



# Light-Touch Feasibility Study: Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model

## Recommendation from the Office of California Cradle-to-Career Data System

This proposal seeks to establish a California Cradle-to-Career Data System (C2C) Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model. The intended impact of the proposal is to increase awareness and use of the data system across the state. The proposal aims to do so by increasing the number of practitioners who are equipped to present on C2C. This request has a high cost and a moderate-to-high level of value in increasing community engagement.

The Office of California Cradle-to-Career Data System (Office) recommends that it continues to invest in onboarding and training of Community Engagement Advisory Board (CEAB) members to prepare them to participate in community engagement activities. In addition, the Governing Board (Board) could direct the Office to reallocate staff time to convene a working group of Advisory Board members to explore a Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model.

## Background

In 2025, CEAB members Dr. Alexis Takagi and Dr. Lorenzo Gamboa submitted a proposal for C2C to establish a C2C Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model. The proposal outlines a multi-phase process, beginning with a working group to develop the model, followed by training CEAB members to serve as C2C Ambassadors, expanding community engagement through ambassador-led activities, and finally preparing the next generation of C2C Ambassadors. The full text of the proposal can be found at [this link](#).

When conducting light-touch feasibility studies, the Office considers four factors: **Alignment, Impact, Cost, and Compliance.**

## Alignment with C2C Mission and Workplan

**Alignment with Mission:** *The extent that the proposal aligns with the mission of C2C*

The proposal aligns closely with C2C's mission "To be California's source of actionable data and research on education, economic, and health outcomes for individuals, families, and communities; to expand access to tools and services to navigate the education to employment pipeline." The proposal intends to expand access to C2C data tools and services by increasing the number of people who are equipped to share the data system within their own communities, thus increasing the data systems' footprint and building trust through community-centered engagement.

**Alignment with Workplan:** *The extent that the proposal aligns with the Office's current and intended work*

The proposal aligns closely with the [C2C FY 2025-2026 workplan](#) by equipping CEAB Members to support the following elements of C2C's Engagement workplan:

- Hosting community conversations, events, and engagement activities (both in-person and online) to solicit input and feedback.
- Ensuring information is trusted and useful by prioritizing transparency in communications and processes.
- Promoting equitable access to engagement activities by region and key communities.
- Prioritizing actionable information and with measurable metrics by Summer 2026.
- Developing and implementing training on the Student Pathways data story through Data Academies and Data Walks.
- Iterate on data dashboard design based on input from the public.

Currently, the Office encourages CEAB members to support the 2025-2026 community engagement activities by promoting, attending, and co-hosting Data Walks and promoting the [Lesson Plan Challenge](#). The Office also uplifts materials and resources that CEAB members develop based on their own

expertise. Additional priorities include the launch of Data Academies to prepare more practitioners, including CEAB Members, to scale Data Walks across the state. The Office's ability to implement Data Academies are constrained by current staff capacity.

The Office provides orientation and training for Board and Advisory Board members to prepare them for their roles. Orientation includes topics such as the work of the Office, administrative services overview, data programs overview, engagement overview, the C2C governance structure, Advisory Board Member roles and expectations, and a legal overview. The Office has updated orientation over the past three years based on member feedback. A key addition of the 2025 Advisory Board member orientation is the Advisory Board member orientation questionnaire, which the Office uses for targeted engagement opportunities.

## Impact

*The potential benefits, risks, and/or drawbacks on advancing the goals of C2C.*

The multi-phase C2C Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model outlined in the proposal has the potential to expand equitable access to C2C by:

- Increasing the number of trusted messengers who can deliver customized information about C2C in ways that are contextualized to specific communities and culturally relevant.
- Developing additional resources and materials to equip non-Office staff to present information about C2C and promote its use. The complexity of the data system and the mandated neutrality of the system requires training and expertise in communications, facilitation, and technical specifications to present the system accurately. The proposal suggests a year-long process to further develop resources and training that could benefit future staff, board members, and the public.
- Leveraging CEAB members' current networks to expand the Office's capacity to reach a wide range of communities and constituencies. Current CEAB members report a significant array of expertise, geographic reach, and access 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.

One barrier for the model is the capacity for CEAB members to be trained and lead engagement events. Some members may not be able to fully complete engagement activities on a regular basis due to competing priorities and varying degrees of readiness. This is a particular risk given that CEAB members are highly dedicated to public education and have many responsibilities in their professional lives. In the 2024 Feasibility Study for the CEAB Proposal: [Expanding Community Conversations](#), interviews with the CEAB indicated that while many members felt that it would be moderately to highly feasible to host an engagement event, others did not have capacity to do so. In this case, there is a risk that implementing a C2C Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model would require significant amounts of staff time to prepare C2C Ambassadors for events they do not have capacity to lead. In this scenario, staff time may be better allocated to directly hosting community engagement events.

The proposal also contains a risk to other priorities. Creating new requirements 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, there are significant constraints on how many activities the Office can undertake. If a Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model 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.

Finally, serving as C2C Ambassadors 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

**Startup Costs:** *Costs to design and launch the proposal, including both direct costs and associated staff time for the Office.*

Startup costs would primarily consist of Office staff and CEAB member time, such as:

- **Time of 2-3 CEAB members to participate in a working group**, including time for meetings and to develop materials, Ambassador Model parameters, and accountability structures.
- **Office staff time to identify and staff the working group**, including educating working group members about the workplan, data system, and current engagement efforts.
- **Office staff time to review materials, processes, and structures** created by CEAB working group members.
- **Board and Office staff time to amend the C2C Governance Manual.**  
According to the C2C [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” (page 9). The proposal would involve amending the Governance Manual to specify expanded expectations for CEAB members. Responsibility would need to be assigned to the appropriate parties to ensure that CEAB members fulfilled their responsibilities.

**Ongoing Costs:** *Costs necessary to maintain the proposed idea.*

The ongoing costs necessary to maintain the proposal are primarily staff time, printing, and event costs.

### **Ongoing costs to the Office include:**

- Providing in-depth training to CEAB Members and other Ambassadors who are new to the program on an annual, bi-annual, or tri-annual basis.
- Identifying topics and learning outcomes aligned to the broader C2C workplan for Ambassadors to present.

- Updating or adapting templates, materials, and resources to use during events, including marketing materials, presentation and activity materials, facilitation guides, and evaluation surveys.
- Printing and supplying materials to Ambassadors to use during engagement events.
- Tracking and providing follow-up as needed (e.g. for highly technical questions) for ambassador-led community engagement activities.
- Gathering feedback on C2C from Ambassadors to incorporate into future system improvements.
- Collecting and reviewing proposed events from CEAB members for the year, offering thought-partnership on events as needed, and following up with C2C Ambassadors who have not yet fulfilled their duties.
- Providing updates to the C2C Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model to incorporate feedback or other improvements on a periodic basis.

**Ongoing costs to C2C Ambassadors include:**

- Time to receive training to serve as C2C Ambassadors, including demonstrating fluency in C2C vision, mission, workplan, and governance structures.
- Time to organize and host events, prepare presentations, and complete engagement activities. Time may also be needed to connect with C2C to share feedback, input, and relay any challenges.
- Financial resources to support the hosting of in-person C2C Events, including space, food, and accessibility costs (such as ASL or Spanish interpreters).
- Technical resources to host virtual events, such as access to a Zoom account.

## Compliance

**Legal Requirements:** *Compliance with privacy laws, intellectual property rights, and any other relevant regulations.*

There are no legal concerns regarding establishing a C2C Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model.

**Scope:** *Whether the proposal is consistent with the scope of work that is described in the 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."
- The Office will "Implement communications, professional development, and technical assistance that supports data system use."

**Neutrality of the Office:** *Whether the proposal might jeopardize the Office's neutral stance.*

The Train-the-Trainer Ambassador Model proposal presents a moderate risk for Office neutrality, largely due to ensuring that C2C Ambassadors do not inadvertently misrepresent the Office's or Board's neutral position on an issue.

To guard against the risk to neutrality, significant training, including role-playing, coaching, and practice will be needed to ensure that CEAB members and future C2C Ambassadors are prepared to maintain office neutrality. Repeated training may be necessary, particularly as questions from the public may shift over time.