

CCE Program Advisory Committees

A one-page summary of the CCE Program Advisory Committee Handbook

What + Why

CCE Program Advisory Committees (PACs) are formed by Associations to advise program leadership helping to maintain grassroots stakeholder engagement to assess community needs and enhance program effectiveness. Associations are called to establish and involve advisory committees for primary program areas. While there are different forms of PACs, typically program staff are responsible for facilitating committee operations, providing necessary support, and ensuring effective communication.

The PAC's help *advise* staff in assessing local needs, reviewing program reach, and evaluating program outcomes to ensure alignment with community demographics and goals.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Program Advisory Committees are intended to:

- 1. identify needs/issues within a community or county,**
- 2. advise or recommend on how best to reach community audiences,**
- 3. review evaluation plans and results, and**
- 4. when necessary, to function as advocates for Extension programs and Cornell Cooperative Extension.**

Functions + Structures

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) advisory committees (PACs) operate within the framework of CCE association constitutions and operational guidelines. Check with your Executive Director to clarify how your Association organizes PAC membership.

There are two basic models for PACs: (1) separate PACs for each planned program area, and (2) an umbrella PAC, with a holistic committee covering all areas. The handbook details considerations for advisory committees, including structural components, programming, agenda development, group dynamics, sample bylaws, committee selection and recruitment, and examples of effective communication.

Convening an effective PAC

Convening and facilitating advisory committee meetings is typically handled by lead program staff, emphasizing the importance of investing time in thoughtful meeting planning. Formal orientation for new advisory committee members is crucial and should cover the committee's role, job descriptions, bylaws, time commitments, and Extension history and processes. Managing expectations of committee members, such as feeling welcomed, supported, and valued, is essential for effective collaboration. Practices for successful meetings include clear agendas, appropriate timing and location, manageable committee sizes, effective navigation of meeting dynamics, understanding member motivations, and incorporating opportunities for social interaction and enjoyable experiences to enhance engagement and teamwork.