

# NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

## Guidance for External Representatives

In your service as a representative for NACCHO on an external task force, workgroup, committee, etc., you will provide an important voice at national forums and discussions on public health. The guidance below is intended to help prepare you to represent NACCHO effectively and accurately in these settings. If you have any questions about your role, please contact your lead staff member.

### 1. Before You Go

- **Talk to your lead staff contact.** Your lead staff member is your primary contact at NACCHO. Prior to your first meeting, they will brief you on the details of your representation and provide you with a packet of related background materials. They will also review the time commitment involved, details on meeting type and frequency, length of the appointment, and if applicable, who will cover the costs of meeting attendance.
- **Remember your purpose.** In this position, will you be representing NACCHO or the experience of your local health department? Your lead staff will be able to answer this question and discuss the difference between the two. Also keep in mind that you may have been selected to serve on this group to represent a specific geographic region, jurisdictional type, or area of specialization.
- **Study Up.** Review materials that outline NACCHO's positions and priorities. Your lead staff member will provide you with:
  - ✓ *NACCHO's strategic plan*
  - ✓ *Relevant policy statements/resolutions*
  - ✓ *A list of the entire body of NACCHO policy statements/resolutions*
  - ✓ *A list of all NACCHO advisory groups*
  - ✓ *Other relevant NACCHO publications*
  - ✓ *Relevant data from the Profile Study of LHDs*

### 2. Representing NACCHO

- **On Specific Issues:**
  - ✓ Refer to resolutions/policy statements passed on the issue.
  - ✓ If there are no resolutions/policy statements addressing the issue, you can respond, "Sorry, but we don't have an official position."
- **When you are blind sided by requests for NACCHO members' views (rather than just your own) and you don't know the answer:**
  - ✓ Postpone answering the question. Example responses:
    - "I cannot comment at this time."
    - "Let me talk with my colleagues and let me get back to you."
    - "We haven't asked our membership yet."
    - "I can discuss this issue with our advisory committee."

- ✓ Don't answer their question; answer the question you wish they would have asked
- ✓ Respond with an anecdote but qualify that it is not based on hard data or just an anecdote.
- **How to communicate NACCHO stance on policies when there aren't any resolutions/policy statements on the issue:**
  - ✓ You can respond, "Sorry, we don't have an *official* position at this time."

### **3. Representing local public health**

- Speak from your experience and be sure to qualify it as such.
- Be clear in your own mind and speak about the difference between your experience and insights and NACCHO's work and positions.
- Be conscious of the geographic, jurisdictional and cultural differences between your health department and others across the country.

### **4. When You Return**

- Your lead staff member will provide you with report form for you to complete following the conference calls/in person meetings. Meeting report forms must be returned by one week following the meeting.
- Travel reimbursements (if applicable) are not processed until meeting report forms have been returned.
- If you are on a particular NACCHO advisory group, you will be asked to periodically share your experience on the external group as well as discuss any action steps. If you are not connected to a particular advisory group, then NACCHO staff will share report information with the relevant advisory group so the group can stay abreast of any developments and the scope of NACCHO's involvement in the issue area.