
Introduction to this Guide

Purpose of the Guide

Community Voices is a program that develops groups of community leaders who can work together over time, identify important community issues and solve problems related to those issues in their communities and county. The purpose of this guide is to introduce your organization (Cooperative Extension) to the Community Voices program and to the basic training the staff may need to understand the Community Voices program philosophy and content as well as the participatory training strategies that are central to the training at all levels of the program. This guide should enable your organization to see the benefits of the Community Voices program for their staff, for the community and county to work on future issues.

This guide is one of three manuals in the Community Voices training program series. The other two manuals in the series are (1) the two-volume manual, "Community Voices: Participatory Training Guide for Community Co-facilitators" and (2) "Community Voices: Program Implementation Guide."

Objectives of the Guide

This guide should enable the staff of an organization (such as Cooperative Extension) to do the following:

1. Describe the four components of the Community Voices program;
2. Describe the two goals of the Community Voices program for communities and counties;
3. Describe three possible benefits of the Community Voices program for your organization (Cooperative Extension);
4. List the the key skills the staff of the organization need in order to implement the program successfully;
5. List the steps in program implementation;
6. Identify three characteristics or skills trainers of your organization must acquire to train other staff members to use the participatory training philosophy and strategies that are at the heart of Community Voices; and
7. Describe the staff and material resources needed to start and implement the Community Voices program in the community and county.

How to Use the Guide

There are two main parts of the guide: (1) an introduction to the Community Voices program, and (2) a workshop plan designed to introduce your organization (Cooperative Extension) to participatory training strategies. This introduction will give you some basic information about the program including goals, benefits, and resources needed. The largest segment of the manual is the four-part workshop plan to train the staff of your organization. The training outline at the beginning of each section will provide you with a sense of what the training will focus on. This actual content of the workshop sessions is designed to be delivered by a team of trainers who have experience with the training of learner-centered training strategies, the Community Voices program and participatory training strategies.