – Community Collaborations: Success Stories (Slides 19 – 20, 20 minutes)**

Play Success Stories video.

After listening to the success stories (Slide 19), here are some possible questions to ask the participants:



- *Now that we have heard some stories of what meaningful engagement with your county regulators can look like, take some time to consider your own community priorities and see if there are ideas from these experiences that you can adapt when collaborating with your CAC office. Please list them in your workbook (on page 10).*
- *Choose one of your community priorities and write one step you can take to engage with your government leaders.*
- *During this workshop session, have you heard a new idea that you think will be helpful for engaging with your CACs?*
- *What is your most important takeaway from today's session?*

### **Wrap Up (Slides 21 – 23, 5 minutes)**

Be sure to remind everyone of other resources available and thank everyone for their participation. Acknowledge those who developed the training and those who organized the workshop.

### **Feedback (5 minutes)**

Before participants leave, ask them to take 5 minutes to fill out the anonymous feedback survey (next page). If there are literacy barriers, this feedback could be collected verbally and noted on the next page.

## Participant Feedback Survey

For the first three questions, circle the number that best represents your assessment of the workshop.

	Not So Much		Very Much	
Did you find this workshop worthwhile?	1	2	3	4

Did this workshop increase your understanding of environmental justice issues and CAC responsibilities?	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Did this workshop provide you with new insights on engagement approaches and techniques?	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

What is an engagement approach that you have not previously used and are likely to try?

Do you have any suggested improvements for the content and delivery of this workshop?

Is there some additional workshop you would find useful?

Do you have anything else you would like to share?

## Sample Email Language to Invite CAC Office to the Workshop

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Dear [COUNTY NAME] County Agricultural Commissioner,

I am reaching out on behalf of [COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION], and I am writing to ask if you would be willing and able to participate in a community workshop called “Engaging Effectively with CACs”. The plan is to hold the workshop in [COMMUNITY NAME] sometime during [RANGE OF DATES].

I will be coordinating and facilitating this workshop, though if you or your staff would like to be involved in sections of this workshop, that would be greatly appreciated—especially if you have staff who have previously been involved in community engagement and outreach. Regardless, I believe it would be very valuable to the participants to have your presence and perspective during the workshop.

The structure and content for this workshop was developed by a work group of CACs and community leaders. Its purpose is to explain some of the roles and responsibilities of Commissioners and to demonstrate how community member engagement with their CAC office can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.

This is going to be an in-person workshop lasting about two hours. Your role would be to underscore the messages being delivered by the workshop, to give some examples of how you have worked with community members, and to answer questions that are raised about your office. Prior to the workshop, I would like to meet with you to get your thoughts about community issues and concerns that have arisen in your county and to determine how we would work together to make this an interesting and seamless workshop. [IF THIS IS GOING TO BE AN ONLINE WORKSHOP, SEE REVISED PARAGRAPH ON THE NEXT PAGE.]

I strongly believe that your participation would not only make the workshop more valuable and worthwhile for community members but would also be a useful engagement opportunity for you and your staff as well.

I look forward to hearing from you and collaborating on promoting meaningful and effective community engagement in [COUNTY NAME] County.

Sincerely,



## SUBSTITUTE PARAGRAPH FOR ONLINE WORKSHOP

This is going to be an online workshop lasting about two hours held via [NAME OF ONLINE PLATFORM]. Your role would be to underscore the messages being delivered by the workshop, to give some examples of how you have worked with community members, and to answer questions that are raised about your office. Prior to the workshop, I would like to meet with you to get your thoughts about community issues and concerns that have arisen in your county and to determine how we would work together to make this an interesting and seamless workshop. It would also be great to have a short trial run before the workshop to make sure we are both comfortable with the mechanics of the online platform.