

Action Committee Subcommittee Guidance

Given recent, increased focus on using subcommittees for Action Committee implementation projects, we compiled the following guide to help you organize your work. Remember these are only suggestions to help you move forward and can be adapted to fit the needs and scope of your project.

This is a guide to initiatives inspired by the CDP or coordinated by the CDP Action Committee. Though some steps naturally come before others, many can be pursued simultaneously.

Subcommittees as a “Permitted Interaction Group” per Sunshine Law

The Sunshine Law provides some specific guidance for the creation of subcommittees, which requires a minimum of 3 separate meetings as noted below:

- AC members on a subcommittee must be less than a quorum (4 AC max) but can include any number of outside community members.
- The scope of the subcommittee must be defined at an AC meeting (1st meeting).
- The subcommittee may choose to update the AC as many times as needed prior to presenting the final recommendations.
- Subcommittee findings and recommendations are presented at a subsequent or 2nd meeting.
- If action is desired from the deliberation and decision-making must occur at a 3rd (or later) meeting. This gives the AC and the public time to digest findings before a decision is made.

A Network Approach

It is important to keep in mind that a network approach to community-based, collaborative resource management can be most effective and efficient.

In contrast to centralized, hierarchical, bureaucratic organization, networks are more informal, flexible, and decentralized. Efficiency is enhanced through distributed power and problem-solving, and effectiveness is improved through autonomous but coordinated action. Networks are not about control – they are about value-added coordination and communication.

Ideas and Guidance

Take from here what is helpful... add, change, or disregard items in this list as you please.

Remember: this is your project, and you can design it as it suits you!

Note: The [Ka'ū](#) and [Hāmākua](#) CDPs have **Community Action Guides. It is highly recommended that you look through these for inspiration/direction (that includes other ACs who can adapt these ideas to your project!)*

Step 1. Establish a Topic of Interest, or Focus

- a. Decide if your interest is specific enough or if you would like to further define that focus through a group process.
- b. For Place-Based Initiatives:
 - i. Clarify the site(s) that will be the focus, relative to regional priorities for protecting and/or managing specific resources and areas.
 - ii. Choose an appropriate scale – neighborhood, street, parcel, or a watershed, forest, forest/agriculture interface, riparian corridor, trail corridor, section of coastline, parcels, sites (cultural, recreational), etc.
 - iii. Maintain an ahupua'a-based perspective and focus, as appropriate.

Step 2. Get Organized

- a. Establish a small, core group of people who:
 - i. Understand and are passionate about the issue.
 - ii. Are able to work with the diversity of people who want to be involved.
 - iii. Can identify the role of local, state, and federal government agencies.
 - iv. Are committed to putting the necessary time in.
- b. Create a plan to engage a larger group that has a clear purpose (to educate, gather feedback, build support, etc.).
- c. Identify your group's place and role within existing community-based, collaborative initiatives.

Step 3. Firmly Ground the Effort in the Community

- a. Ground the program in the cultural context of your area of focus.
- b. Be open, transparent, and inclusive of a range of different perspectives.
- c. Consistently seek greater public involvement.
- d. Cultivate community ownership.

Step 4. Strengthen Collaboration and Coordination

- a. Identify the full range of stakeholders – those individuals, families, groups, organizations, and agencies who have a “stake” in your program, whether you agree with them about everything or not.
- b. Invite stakeholders to get involved or collaborate
 - i. Start with local groups.
 - ii. Engage other partners, like nonprofits.
 - iii. Embrace agency support.
 - iv. Identify a community ombudsman or liaison to government.

Step 5. Craft a Strategic, Achievable Plan - The subtasks with lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, ...) are merely examples and can vary greatly based on the specific project.

- a. Establish a clear vision like what the community wants in the future as it pertains to the project or activity.
- b. Collect information like review historical and current conditions, including current activities, threats, obstacles, available resources, and opportunities.
- c. Establish a clear understanding of the root causes of the threats to resources, including socio-economic factors.
- d. Set goals and objectives to achieve the vision, which could include ideas like the following:
 - i. Document, preserve, and perpetuate traditional management knowledge and practice.
 - ii. Advance knowledge and understanding, supporting, and supplementing scientific research with traditional knowledge.
 - iii. Promote inter-generational exchange, providing opportunities for kupuna to share their knowledge and wisdom and for youth to get involved.
 - iv. Protect, restore, and maintain cultural, historic, ecological, trail, and recreational resources.

- v. Identify preferred access trail/road corridors and alignments.
- vi. Increase local access to cultural, natural, scenic, subsistence, and recreational resources.
- vii. End misuse of resources from overharvesting, illegal ATV use, invasive species, unsanitary waste disposal, etc.
- e. Identify the range of strategies that could be pursued to achieve objectives, possibly including:
 - i. Make resource preservation recommendations to other community-based resource management groups as well as to Federal, State, and local decision-makers.
 - ii. Organize oral history or videography projects.
 - iii. Seek formal designations for appropriate sites, including registration on the state or federal historic register or designation as an official State or Federal trail.
 - iv. Acquire high-value sites that are privately-owned, either fee simple or by easement (ex: PONC nomination).
 - v. Identify appropriate uses of natural and cultural resources and sites to perpetuate Hawaiian and local culture.
 - vi. Participate in planning activities hosted by other agencies, provide feedback from your CDP, raise awareness, and create space for collaborative efforts.
 - vii. Gather community feedback on an issue to compile and report to decision makers
 - viii. Track/monitor CDP implementation, identify where things are being done and not done.
 - ix. Collaborate with relevant departments to draft a Financial Impact Statement (FIS) for inclusion of a project in the County Capital Improvement Program Budget.
 - x. Advocate through education (for example the Puna ACs “Building in Puna” brochure).
 - xi. Raise awareness through information, education, and outreach activities.
 - xii. Host or join volunteer projects (e.g., maintenance, restoration, cleanups, etc.).
 - xiii. Host cultural and educational events.
 - xiv. Establish demonstration projects.
 - xv. Hold fundraisers.
- f. Identify and prioritize preferred strategies.
- g. Develop a detailed work plan of activities, including action steps, timeline, responsible party, and resources needed and available.
- h. Develop a project budget.
- i. Identify necessary resources (money, expertise, connections, equipment, etc.) and come up with a plan to cover these needs.
 - i. Fundraisers.
 - ii. Grant opportunities.
 - iii. Leverage the skillsets, networks, and strengths of your group members.
 - iv. Query your group for equipment needs (i.e. “does anyone in our network have an ArcGIS license, a good laptop, a projector screen, etc.”).
 - v. Are there decisionmakers or topic experts we may want to bring into the fold (Councilmembers or other elected officials, agency heads, university student/researcher, etc)?
- j. Identify funding and other resources to support plan implementation.

Step 6. Establish a Structure Tailored to the Partners and the Goals (i.e., form follows function)

- a. Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and accountability among partners and supporters, taking care to align strengths and roles.
 - i. Ex: A group chair (or establish a networked leadership approach), points of contact for various stakeholders or other allies, a secretary, group members responsible for a particular aspect of the project, etc.

Step 7. Build Capacity

- a. Secure assistance and resources.
 - i. Leverage partnerships, affiliations, and funding.
 - ii. Secure financial and other resources.
- b. Create sustainable organizational and leadership systems.

Step 8. Implement the Plan

- a. Remain flexible, allowing for improvements in techniques and for shifts in approaches as conditions change.
- b. Report back to the AC along the way providing updates or identifying roadblocks.
- c. Document the process and outcomes.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. How do I create a subcommittee?

A. First notify the chair of your idea, so they put it on the next meeting agenda. You can create a subcommittee at a regular AC meeting by proposing your topic, ideally via a motion: *"I move to create a subcommittee..."* you would follow that initial language with the subcommittee scope/purpose: *"to draft a PONC nomination for shoreline parcel x."* Your subcommittee scope could be simple, *"I move to create a subcommittee to put together a project plan to protect the shoreline parcel x."* The discussion to follow could involve refining/broadening the scope (and should include identifying up to 4 AC members to serve on it) but the key point here is that your subcommittee purpose could be as broad as identifying a topic you're passionate about and creating a hui to define the next steps.

Q. Can a community member be on a subcommittee?

A. Yes and you can include as many community members as desired - they do not count toward the 4 members limit that AC members have.

Q. Do community members need to be identified as subcommittee members during an AC meeting?

A. Not necessarily. It is up to you if you want to identify specific community members as subcommittee members at an AC meeting. Know that you do not have to wait for an AC meeting to add community members to your subcommittee or invite them into your process.

Q. Do we need to elect a chair? Could a community member serve as chair?

A. Not necessarily. How you decide to organize your group is completely up to you, and yes, a community member could be a subcommittee chair.

Q. Can our subcommittee fundraise? Can we apply for grants?

A. , There are some caveats to be aware of based on the AC's affiliation with the County. So, please contact staff to discuss this further if your project requires funding.

Q. Are subcommittee members able to contact each other outside of regular AC meetings?

A. Yes! And that is a major reason why you may want to make one. You can talk over email, Zoom, phone calls, texts, go out for coffee together, etc. If you want to collaborate with other outside groups by attending their meetings, that's fine as well. The point of caution would be to keep your communications on topic and don't talk about Action Committee business outside of the scope of your project.

Q. Do we have to follow Sunshine Law (like posting agendas, minutes, etc)?

A. Nope! But it is recommended to keep some notes of your meetings.

Q. Does that mean we don't have to include members of the public?

A. We certainly encourage you to be as open, transparent, and inclusive as possible! However, we also understand the need to workshop in small group settings, especially while you find your footing at the beginning of your project. Your meetings do not have to be public, the products your subcommittee creates however will be once presented to the full AC.

Q. Are we allowed to collaborate with other groups, reach out to County officials, or host public meetings?

A. Yes to all of the above! There is nothing in our rules that prevent you from engaging with outside groups and the community around you, in fact we encourage you to reach out and build a network around your project!

Our only request is that you share any publications (flyers, letters, reports, etc.) produced by your subcommittee so that we can add them to our public records for transparency. We can also send them out to our electronic email lists as needed.

Q. Can I loop in an AC member who is not in the subcommittee? Our AC chair is not on the subcommittee, should I keep them informed?

A. Any updates to other AC members, including the chair, that are not in the subcommittee, must only take place at a regular AC meeting and noted on the agenda. Updates outside an AC meeting are not permitted.

Q. I think I understand the rules, however I'm still worried about doing something that "crosses the line" and creates a problem either with Sunshine Law or County rules, etc. What exactly do I need to be careful of?

A. At a basic level...

- 1) Don't discuss your subcommittee business with AC members who are not on your subcommittee;
- 2) Don't discuss AC business that is outside of the topic/scope of your subcommittee; and
- 3) Don't claim that your subcommittee represents or speaks on behalf of the Planning Department or your AC.

In Conclusion

While we have tried our best to cover the basics in this guide, but there will likely be other questions that pop up as you go.

Please feel free to contact our CDP Team for assistance. We are available to help you brainstorm directions for your project, connect you with stakeholders and officials (as applicable), and provide advice for you along the way.

With all this in mind, good luck... imua... and plan on!