

Strategic Use and Implementation of EPA OAR Partnership and Community-Based Programs

CAAAC Work Group Charter (May 2010 Kick-Off)



Purpose: Convene a small, fast-track workgroup under the auspices of the Clean Air Act Advisory Committee (CAAAC) to provide EPA with advice and recommendations regarding the strategic use and implementation of voluntary partnership and community-based programs to achieve EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) goals.

Background: Voluntary partnerships and community-based programs are one of many tools OAR uses to protect public health and the environment. For over 20 years, OAR has used such programs to enhance and complement regulatory programs as well as to address significant problems that may not be amenable to traditional regulatory approaches. Varying in design and scope, these programs encourage and equip individuals, businesses, schools and other organizations to voluntarily achieve environmental results that might not otherwise be possible and foster a culture of going beyond the minimum requirements of law.

At the same time, OAR faces a substantial volume of regulatory work over the next several years that demands resources and attention. As a result, in 2009, OAR launched an effort to examine its current use of partnership and community-based programs and to consider how the use and implementation of these programs might be best aligned to support the air program's goals. In early 2010, OAR senior managers proposed the following principles for guiding OAR use and implementation of partnership and community-based programs. *OAR investments in partnerships and community programs must:*

- a. *Address a priority environmental problem*
- b. *Set measurable goals, collect performance information and report on environmental and public health results*
- c. *Complement (and not undermine) core regulatory and enforcement responsibilities, including filling regulatory and compliance gaps*
- d. *Enhance EPA's reputation with the public*
- e. *Justify the unique need for an EPA lead role, rather than other levels of government or other organizations*
- f. *Plan for the appropriate duration of EPA involvement – from helping convene partners, to launch and piloting of new programs, to long-term operation of a program*
- g. *Effectively leverage other resources in OAR, EPA and other organizations*
- h. *Be designed and operated with transparency and accountability*
- i. *Help build internal environmental management capacity in communities, companies and other organizations*
- j. *Comply with the EPA voluntary program guidelines and process requirements*

CAAAC Work Group Scope and Objectives: EPA is interested in soliciting advice from the CAAAC regarding the strategic use and implementation of voluntary partnership and community-based programs to achieve OAR's goals. EPA seeks advice from the CAAAC because its members represent organizations that play a role in partnership and community programs and can provide insights and recommendations from diverse perspectives on how to improve the effectiveness of OAR efforts. In particular, EPA desires input from the CAAAC on the following questions:

1. What general principles should guide OAR investments in partnership and community-based programs? (Do you have suggestions for improving the proposed principles above?)
2. What types of best practices should be considered when designing, implementing, and operating partnership programs? What best practices are relevant for community-based programs?
3. What improvements would create synergies and improve coordination across OAR's and other EPA partnership and community-based programs, including grant programs?
4. How can OAR better leverage opportunities to partner with others (e.g., other federal, state, local and tribal organizations, NGOs, industry associations, and others) to implement, operate, and evolve its partnership and community-based programs? What partnership models could enable OAR to significantly expand progress towards its goals in light of limited resources?
5. How can OAR best understand if its partnership and community-based programs are achieving results commensurate with the scale of the investment?

EPA believes that a small CAAAC work group (approximately 8-10 participants) would be appropriate to examine these questions. EPA seeks CAAAC input within 3-4 months.

Proposed Timeline:

May	<p>Recruit CAAAC work group members</p> <p>Discuss work group charter and process during CAAAC Economic Incentives and Regulatory Innovation Subcommittee meeting in Washington, DC (May 26)</p> <p>Present on and discuss work group charter and process at the Spring CAAAC meeting in Washington, DC (May 27)</p>
June/July	<p>Work group discussions via conference call (approximately 2-3 calls, including possible teleconference/web-conference presentations on selected partnership and community-based programs)</p> <p>Prepare initial draft work group report</p> <p>In-person 1-day work group meeting (late July or early August)</p>
August/Sept.	<p>Additional work group discussions, as needed (via conference call and/or in-person)</p> <p>Finalize work group report</p>
October	<p>Presentation at fall CAAAC meeting</p> <p>Finalize report based on comments from the full CAAAC</p>