

Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence

Sample 2-Hour Virtual Workshop

Note: This workshop is designed for use as an introduction to the Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence specifically and the Guidelines for Excellence Series in general. It can be scaled, depending on your needs, from 90 minutes to 2 hours. Times are approximate and will vary depending on your focus and your participants.

Materials/Links Needed:

- ✓ PowerPoint/Google Slides presentation: *Community Engagement Guidelines*
- ✓ Link to *Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence*:
https://eepro.naaee.org/sites/default/files/eepro-post-files/community_engagement_guidelines_pdf.pdf
- ✓ Activity 1 “Community Social, Economic, and Environmental Needs.”
- ✓ Activity 2 “Digging into the Community Engagement Guidelines.”
- ✓ Activity 3 “Individual and Organizational Readiness.”
- ✓ Activity 4 “Reflection: Community Engagement Guidelines.”
- ✓ Google Form: Workshop Evaluation. Please make a copy for your own use:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15V0DBtlyZblQRjrlXbHkp4Haxq8hS9pvxJRfIOcHk-Q/edit>

Note: Much of the following assumes you will be using breakout rooms for small group work. Depending on the group and their familiarity with the online platform (e.g., Zoom) you are using, you may want to provide a quick introduction to using the chat function, the need to cut/paste URLs for use while in breakout rooms, and such.

Introduction & Project Background

15 minutes

Using a PowerPoint presentation, provide a short overview of the *Guidelines for Excellence*: What is NAAEE? What is the National Project for Excellence in EE? Why were the *Guidelines* developed? How were they developed? Overview of the *Community Engagement Guidelines*.

NOTE: Depending on your group, you may wish to include, in the introduction, the following: background information about your organization and/or the sponsoring organization, participant introductions, and an icebreaker.

Community Economic, Social & Environmental Needs

10 minutes

In this activity, participants begin to think about community economic, social and environmental needs. They will explore the nature of the needs, how they might impact the community, and begin to see some of the intersections.

Procedure:

- Remind the participants that the *Community Engagement Guidelines* are focused on how environmental educators can work successfully with communities to:
 - protect the environment and promote
 - community well-being, sustainability and resilience.
- Split the group in two (e.g., use the first letter of their last name, cat people v dog people), assigning them to either Group #1 or Group #2.
- Ask those in Group #1 to think about their community and to write down an environmental need facing the community (e.g., water quality; biodiversity, fire).
- Ask those in Group #2 to think about their community and to write down a social or economic need facing the community (e.g., safety in the community, childhood obesity).
- Ask the participants to think about the identified need for a moment:

- What is the nature of the need?
- Does it impact the whole community?
- What are some of the organizations or agencies working on this need?
- Is this an historic need or something that has arisen within the recent past?
- Once everyone has had a chance to think about their identified need, paste the URL for Activity 1 “Community Social, Economic, and Environmental Needs” into the chat and display it on your shared screen. NOTE: Activity 1 is a model for you to use. You will need to create your own. Be sure to use a whiteboard or another format that allows Post-it notes or commenting.
- Ask the participants to copy the URL into their browser.
- Explain that they should write their community need under the appropriate category (Social and Economic Needs or Environmental Needs).
- Ask for two volunteers – one from each of the two groups – to read their note.
- Ask the two volunteers to describe the need, using the questions posed earlier:
 - What is the nature of the need?
 - Does it impact the whole community?
 - What are some of the organizations or agencies working on this need?
 - Is this an historic need or something that has arisen within the recent past?
- Ask the group to think about these two needs. What could a group, in your community, collaborate on that would meet both needs? What are the co-benefits of the collaboration? Who are possible allies?
- Repeat with two more sets of volunteers and needs.
- After the volunteers have described the two sets of needs, ask the participants: If you were working in a group that identified all four sets of needs, what could you collaborate on that would address all the needs?

Digging into the Guidelines

60 minutes

In this section of the workshop, participants will become familiar with the overall organization of the *Community Engagement Guidelines* and its five Key Characteristics.

Procedure:

- Using a PowerPoint, walk the participants through the *Community Engagement Guidelines* (e.g., there are five key characteristics, each key characteristic is further defined by guidelines, and guidelines are even further defined by indicators).
- Explain that in this next activity, they will become familiar with the five key characteristics in the *Community Engagement Guidelines*.
- Explain that they will be divided into five teams and each team will be assigned one of the five Key Characteristics – based on their breakout room number.
- Post the URL for the *Community Engagement Guidelines* in the chat and ask participants to copy the URL into their browsers. They will need to access it when they get to their breakout room.
- Post the URL for Activity 2 “Digging into the Community Engagement Guidelines.” Ask them to copy this URL into their browsers.
- Explain that once in their groups, participants will have about **20 minutes** to become familiar with their assigned Key Characteristic. In their breakout rooms, they should:
 - ✓ Introduce yourselves
 - ✓ Read through the assigned Key Characteristic [focus on the guidelines and indicators and skim any boxes as you have time]
 - ✓ As a group, discuss the Key Characteristic
 - ✓ Prepare a short presentation (4 minutes) about your assigned Key Characteristic. In your presentation, you should provide:
 - a general overview of the Key Characteristic
 - key takeaways
 - examples from your own practice
- Bring the group back together and ask each group to present, starting with Key Characteristic #1. Use PowerPoint slides to provide a quick overview of each Key Characteristic as groups present.
- Stress key points on each or clarify information after each group has presented.

Exploring the Supporting Resources

20 minutes

In this final exercise, participants will become familiar with the Supporting Resources and think about professional and organizational readiness.

Procedure:

- Explain that the *Community Engagement Guidelines* also include a number of supporting resources designed to provide additional background information for a number of topics.
- Show them page 61 – listing the 25 Supporting Resources.
- Tell them that they will be taking a few minutes to become familiar with just one of these resources.
- Explain that they will be working in groups and that they will be given a scenario.
- Post the URL for Activity 3 “Individual and Organizational Readiness.” Ask them to copy this URL into their browsers.
- Ask them to check that they still have their copy of the *Community Engagement Guidelines* available in their browser.
- Explain that once in their groups, participants will have about **15 minutes** to read the scenario and complete the assignment.
- Bring the group back together after about 15 minutes.
- Ask if anyone would like to give a quick takeaway from their discussion? Anything surprise them?

Wrap-Up, Final Questions & Evaluation

15 minutes

This final session provides an opportunity for participants to reflect, ask questions, and complete the workshop evaluation.

Procedure:

- Take the last few minutes to remind them that they have only started down the path towards community engagement and invite them to take some time to really dig into the *Community Engagement Guidelines*.
- Final reflection: Ask participants: 1) What two things are you going to take back to your organization? or 2) Complete this sentence: When I think of EE and Community Engagement, I ...
- Open up the floor for any final questions.
- Thank the participants for their time.
- Post the URL to the Google Form: *Guidelines Virtual Workshop Evaluation* in the chat. Ask participants to take a few minutes to complete the evaluation.