



FACA ESSENTIALS GUIDE FOR MEMBERS SERVING ON FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES AT EPA

OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES AT EPA

Federal advisory committees are an important tool within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for building consensus and providing input and recommendations from EPA’s customers, partners, and stakeholders. Federal advisory committees are established by one of four authorities: Presidential authority, statutory requirement, statutory authority, and federal agency discretion. These committees are governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), created by Congress (5 U.S.C. 10) in 1972. EPA oversees numerous committees and subcommittees, which are an integral component that help advance the Agency’s key priorities and carry out its mission to protect human health and the environment. These committees play an important role by providing advice that helps EPA develop regulations, accredit laboratories, and manage research programs, among other activities. The topics addressed by these committees include pesticides, drinking water quality, air quality, rural community welfare, and children’s health. EPA holds numerous committee meetings annually—which include members representing science and technology, policy, public health, industry, academia, and tribal groups amongst other stakeholder groups—and complete a multitude of reports and advice letters.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT (FACA)

Congress passed FACA to create an orderly procedure by which federal agencies may seek collective advice from various customers, partners, and stakeholders.

- FACA establishes procedures for the management of federal advisory committees, ensures transparency of advisory committee decision-making, and ensures balanced representation
- FACA ensures that federal advisory committees convened to give group advice are accountable to the public by maximizing public access to advisory committee deliberations and minimizing the influence of special interests through balanced committee membership
- FACA seeks to reduce wasteful expenditures and improve the overall administration of federal advisory committees

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT TYPES

Your function as a committee member may differ depending on the type of appointment under which you were invited to serve. Below are the three types of member designations under the Federal Advisory Committee Act:

- **Representative** members are selected to represent the point of view of a group. Representative members may represent groups or organizations, such as industry, labor, consumers, or any other recognizable group of people having an interest in matters before the committee
- **Regular Government Employee (RGE)** members are individuals employed by the federal government. As an RGE member, you are providing your best judgment based on your professional expertise, consistent with your agency's policies ([5 U.S.C. 2105](#))
- **Special Government Employee (SGE)** members are appointed to provide the Agency with their own best independent judgment based on their individual expertise. As an SGE member, you are speaking for yourself as an expert in your field

REQUIREMENTS FOR HOLDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Each committee must have a designated federal officer (DFO) to manage the committee and attend each meeting. Meetings may not be conducted in the absence of the DFO (5 U.S.C. 10 (e))
- Committee meetings must be announced in advance and open to the public, unless designated as closed for national security, or other appropriate reasons. The public shall be provided an opportunity to voice comments to the committee (5 U.S.C. 10 (a))
- All committee documents provided to or prepared by the committee, including reports, transcripts, drafts, minutes, working papers, and agendas must be made available for public inspection and copying, unless they can be withheld under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552)
- The committees must be "balanced" in the points of view represented for the functions to be performed (5 U.S.C. 5 (b)(2))

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER

As a member of a federal advisory committee your responsibilities are to:

- Attend and participate in committee meetings
- Study materials provided in advance of the meetings
- Be willing to engage in an exchange of views and perspectives and search for consensus-based solutions
- Comply with the applicable ethics in government laws
- Cooperate with your committee's designated federal officer
- Serve on the committee for your appointed term, or if you find you cannot serve, resign from the committee
- Refrain from any language or activities that would compromise the civility of the committee
- Maintain an environment that welcomes and promotes the participation of committee members
- Contact the DFO if your affiliation or contact information changes (i.e., email, address, etc.)

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Please contact EPA's Federal Advisory Committee Management Branch:

Federal Advisory Committee Management Branch
Federal and Science Advisory Committee Division
Office of Policy and Regulatory Management
Office of the Administrator
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., MC 1601-M
Washington, D.C. 20460

Other Resources:

[List of Federal Advisory Committees at EPA](#)

[The Federal Advisory Committee Act](#)