Ways to Encourage Engagement from All CAC Participants

- Have CAC members interact with other parts of the UCEDD.
    - For example, have CAC members work on a project to learn more about what the UCEDD does. Have the CAC member provide direct feedback.
- Consider having CAC meetings that discuss current issues.
    - For example, the Nebraska UCEDD once had a CAC meeting focused on emergency preparedness. They invited guest speakers. They created opportunities for groups to talk about the situation in their state.
- Have a person with an I/DD lead CAC meetings.
    - Leadership by people with I/DD is important for a CAC to be effective. At the meeting, have another person take notes. Have another person handle other important meeting tasks.
- Have CAC members plan events.
    - In Rhode Island, CAC members planned an event focused on access to transportation. They also created a community grant to promote accessibility of arts and leisure activities. CAC members reviewed the applications.
- Offer to pay for expenses for CAC members to attend meetings.
- Make sure all CAC meetings are accessible.
    - For example, always provide materials before the meeting. Make materials in easy-to-read formats.
- Involve CAC members in policymaking.
    - Nebraska's CAC wrote a letter to a team that was evaluating long term supports and services under managed care. The CAC shared their key points with the team and state leadership. Their comments were included in a final report.
- Bring outside guests to a CAC meeting.
    - For example, you may consider having someone from the AUCD Council on Leadership in Advocacy (COLA) provide advice or guidance to your CAC. You can also have a CAC member attend COLA meetings and report out about COLA's activities during your CAC meetings.
- Identify meeting dates a year in advance to ensure they are on the calendar.
- Attend other groups' meetings to see who is participating in similar groups and initiatives. Participate as a representative of your UCEDD and consider recruiting from these new connections.
    - Some examples of other groups' meetings to attend are The Arc, self-advocacy organization, or parent and caregiver trainings.
- Reach out to CAC members who may not participate often during meetings. You can email or call them on the phone to see how they are doing.

Promoting Virtual Engagement:

It may be harder to engage your CAC during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of your CAC members may have already felt isolated before the pandemic. COVID-19 has made that isolation feel worse. It can be hard to involve CAC members virtually. It may be hard to make virtual sure meetings are accessible.

Some ideas for involving CAC members include:

- using social media,
- using breakout rooms in Zoom,
- inviting outside speakers to CAC meetings, or
- hosting virtual social hours.

Recommendations

CACs are important for UCEDDs and people with I/DD and their family members. CACs help involve people in work that affects them. The tools in this tip sheet can help UCEDDs connect better with their CAC members.

There are many ways to meaningfully engage a CAC! Each state and territory has its own needs. These needs can impact how UCEDDs connect with their CACs. To ensure a good connection with their CAC, UCEDD directors need to:

- know their state or territory's unique needs, and
- know what the DD Act requires.

Links to Helpful Resources

- Webinar: Meaningfully Engaging Your CAC Admin Essentials
- Webinar: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Consumer Advisory Committees (CACs)
- CAC's Recommendations for Meaningful Participation of Individuals with Disabilities and Families
- Webinar: Involvement of People with Disabilities in the Operations of the UCEDD
- Checklist for the CAC to Assist with Program Compliance
- CAC Orientation Curriculum
- My Voice. My Participation. My Board. A Leadership Training for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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