

Results of Training Survey Conducted of NACAA Training Committee
December 2010-January 2011
February 11, 2011

We received responses from 14 state agencies, 9 local agencies and 4 MJOs. The breakdown is as follows:

State agencies: 14 (AK, DE, FL, GA, IN, IA, KY, LA, NE, NJ, OH, OK, PA, WV)

Local agencies: 9 (Jefferson County, AL; Hillsborough County, FL; Louisville, KY (2); Dayton, OH; Hamilton County, OH; Philadelphia, PA; Shelby County, TN; Northwest Clean Air, WA)

MJOs: 4 (WESTAR (2), CenSARA and MARAMA)

Responses to Specific Questions

These only include responses from state and local agencies.

1. *Is the Training Committee meeting your current needs?*

The vast majority of state and local air agencies responded simply “yes.” A few people elaborated.

- “There seems to be a logical, organized effort and I see progress in a direction that I support. So, yes, in that respect it is meeting my needs. I’m certainly supportive of the work being done.”
- “It keeps me up-to-date with what’s going on in the training field. It also lets me see the direction that training is going in the future.”
- “Yes. I think the NACAA Training Committee calls/meetings give the states and other agencies the opportunity to have a voice in development and implementation of our National Training Strategy. Furthermore, the increase awareness of developing initiatives avoids duplication of effort and helps ensure a unified effort whenever possible.”

However, a few said no or were equivocal.

- “No-and while I understand that the NTS the committee is addressing is important, I need to get staff trained and learn of more training now. I find more value in my calls with [my regional consortia group].”
- One person said she had not been participating for 6 months and so could not answer the question, which I interpret as the committee is not meeting her needs.
- “We always need more training, but what we are offered has seemed to be useful.”
- “I am pleased to see Training Committee is working on updating courses, evaluating new formats for courses; looking beyond just classroom formats is important especially while many face budget constraints. But, it seems the Committee is working primarily on updating basic courses. Updating or even creating new, more advanced level courses or courses on more recent items (Greenhouse Gases) – which is what we need, doesn't seem to be high on the list of priorities for the Training Committee.”

2. *If you are regularly participating in committee calls and/or meetings, what are the items of most interest to you that keep you involved?*

Five state and two local agencies responded that they participate regularly on the calls. Most said they listened for upcoming training opportunities and what courses are being updated and their status. One expressed interest in following the National Training Strategy Action Plan and LMS. One wanted to ensure good standardized course material.

3. *If you are not regularly participating in committee calls and meetings, could you provide information as to the reasons so that we might look at adjusting our approach, if necessary, to better meet the needs of the members?*

Nine state and six local agencies responded that they do not participate regularly (or ever) on the call. A few said they didn't participate because they obtained the information they needed from regional group calls. A few said they didn't participate because other duties (meetings, field work, etc.) conflicted with the calls. One said there was no real reason for not participating, but since it was difficult to attend out-of-state training, she didn't get on the calls. Other reasons cited:

- The calls are too long and it takes a really long time to get things done. This was echoed by another who said there is lots of talking and not a lot of substance.
- The agendas are not of interest. I think the calls should be broken into two segments, as we have discussed before – part for MJOs only and part for state/local agencies. (This was echoed by another who said, "If pressed for time, it is easier to have the agency business "front-loaded" in the agenda for me and others I would imagine.") I'm also one of the few local agencies who have participated.
- "I took a promotion last May (I am now our Training Coordinator and Grants Manager) and have been on a steep learning curve since then. I have been paying attention to the work of the committee but haven't really felt 'qualified' yet to offer insight. However, I am very pleased with the items the committee is working on. In particular, APTI course updating and training for air quality professionals. I jumped into the training coordinator position here without prior training. Nationwide guidelines and current APTI courses would have been great especially in light of little local program guidance. I do plan to participate more."
- The Committee work seems to be going well, so since I'm pressed for time, I don't participate. But if you need my help, maybe I'll participate.
- "Our agency does not regularly participate in the committee's activities, however we believe its purpose to be beneficial. In an effort to reinvigorate the group, it may be worthwhile to establish annual goals and obtain buy-in at the air director's level. The desired result would be increased committee participation at the principle staff level. The goals would need to be broad and primarily geared toward offering training over the course of the year in areas that affect the majority of the member agencies, and based on subjects such as technological advances, rule implementation, impacts of new standards, etc."
- "I was participating often in the past – but the agenda was always the same thing (MJO updates, what EPA wasn't accomplishing). I know calls have focused more recently on the Training Strategy... I'm not sure I have much input here (seems like NACAA, CARB & EPA already have it planned out. When I was participating regularly it was because I felt what I had to contribute as a state was being listened to and that attempts were being made to make sure training was covering the needs of everyone."

4. *Are our communications adequately meeting your needs? (Web page, e-mails, committee calls)*

Seventeen respondents answered yes.

- One person said these communications is how they get most of their information about webinars and classes.
- One said the agenda “presentation attachments allow for us to know of specific initiatives and select those calls which are of more important to our agency needs.”
- One commented, though, that the recent calls have focused on the National Training Strategy Action Plan, which this person is not involved in.
- One person said the webpage could be updated more often.

Three people were equivocal.

- “I have referred to web pages for descriptions, but have had to request MJO to see if they could clarify differences in APTI and CARB specific related course to see if one were more entry level and the other version was actually different enough to merit an advanced designation so as not to have too much overlap.”
- “I didn’t know the JTC had a Web page, but the emails you send are very helpful in getting information out. The calls benefit the MJOs, but I don’t see a lot of value for agencies.

One said no, but referred to committee calls rather than other communications.

- “My past experiences were there was a lot of talking but very little of substance came from the meetings that I had attended and my attention went elsewhere.”

5. *Are our committee priorities and activities adequately meeting your agency’s needs?*

Eighteen responded yes.

- “I think the National Training Strategy and Learning Management System is a significant step in meeting the needs of the state and agencies.”
- One said they could always use more training.
- “Yes and wish continued success moving forward for each of us as we will need courses for the eventual new hires and for those being asked to do other tasks with the associated cross-training that will be needed.”
- One praised the emphasis on web-based training.
- “Yes it is. I was concerned about the future of training with EPA pulling out resources over the last few years. I think the LMS is the answer to that issue. As long as EPA agrees to maintain the LMS, and the MJOs use it and contribute to it, I think that training will continue for years to come. Also, our efforts to upgrade the classroom classes and SI courses is extremely important. Many were outdated because of the advancement of technology and new regulations.”

One was equivocal. “In the long term, yes. We need a NTS and we need commitment from EPA. Short term, immediate training needs, no.”

Two said no.

- In addition to her concern about only updating basic courses, another concern is that “it doesn't seem like the Training Committee is really all that interested in what the states have to say. It seems like only MJO & CARB are the players. “

- “One thing I would like to see is the Training committee take over some functions that had previously been handled by APTI staff (which no longer [exists] practically). A depository for training materials and a schedule/budget to update APTI classroom materials.”

6. *How likely is it that you would be able to attend a face-to-face meeting of the committee in 2011? Choose from certain, likely, 50:50, unlikely, definitely not, or not sure. Please answer assuming travel costs/expenses are not a consideration.*

See below.

7. *Please let us know how likely it is that you would be able to obtain approval to travel to a face-to-face meeting 1) if there were no subsidies or 2) if NACAA covered some expenses (registration and/or hotel and/or plane travel)*

Most people answered with travel restrictions in mind.

- Six state/local agencies said they would likely or certainly attend and travel assistance from NACAA was not critical.
- Four said they were interested in attending but it was contingent (or it would be very helpful) to have travel assistance.
- Five said it was unlikely they would attend, even if there were travel assistance.
- Three were uncertain they would attend, and they could only attend if there were travel assistance.
- Two responded that their attendance depended on the substance of the meeting, the dates and whether they thought their participation would contribute to the meeting results. For example, one said “Really it depends on the need expressed by the more involved committee members. I haven’t heard that there’s a need that my attendance would meet. I don’t mean that to sound as cold as it might via email – but is there something that my attendance would accomplish? I can’t justify the expense without that component.”
- Two responded that it depended on whether the meeting was close by.
- One responded that it was uncertain she would attend and even if she got travel assistance, it would be unlikely she would get approval.