

**100 Ways to Strengthen NC Cooperative Extension  
County Advisory Councils (CAC)  
“Empowering People. Providing Solutions.”**

***County Advisory Council (CAC) Development***

1. Establish guidelines for selecting CAC member
2. Include persons on CAC from traditional and non-traditional backgrounds
3. Consider diversity (gender, ethnicity, age, etc.) as factors in recruiting CAC members
4. Invite persons from business, industry and school system to serve on CAC
5. Include media person or journalist on CAC to help with marketing and publicity
6. Work to have CAC reflect the overall county population
7. Provide orientation for all new CAC members
8. Provide SEAL and other relevant training for all CAC members
9. Articulate CAC’s purpose clearly to members
10. Communicate the role of the CAC in Cooperative Extension’s structure, ensuring that members understand the organization’s vision and goals
11. Conduct training to educate CAC members about Extension
12. Use electronic media to maintain contact between CAC members and CED
13. Use electronic media to maintain contact between CAC members and grassroots groups
14. Invite State Advisory Council (SAC) members to present reports/presentations to CAC
15. Advise SAC members regarding CAC meetings and other events occurring at local level
16. Make invitation to prospective advisory council members special and worthwhile
17. Establish meeting agenda in advance of each CAC meeting in cooperation with council chair and utilizing member input
18. Include meal or refreshments at each regularly scheduled meeting
19. Involve council members in tasks that match their strengths, interests and availability
20. Identify projects for consideration by CAC which have specific outcomes and can be reasonably achieved
21. Educate members about the responsibility to raise public awareness about Extension – ‘get involved, make an impact, make connections’
22. Assign length of term to rotating schedule so only part of the CAC membership changes annually to maintain continuity and consistency
23. Work to identify natural leaders in the group; foster and enhance leadership skills of all members
24. Invest in building a sense of community within CAC to encourage members to support one another and Extension
25. Establish and announce regular meeting schedule keeping in mind the needs of the CAC members and their preferences to the extent possible
26. Provide appropriate recognition (certificates, plaques, etc.) for CAC loyalty and dedication – “An Extension Friend”
27. Identify opportunities for CAC members to be actively participating in local Extension programming. Remember: an active CAC results in more efficient planning to ensure that services really meet consumer needs and priorities.

## **100 Ways to Strengthen NC Cooperative Extension County Advisory Councils (CAC)**

### **Marketing & Communications**

28. Designate a CAC member as marketing coordinator to enhance publicity and visibility
29. Provide visible “signs of belonging” (i.e., nametags, business cards, logo clothing) to enhance CAC status and visibility
30. Encourage CAC members to attend community events as a representative and/or as an advocate for Cooperative Extension (ex: health fairs, fall festivals, agricultural events)
31. Encourage CAC members to participate in events/functions sponsored by Extension and assign them meaningful responsibilities
32. Work with, CAC members to develop and rehearse 30 second ‘elevator speeches’ to use at appropriate times
33. Provide marketing materials (bookmarks, brochures, fact sheets, etc) for distribution by CAC members and for display at strategic locations throughout the county/district
34. Train CAC members to share Extension success stories with key community players
35. Advise CAC members to deliver praise in public, criticism in private
36. Encourage CAC members to be passionate about promoting Extension services
37. Establish electronic phone/email tree to quickly engage CAC members in immediate response campaigns regarding local and state Extension topics and issues
38. Familiarize CAC members with “Ask an Expert”
39. Organize CAC members into marketing teams to increase effectiveness
40. Empower CAC members by involving them in planning as well as marketing
41. Identify barriers to effective marketing concerning underserved populations and solicit CAC help to identify solutions
42. Provide CAC members with specific data regarding Extension program effectiveness
43. Brainstorm with CAC members to identify best approaches to successful marketing in your county and/or district
44. Display Cooperative Extension brand prominently at relevant events/functions and encourage CAC members to take responsibility in helping identify opportunities for such events and displays
45. Collaborate with various community organizations to provide Extension appropriate materials during special celebrations – National Education Week, Fireman Week, EMS Week, etc. (<http://www.positivepromotions.com/calendar-of-events/a/44/>)
46. When appropriate, partner with organizations who have similar missions—Farm Bureau, Farm Service Agency, forestry/land management organizations, youth organizations, farmer’s markets
47. Utilize free advertising through public service announcements and electronic media
48. Build strong relationships with prominent individuals and organizations in the county– make a friend before you need a friend
49. Include youth from 4-H and other youth development organizations in planning media presentations, particularly for programs to directed primarily toward children and youth
50. Maintain an email distribution list that includes everyone who has accessed Extension programming, including government officials and other key person, to share timely information highlighting upcoming events and programs (monthly or bi-monthly)
51. Produce marketing materials targeting specific interest groups for planned programs
52. Feature council members on Extension radio segments, television spots or in Extension newspaper columns
53. Encourage CAC members to talk to personal contacts about Extension’s value to the community. Remember: CAC members have direct contact with consumers daily within their personal social/business/community networks—an extremely valuable marketing tool!

**\*See Attachment 1 for “Marketing & Communication” Model**

## **100 Ways to Strengthen NC Cooperative Extension County Advisory Councils (CAC)**

### ***Government Relations & Advocacy***

54. Encourage CAC members to attend commissioner meetings, wearing nametags and/or logo clothing, particularly during and before budget sessions
55. Select the most effective CAC members to deliver messages to elected officials
56. Provide training for CAC members to understand positive and negative approaches in advocating for the organization
57. Provide local leaders with informal appreciation meal, and include CAC members and Extension service consumers on the guest list
58. Train CAC members to promote Extension's agenda when opportunities arise
59. Train CAC members so they are comfortable talking with local government officials which will also make them more productive in addressing state level leaders
60. Remind CAC members to 'peddle the progress' of Extension when meeting with government officials
61. Summarize data about Extension services to reflect the local economic impact for elected officials and provide this data to CAC members
62. Include pie charts or bar graphs with data when appropriate to make data more user friendly, more easily presented, and/or more impactful
63. Provide CAC with only three or four major facts to use as key talking points about local program when they speak with elected officials – too much info confuses the message and messenger
64. Invite local and state government officials to make presentations or participate in some way at Extension awards and recognition events – they are more likely to attend if they have a specific role!
65. Submit photos to newspapers of elected officials attending and participating at Extension events
66. Invite local and state officials to informal meet/greet sessions at farmer's market or other appropriate local program or event
67. Invite elected officials to Extension events – recognize and express appreciation at the beginning AND again at the end
68. Use varied printed and electronic media to recognize and value government officials
69. Help CAC members develop an understanding of the interests and concerns of the local and state policymakers and how those relate to Extension
70. Advise CAC members that Extension is not a political organization but rather an organization affected by political decisions
71. Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative when working with elected officials
72. Provide appropriate recognition (framed certificates, plaques, etc.) for deserving policymakers – "A Friend in Government"
73. Organize CAC to write personal thank you notes to government officials for their support and contributions to Extension
74. CAC members are local voters and therefore have personal stakes in local government. Remember: CAC members have unique, direct contact with elected officials and represent the voting public. CAC is a valuable advocacy group locally and regionally
75. CAC members connect elected officials to many citizens within their precinct or voting district. Remember: Policymakers are most interested in information that is locally specific and shows the direct impact of a program on their constituents.

## **100 Ways to Strengthen NC Cooperative Extension County Advisory Councils (CAC)**

### **Resource Development**

76. Engage CAC members in establishing contact with potential donors whom they know personally or have an acquaintance
77. Utilize CAC and their relationships with potential donors – personal connections makes a difference
78. Utilize SAC members to assist CAC members in resource development efforts
79. Assign CAC to teams when approaching potential donors to increase credibility
80. Arrange for district Extension Resource Development personnel to conduct training sessions for CAC and invite county SAC representative
81. Train CAC to share their personal experiences with potential donors
82. Encourage and assist CAC to arrange a donor's recognition meal for Extension
83. Invite potential donors to Extension events to educate them about Extension programming and outreach, and to solidify their support and understanding before asking for donations
84. Establish common points of interest when meeting potential donors
85. Prepare your specific agenda and goals carefully prior to approaching donors
86. Develop list of specific information about Extension services for potential donors
87. Use printed and electronic media to recognize donors
88. Provide a professionally prepared 'Donor's Board' for display in Extension reception area
89. Develop meaningful relationship with potential donors before asking for donations
90. Brainstorm with CAC potential donors for targeted program support
91. Identify influential leaders in the county who already support Extension services. Influential leaders help make connections to other potential donors
92. Seek resource development support in unlikely places – real estate organizations, retiree's groups, local clubs and organizations, agriculture supply stores
93. Connect to organizations with similar missions who may be potential donors: ex: Farm Bureau, cattleman's associations, churches and youth groups. Recruit new CAC members from their boards
94. Maintain a 'sign-in sheet' for all meetings, community events, and other functions involving Extension – attendees are potential new donors. Ask for email addresses to include these individuals on future contacts
95. Invite potential donors to hear "Report to the People"
96. Develop a means to reach local civic groups to generate interest and extend support base
97. Identify community organizations/agencies to collaborate in addressing specific issues
98. Brainstorm with CAC to identify individuals/groups who could assist in acquiring the resources necessary to address program initiatives
99. Approach elected officials who support Extension to create special project funds with their name attached to which other individuals may contribute
100. Help regional resource development staff identifying individuals who might/would will their estate to support Extension programming at the county, district and/or state levels

**\* See Attachment 2 for "Resource Development" Model**

# **100 Ways to Strengthen NC Cooperative Extension County Advisory Councils (CAC)**

## **ATTACHMENT 1: “MARKETING & COMMUNICATION” MODEL**

1. Establish an infrastructure
  - a) Designate a CAC marketing team/committee
  - b) Brainstorm marketing needs/potential
2. Establish and develop a marketing plan
  - a) Train and educate marketing committee
  - b) Promote “Ask an Expert”
3. Access available materials and resources
  - a) Utilize available data to increase effectiveness
  - b) Utilize free promotion opportunities
  - c) Create targeted marketing items/materials
  - d) Develop elevator speeches
4. Engage/Promote
  - a) Advocate Extension with passion via internal & external events
  - b) Utilize partnerships/relationships
  - c) Utilize internal assets (people) to market to new audiences
5. Utilize media/outreach opportunities
  - a) Explore/implement the use of PSA’s, social media, news media, community networks

## **ATTACHMENT 2: “RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT” MODEL**

1. Establish CAC fundraising committee
2. Identify funding needs/priorities
3. Organize and train CAC in fundraising techniques
  - a) Determine how to identify prospective donors
    - Individuals
    - Groups and/or businesses
    - Civic organizations
  - b) Determine how to contact and cultivate prospective donors
    - Get them involved
    - Meet with CES staff
    - Involve other CAC members
  - c) Practice ‘How to Ask’ guidelines – involve regional resource development personnel
4. Practice good stewardship by including the following
  - a) Recognize donor individually and personally
  - b) Acknowledge donation/gift with a prompt ‘thank you’ note
  - c) Recognize donor/s at CAC meetings and at other times as appropriate