



## Feasibility Study: Constituent-Based Community Conversations

At the October 16, 2024 meeting, the Community Engagement Advisory Board (CEAB) advanced a proposal from Adam Gottlieb to require CEAB members to work with staff from the Office of Cradle to Career Data (Office) to co-host constituent-based Community Conversations.

Specifically, the Office would:

- Provide marketing materials for tailored Community Conversations
- Provide a Zoom platform to hold the meeting if an online venue is preferred
- Travel to the Community Conversation if it will be held in person
- Co-facilitate the Community Conversation
- Record the Community Conversation
- Post a recording of the Community Conversation to the Cradle-to-Career (C2C) website

CEAB members would be expected to co-host one Community Conversation during their three-year term, including the following activities:

- Provide recommendations on a constituency to engage through a tailored Community Conversation

- Provide recommendations on the format for engaging that constituency (online or in person)
- Advertise the Community Conversation to the specified constituency
- Assist in organizing the Community Conversation, including, but not limited to, providing a venue and resources for the conversation or providing expertise that would help to shape the event
- Co-facilitate the meeting
- Follow up on any action items that come from the Community Conversation
- Recommend key words to associate with the recording of the Community Conversation to help community members find it

The full text of the proposal can be found at:

<https://c2c.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Expansion-of-Constituent-Based-Community-Conversations.pdf>

When conducting feasibility studies, the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data considers four factors: relationships to the existing policy, protocols, and C2C workplan; governance; neutrality; and cost. Information on each aspect is included below.

### Note on Methodology

The feasibility study is based on interviews with CEAB members and the Office Communications and Data Team. Four outreach messages were sent to CEAB members between November 18, 2024 and December 12, 2024, resulting in:

- 12 completed interviews

The analysis is based on the following assumptions:

- Office staff would not be responsible for ensuring CEAB members co-host a Community Conversation. Please see the Governance section below for more information on roles, responsibilities, and future steps related to establishing accountability structures.
- CEAB member events would be hosted in partnership with Office staff to ensure consistency, compliance, alignment to the C2C workplan, and meaningful follow-through regarding information shared during the Community Conversations.
- Each year, Office staff would develop objectives, activities, and materials relevant to the C2C workplan to be used for the co-hosted Community Conversations. This would ensure topics are relevant and actionable for both participants and the Office. These materials would be used at all co-hosted Community Conversations to promote efficiency and consistency.
- Because the Office is prohibited from using funds to pay for space or food, any such costs would be underwritten by CEAB members' employers and/or secured through sponsorship or in-kind donations arranged by CEAB members. CEAB members would not be expected to expend personal funds to co-host events.
- There would be approximately five Community Conversations co-hosted by CEAB members each year. This parameter is based on the assumption that events would be staggered throughout CEAB members' three-year tenure.

## Relationship to Existing Policy, Protocols, and C2C Workplan

### Cradle to Career Act

The proposal is aligned with the Cradle to Career Act code, which specifies that:

- C2C shall: “Provide support for professional development opportunities to further policy making and to improve the functionality of the system by end users, including state agencies, schools, colleges and universities, social service providers, and students and families.”<sup>1</sup>
- The Office will “Implement communications, professional development, and technical assistance that supports data system use.”<sup>2</sup>

### CEAB Member Responsibilities and Expectations

According to the [Cradle-to-Career Governance Manual](#), the responsibility of the CEAB is to “examine whether the Office is creating strong feedback loops with data users, supporting evidence-based decision making and analytical capacity, and ensuring equitable access to actionable information.” While the proposal involves an expansion to the CEAB member expectations and responsibilities, CEAB members consistently expressed that this proposal aligned with their intended role of ensuring equitable access to the data system.

### C2C Community Engagement Framework and Workplan

Rooted in the Office's values, including transparency and collaboration, as well as [C2C's Community Engagement Framework](#), the Office hosts Community Conversations to inform development, interpretation, and awareness of the data system, and to foster an environment and culture of collaboration. Between June 2022 and August 2024, the Office hosted ten Community Conversations to engage the public through interactive webinars, along with three in-person sessions in 2024. The virtual Community Conversations are recorded and posted

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<sup>1</sup> CA Educ Code § 10860 (2022)

<sup>2</sup> CA Educ Code § 10862 (2022)

for review by the public on the C2C website at <https://c2c.ca.gov/ways-to-get-involved/community-conversations/>.

The [C2C FY 2024-2025 Workplan](#) includes “Ongoing Community Conversations, events, and engagement activities (both in-person and online) to solicit input and feedback.”

This proposal would support the goal of engaging communities across the state by working with trusted messengers to outreach to communities, enlisting their expertise in effective communications that is relevant and contextualized to their communities, and further equipping CEAB members to serve as champions and ambassadors of C2C.

Office staff and CEAB members are aligned on topics and goals for Community Conversations, including: (1) making C2C relevant to communities across the state; (2) informing key, timely elements of the data system; and (3) gathering public input and feedback on the system. CEAB members also expressed interest in hosting events that develop participants' understanding of how to use the data system in their own work.

Office staff indicate that this proposal is also aligned with their intention to provide additional Community Conversations in 2025 and beyond, including plans to host three virtual events by April 2025. Partnership with CEAB members would expand their reach to host in-person Community Conversations, which has previously been challenging because the Office cannot pay for venues or food.

### **Expanding the Communities That Are Engaged with C2C**

The Community Engagement Framework aims to reach a wide range of communities and constituencies to ensure equitable access to the data system. Current CEAB members report an ability to support outreach to constituencies that include students and families; K-12, community college, and university practitioners, administrators, and educators; state and local policy makers; and non-profit organizations. Some CEAB members also have connections to industry partners. Members who have the capacity to host in-person events would be

uniquely equipped to reach constituents unlikely to attend virtual events, such as students and families.

Current CEAB members could support outreach to the following regions: Greater Sacramento, Greater Bay Area, Central Valley, Inland Empire, and Los Angeles. Given that CEAB membership will vary and represent only a subset of regions across the state, the proposal would not be sufficient to ensure comprehensive reach across the state. Therefore, to achieve the goal of intentional engagement and geographical representation, Office staff would likely need to both support CEAB member events and provide additional, Office-led Community Conversations.

### **Future Impact on Flexibility of Community Engagement Strategies**

Creating new requirements for Office staff and CEAB members may constrain the scope of future C2C workplans by committing the Office and CEAB members to specific responsibilities. Because the Office has a very small staff (a total of 3 FTE cover all community engagement activities, with support from other staff), there are significant constraints on how many activities the Office can undertake. If co-hosting Community Conversations becomes a mandated strategy, there will be less flexibility to adapt and react to emerging community engagement needs as the data system evolves. Additionally, if staffing changes (for example, due to an unexpected open position), the Office staff may need to deprioritize other elements of the C2C workplan to ensure they are not in violation of the Governance Manual.

### **Governance**

No data providers would be affected by this proposal, so the proposal does not impact governance for the C2C Governing Board.

However, the proposal would involve amending the Governance Manual to specify a new expectation and responsibility for CEAB members. Responsibility would need to be assigned to the appropriate parties to ensure that CEAB members fulfilled their responsibilities.

Based on feedback about how work on community conversations would be divided among advisory board members, the Office should expect to work with the CEAB members to support evenly distributed efforts for these events.

## Neutrality

### Maintaining Neutrality for the Data System

Expanded Community Conversations involves low-to-moderate risk for Office neutrality, largely due to ensuring that CEAB members' do not inadvertently misrepresent the Office's or Governing Board's position on an issue.

Many CEAB members expressed a desire for reference documents on common questions and guidance on how to address comments or concerns voiced by participants. Office staff would need to train CEAB members on how to ensure neutrality when participants make political statements or ask questions on sensitive topics. The extent of preparation and training may vary based on the CEAB members; while some may have significant experience with ensuring political neutrality, others may be less familiar and need more guidance.

### Risk to CEAB Members

Expanded Community Conversations may involve low-to-moderate risk to CEAB members, particularly in clarifying their role as advisory board members versus their institutional roles. Participants may misinterpret content shared by CEAB members on behalf of the data system as official statements of their institutions.

## Cost

### Start-up Costs: The Office

Expenses would fall into two primary categories:

- Staff time to build out the project management system to manage coordination with CEAB members.
- Staff time to develop guidance, resources, and materials for CEAB

members, such as policies that clarify expectations for members and guidance related to political neutrality.

### Ongoing Costs: The Office

Ongoing costs include Office staff time on an annual basis to:

- Identify topics and learning outcomes aligned to the broader C2C workplan for Community Conversations.
- Coordinate with CEAB members to plan scheduling, format, and roles for co-hosted Community Conversations. As a reference point, coordinating, scheduling, tracking, and completing CEAB interviews for the feasibility study required 32 hours. Initial planning and coordination with CEAB members who are co-hosting Community Conversations would require between 48 - 64 hours each year.
- Develop or adapt templates, materials, and resources to use during events, including marketing materials, presentation and activity materials, facilitation guides, and evaluation surveys.
- Collect and review proposed events from CEAB members for the year, offer thought-partnership on events as needed, and follow up with CEAB members who have not yet fulfilled their co-hosting duties.

In addition, Office staff would have ongoing costs based on the events. These costs would involve the following for virtual events:

- Time for 1-2 Office staff members to co-facilitate each event, synthesize and analyze input or feedback from the events, and respond to inquiries that arose at the event.
- Funding to cover accessibility costs (such as ASL or Spanish interpreters) and language translation when not underwritten by CEAB members.
- Time and financial costs may be needed to ensure that events adhere to standards for public meetings, particularly if more than two CEAB



members participate in the event.

In-person events may involve the following additional costs:

- Funds for travel and lodging in cases where staff support in-person events.
- Physical materials when not underwritten by CEAB members.
- Time from additional Office staff in the case that in-person events are scheduled across the state during the common event windows of early fall, late winter, and spring.

Staff estimate that this proposal would require one additional authorized position at the Staff Services Manager I level. This position would serve as liaison to and support board members and lead the co-sponsored Community Conversations. In addition, depending on the event topics, needs, format, and location, the Office would need 8-10 hours of support from other team members to deliver content or co-facilitate at events.

### **Ongoing Costs: CEAB Members**

At a minimum, CEAB members would need to provide 25-40 hours to co-host an event. This includes 15-20 hours to refine session objectives with Office staff, develop an outreach list, recruit participants, communicate with attendees, prepare for their role as co-facilitator, receive training in topics such as maintaining political neutrality, and provide follow-up information. An additional 4 hours would be needed for webinars or 10-20 hours for in-person events, including organizing space, food, AV needs, and parking.

Costs to CEAB members will vary based on the size of the event and whether it will be stand-alone or integrated into existing convenings or conferences. Time and costs are likely to be higher for CEAB members who have less experience hosting events or who have to secure underwriting for events.

The majority of CEAB members shared that co-hosting Community Conversations would be moderately to highly feasible, while others acknowledged they would

not have capacity to co-host an event.

In terms of financial resources to co-host events:

- Five CEAB members reported they would be able to underwrite costs of in-person events for between 10 and 60 people. They noted that staff from their institutions would be available to help with logistics or coordination.
- Three members reported the possibility of underwriting costs depending on available funds, approval from leadership, and their ability to secure partners.
- Four members reported it would not be possible to underwrite hosting costs for a Community Conversation.

In the future, people may be dissuaded from participation on the CEAB, due to capacity or fiscal constraints.