



ESSENTIAL 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 the EPA's diverse customers, partners, and stakeholders. These committees are governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972. The EPA manages 23 committees, and 12 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 at the agency by providing advice that helps the Agency 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. The EPA holds numerous committee meetings annually. In 2023, the agency held 74 committee meetings which included 621 members representing science and technology, policy, public health, industry, academia, tribal groups and other stakeholders and completed 42 reports. Federal advisory committees are established by one of four authorities, Presidential authority, statutory requirement, statutory authority, and Federal Agency discretion. Today, an average of 1000 federal advisory committees with more than 60,000 members advise the President and the Executive Branch on a variety of issues.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT (FACA)

Congress passed the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. 10) in 1972, to create an orderly procedure by which federal agencies may seek collective advice from diverse 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

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A NEW MEMBER

As a new 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 promotes the participation of individuals regardless of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information, prior EEO activity, status as a parent or marital status

THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF APPOINTMENTS TO FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Your functions 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 persons having an interest in matters before the committee
- **Regular Government Employee** (RGE) members are individuals employed by the federal government. As an RGE member, 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 a 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 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))

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Please contact the EPA’s Federal Advisory Committee Management and Oversight Division at 202-564-2294.

[Federal Advisory Committee Management and Oversight Division](#)
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Other Resources:

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