



# CONSORTIUM HANDBOOK

An instructional guide for Consortium Coordinators  
looking to start, maintain, or improve their CPSE-  
supported Consortium.

2025



## Contents

Getting Started – Creating a Consortium .....	2
Consortiums Defined .....	2
Steps to Creating a Consortium .....	2
Consortium Coordinator Expectations .....	3
Consortium Meeting Expectations .....	3
Planning a Meeting .....	4
Agendas .....	6
Scheduling Meetings .....	6
Maintaining Member Contacts .....	8
Meeting Technologies .....	8
Consortium Governance .....	9
Budget Considerations .....	9
Getting Stronger – Maintaining and Improving Your Consortium .....	10
Maintaining Contacts .....	10
Recruiting New Contacts .....	10
Sending Effective Invites .....	11
Meeting Activity Ideas .....	11
Managing a Web-Based or Hybrid Meeting .....	13
Time Management .....	16
Succession Planning for Coordinators .....	16
Post-Meeting Communications .....	17
Other Ways to Get Involved .....	18
Resources and Appendix .....	20
Agenda Templates and Examples .....	20
Meeting Templates and Examples .....	26
Email Examples .....	28
Contact Management Methods .....	31
Group Discussions/Ideas/Activities .....	32
Icebreakers .....	34
CPSE Resources and Offerings .....	35



## Getting Started – Creating a Consortium

### Consortiums Defined

Consortiums are CPSE-supported regional groups created to provide local support and assistance to:

- Fire and emergency services agencies seeking to improve their delivery of services
- Agencies engaged in the self-assessment process
- Agencies that have made the accreditation processes a part of their culture
- Fire and emergency services personnel looking to network regionally
- Fire and emergency services personnel seeking professional designations, career guidance, and mentoring

Each Consortium has at least one volunteer Consortium Coordinator to plan, schedule, and manage the Consortium for their region. All current Consortiums with regions covered and Coordinator contacts can be found [HERE](#).

Through hybrid, in-person, or virtual meetings, CPSE Consortiums engage regional professionals in information sharing regarding accreditation and credentialing processes as well as hyper local issues. Conversations and training topics surround continuous improvement goals, career achievement and goal setting, challenges, and updates on CPSE programs and services. An agency or individual need not be from an accredited agency or a designee to participate.

### Steps to Creating a Consortium

Prior to starting the journey of creating a new Consortium, please consider the current list of active Consortiums [HERE](#). Current Coordinators will often welcome additional leadership assistance at any point. If you wish to create a Consortium for a smaller area within one that already exists, it is strongly recommended to host communications first between that Coordinator and the CPSE Community Experience Manager.

If a region is not currently represented by a Consortium and you have interest in volunteering to coordinate:

1. Think through the state(s), province(s) and/or region(s) you wish to represent
2. Contact the CPSE Community Experience Manager
3. Develop a sample schedule for a meeting with your desired length
4. Develop a meeting schedule for the year with consideration if you will be hybrid, in-person, or virtual based

The CPSE Community Experience Manager will assist you with creating a contact list to send invitations for your first few meetings. CPSE will also announce the creation of the Consortium



on its website and social media pages. The CPSE Community Experience Manager will maintain close contact with needed support and resources.

## Consortium Coordinator Expectations

The most critical person in a consortium is the individual who accepts the role of Consortium Coordinator. This individual assumes the responsibility to schedule meetings and plan activities that will encourage more people to join the consortium over time. While not required, it is strongly recommended for the Consortium to have at least one additional coordinator to assist the primary Coordinator. This ensures continuity of programs and activities, evens workload, and prepares new leaders to take on roles within the Consortium.

Here is a sample list of responsibilities of a Consortium Coordinator:

- Maintain regular contact with Consortium members to inform of general CPSE information like local courses and Consortium meeting dates
- Build and nurture relationships with members
- Schedule meetings, recruit speakers or presenters for educational components
- Maintain member contact lists and meeting technologies as necessary
- Chair, lead, and manage meetings whether in-person, hybrid or virtual
- Inform CPSE of meeting dates and times as soon as possible for CPSE attendance
- Develop agendas for meeting content and member awareness
- Distribute CPSE educational workshop flyers when local
- Facilitate engagement between members and CPSE; serve as a CPSE ambassador
- Promote accreditation, credentialing, technical advising, and other continuous improvement processes through discussion and educational content

Coordinators are also expected to attend quarterly Consortium Coordinator workshop meetings for continuing education, open dialogue and idea sharing between coordinators, and to provide feedback to CPSE.

## Consortium Meeting Expectations

Consortium meeting lengths and frequency are at the discretion of the Coordinator and/or Consortium by-laws if applicable. For each meeting, it is expected a Consortium will:

- Start and end on time
- Perform introductory roundtables of members
- Provide time (30-45 minutes) for a live update from a CPSE representative
- Provide a speaker for an educational/training presentation or host a group discussion relating to a continuing education area
- Allow for networking time and discussion
- Provide the next Consortium meeting date at the end of each meeting



Consortium Coordinators can set the expectations for their meetings through open communication with their members. Some tips for this include:

- Creating and sharing agendas prior to meetings
  - Include discussion topics/questions ahead of time for attendees to prepare
- Setting designated discussion times with established topics
- Providing an open introduction to go over the agenda
- Establishing and nurturing relationships with members through recognition, humor, and conversation

Coordinators will also have to communicate expectations for the host agency in the situation of in-person and hybrid meetings. Ensure you are aware of the technology requirements you will need and pass that on clearly to your contact at the host agency. Arrive early at the location to set up the technology so the meeting may start on time without technical delays.

Host agencies often appreciate the chance to share a few words of introduction to their location and their experiences with CPSE processes. Check with the agency representative ahead of time to determine if this is something they would like to do and incorporate it into the agenda. Be sure to thank your host agency for their time and space, especially if they are providing refreshments or a presentation.

## Planning a Meeting

Meeting structure, length, and frequency are at the discretion of the Coordinator and/or the Consortium by-laws if applicable. Some Consortiums choose all-day meetings with a break for a networking lunch (provided by host agency or vendor speaker), while others choose meeting lengths from 1-3 hours scheduling around traveling distances for in-person considerations or mealtimes. Other options still may include alternating longer meetings once or twice a year for in-person intentions with shorter virtual meetings other times during the year. Having dates and locations for 2-3 meetings in advance encourages participants to place them on the calendar in advance and increases attendance.

Here are some pros and cons on meeting lengths as determined by current Coordinators:

- All-day meetings encourage in-person attendance, but require steeper planning time
- Shorter virtual or hybrid meetings are easier to plan, but may result in low attendee engagement; shorter in-person meetings may not encourage travel
- Planning hybrid or in-person meetings to end near lunch can inspire attendees to network together after during a meal nearby
- Planning hybrid or in-person meetings after lunch helps ensure in-person travelers have sufficient travel time

Your Consortium's meeting length and frequency can be flexible as the Consortium grows; solicit feedback from your members to help decide this at each meeting to determine what is



and is not working. Here are some considerations to keep in mind as you determine these aspects:

- Location and timing of local conferences – Chiefs conferences or other related events in your regional area can be a great time to reserve a room or find a host agency nearby as many attendees will be traveling already to that location
- Location and timing of CPSE workshops – keep an eye on the CPSE QIFES schedule for agencies hosting in your region and inquire about hosting a Consortium meeting before or after workshop days
- Distance of traveling in-person attendees – how far your members need to travel will impact the timing and meeting lengths you have available to you
- Hybrid structures – hybrid meetings may be harder to start on time as you wait for in-person RSVPs; consider starting the full meeting online 30 minutes later than the established start time when ready to start items on the agenda
- Virtual structures – lengthier meetings may suffer from screen fatigue and disassociation tendencies
- In-person structures – ensure to allow enough time for networking chatter, bio breaks, and the probability of late arrivals
- Firmly established schedules – setting by-laws or schedule frequency to a regular week/day and time each quarter will set easy expectations for members to place on their calendars in advance

The components of your meeting that you choose to include will also affect length. As you may recall, the expected components of a meeting include:

- Introductory roundtables of members
- Live update from a CPSE representative
- A speaker for an educational/training presentation or group discussion relating to a continuing education area
- Networking time and open discussion

Introductions often take longer than expected – it is recommended to allow at least 30 minutes for these to take place depending on the number of attendees. These roundtables are often most successful when participants are prompted to provide:

- Name, role, and agency
- Agency status in accreditation (if applicable)
- Updates on their accreditation process cycle (if applicable)
- Number of designees in their agency and those newly conferred
- A “fun” question to break the ice such as:
  - “What was your dream job as a kid?”
  - “What was your last TV binge?”



Ensure that roundtables include all virtual participants when hosting virtual or hybrid meetings. Placing these questions on your agenda in advance allows attendees time to prepare.

Providing time for a CPSE representative to provide an update is an important aspect of Consortium meetings. Allow 30-40 minutes for this update to occur either virtually or in-person. If you have asked a CPSE staff member to also provide a continuing education presentation, allot an additional 30-40 minutes on top of the update time. CPSE updates are not only a great way for members to stay current with programs and offerings, but for members to provide feedback and ask questions directly to staff.

Time allotted for a speaker or group activity may be best determined by the content itself and the other aspects of the meeting you wish to include. Networking time can be as simple as starting agenda items 15-30 minutes after the meeting start time or placing open discussion prompts on the agenda to encourage networking exchange.

See the Resources and Appendix section for more on meeting planning, activities, and templates.

## Agendas

Agendas are not only a great template to help you plan, but they inform participants of the details of the meeting, anticipated discussions, and materials needed. If you wish to host a group discussion on a certain SAM category, for example, informing members in advance will allow them to prepare their documents and be ready to share their thoughts and ideas in a fruitful exchange.

Agendas should contain the following:

- Meeting date, location, time, and link (if applicable)
- Meeting components with prompts if needed
  - Roundtables, discussion items, educational presentation
- Old business updates
- Next meeting date, location, and time
- Upcoming regional CPSE educational opportunities

See the Resources and Appendix section for agenda templates and examples.

## Scheduling Meetings

Once you have determined your meeting type, location (if necessary), length and contacts, it is time to schedule the meeting. When choosing the dates for your meetings, consider the following:



- Regional and national conference dates – consider scheduling at or near a regional conference where your members will be congregated; you also may want to avoid scheduling during national conferences when attendees may be away
  - Examples: FRI, TSI, CRRL, IAFF ALTS, IAFF Convention, IAFF Redmond, FDIC, software vendor conferences (ESO etc.)
- Holidays – not all departments hold the same holiday schedule, and many individuals may take advantage of three-day weekends to extend vacations; avoid federal holidays
- CPSE Workshops – if a workshop is being hosted in your region, consider asking the host agency to also host a Consortium meeting the day before the workshop
- CPSE Conferences – CPSE will provide rooms for those wishing to host an in-person meeting at the Excellence Conference; the same can be arranged for the location of the Summer Symposium
- Your members – if you're not sure, you can always ask for feedback! Some dates may be best determined by host agency availability as well if hybrid/in-person

Once you are ready to send invitations, ensure your contact lists are complete, and you have an agenda ready for the meeting. Invitations are typically sent by e-mail direct from the Coordinator, or member of the team that has that task assigned. Some Consortia also have e-mail domains set up for the Consortium itself and use this as one main administrative e-mail address and distribution list center.

Invitation e-mails should contain the following:

- Consortium name
- Date, location, time
- Virtual link if applicable
- Agenda for meeting
- Calendar invitation

Utilizing the calendar blocking function with your e-mail invitation has a twofold benefit. When an attendee "accepts" the calendar invite, you may be able to see or receive notification of this RSVP. Additionally, the calendar block reminds the attendee of the meeting and assists in their ability to save time to attend in their schedule.

Sending personalized invitations and regular e-mail announcements and reminders are a great way to encourage attendance. Consider using an RSVP method and follow up with those who have not responded prior to the date.

You may request a list of newly registered agencies or conferred designees from CPSE at any time. This list can be used to send personalized invitations inviting and introducing these individuals to your Consortium to help expand your contact list reach.





## Maintaining Member Contacts

Once you have decided upon a meeting length and frequency, you will need a contact list to send invitations to. The CPSE Community Experience Manager will assist with establishing a list of contacts for regional agencies and designees to start with for new consortiums; the Manager may also assist in sending invitations as needed. Established Consortiums are encouraged to receive updated CPSE contact lists for their regions once or twice a year to invite new participants that may be new to the community.

Coordinators are responsible for maintaining their own distribution lists based on attendees for their meetings and adding new members as needed. CPSE can assist in this area with the utilization of its Zoom platform if Coordinators elect to use it (more on this [HERE](#)).

CPSE can also set up a SharePoint page for your Consortium where members can exchange contact information, documents, and more. Contact lists can be maintained here as well as agendas and other relevant items.

If your Consortium does not yet have a SharePoint page set up or would like to explore the CPSE Zoom Portal, please contact the CPSE Community Experience Manager, or learn more about these in the Resources and Appendix section.

## Meeting Technologies

Virtual options can be scheduled in a variety of platforms like GoToWebinar, Zoom, Skype, or Teams. What you choose to use for your Consortium will be determined by what you have access to and what works best for your members.

CPSE provides access to its [Zoom Registration Portal](#) for Consortiums. This option is available to help alleviate the administrative load of Coordinators but is not required. The CPSE Community Experience Manager can set up your meetings in Zoom with the following benefits:

- Registration required for each participant, enhancing contact lists
  - CPSE will pull registration and attendee reports to build and expand your distribution list after each meeting
  - You can choose to ask for additional information at registration
- Host privileges shared between CPSE and the Consortium
  - You will not need to wait for a CPSE representative to start or end a meeting; it can be set to share these privileges with Coordinators as well
- Publicly facing registration page linked to CPSE website
  - Allows participants to find you on their own while they peruse CPSE website for information
- Free, advanced Zoom features
  - Polls, surveys, Q&A and more options available to you at no charge
- Invitations can be sent by CPSE directly if desired



Host agency determinations should also include technology availability. If hosting hybrid, it is important to ensure the host agency has access to video and microphones for those in the room to see and be seen by online participants. The coordination team should arrive at the host location early to confirm capabilities and help navigate technological issues.

## Consortium Governance

Consortiums at a minimum level need a Consortium Coordinator to lead and schedule meetings, determine content, and maintain communication with members, though it is strongly recommended to have at least two coordinators per Consortium. To assist with succession and attrition, some Consortiums choose to introduce governing elements such as by laws and officer roles.

Benefits to a governance structure include improved succession planning, clear management expectations, and the use of a team of individuals to accomplish tasks rather than a single individual. Challenges may include the need for more frequent recruitment and a misinterpretation of or restrictions caused by by-laws. While governance structures are not a requirement of Consortiums, here are some examples you may consider for your own use-case to improve operations and set expectations:

- Coordinator and Co-Coordinator(s) divide tasks by strength
- Coordinator/Chair, Co-Coordinator/Vice-Chair, Secretary defined officer roles
- Defined officer roles with term limits
- Defined officer roles with term limits and associated succession plan
- By-laws that establish regular meeting dates and times (1<sup>st</sup> week of each quarter at 10am etc.)
- By-laws that establish regular meeting locations or method for choosing and rotating hosts

If you choose any governance options for your Consortium, it is important for these to be written out and shared in a location all members can view for understanding. See the Resources and Appendix section for governance examples.

## Budget Considerations

Most Consortiums operate without a budget or have a need for financial lines. Some groups choose to collect small dues to purchase lunch or snacks for meetings. If this is something your Consortium would like to do, consider electing a Treasurer to maintain, track, and ensure proper use of these funds. CPSE does not provide monetary resources to Consortiums.



# Getting Stronger – Maintaining and Improving Your Consortium

## Maintaining Contacts

Clean, effective contact management is one of the best ways to ensure attendance at meetings and gain successful RSVPs. CPSE offers several resources to assist in this, including:

- CPSE Zoom Registration Portal – this Zoom portal requires registration of your attendees, which allows for accurate capture of emails and names to be added to distribution lists. CPSE will maintain and update your distribution lists after each meeting. The portal is also publicly faces on CPSE’s website, allowing any new members to find your meetings on their own.
- Consortium SharePoint pages – a SharePoint page allows for document sharing, contact sharing, and distribution list storage and maintenance private to your Consortium.

There are other methods to maintain contacts outside of these, however. Microsoft forms, Google forms, Mail Chimp, and SurveyMonkey are all other options Consortiums have used in the past to generate lists. More on these can be found in the Resources and Appendix section.

## Recruiting New Contacts

Growing your contact list can happen digitally and in-person. CPSE adds new members to its database nearly every day; it is advised to receive a list of and/or send a meeting invitation to the full CPSE database for your region to capture any new individuals once or twice a year. This list can be provided by CPSE and/or CPSE can assist in sending the invitations. Lists will include active, current designees and agency contacts for your region.

Checking in with the list of CFAI registered, applicant, candidate, and accredited agencies on a quarterly basis through the CPSE Community Experience Manager or the CPSE website is also a great way to find new agencies. Newly registered agencies likely will not know about the Consortium right away – sending a welcoming e-mail with an invitation to join your next meeting not only makes them feel a part of the community, but encourages attendance.

When visiting conferences, especially those in your region, consider creating a QR code contact form. When you meet an individual that shows interest in the Consortium, have them scan the QR code to provide their information to you. Depending on how your contact form is set up, you could have it added directly to your distribution list or to a separate list of interested individuals to reach out to separately with invitations prior to your next meeting. Remember, personalization goes a long way when building relationships with members.

Some Consortiums have created their own websites where information about meetings are listed and where interested parties can sign up for the distribution list. If you choose to use such



a method, please provide the link to the CPSE Community Experience Manager so the link can be placed on the CPSE Consortium webpage for the general public to see and utilize.

Making use of the [CPSE Zoom Portal](#) is another great way to expand your reach. As this is publicly facing on the CPSE website, your meetings will be showcased to anyone who visits the Zoom portal to register. This can help capture passive interested parties without an invitation.

If your region has a Fire Chiefs Association, consider asking them to create a section within the association for the consortium membership. This may provide you access to additional resources like meeting spaces, contact lists, and more. Fire Chiefs Association conferences are also a great place to plan to host a meeting as many members may be traveling to the event regardless, and you will have an opportunity to invite participants in attendance who may not yet know about your Consortium.

## Sending Effective Invites

The communications you hold with your members can set the tone for your meetings as well as the attendance level. Invitations are the first form of relationship building with your contacts – do not underestimate their importance. Consider the following when creating invitations:

- Personalizing e-mails with first names via Microsoft Mail Merge or software such as Mail Chimp
- Using a warm greeting and closing
- Utilizing bullets, concise language, and short paragraphs for ease of reading
- Include attachments as needed such as the meeting agenda or workshop flyers
- Making links to the meeting or SharePoint page larger and clearly seen

Invitations via e-mail will also be most effective when they include a calendar invitation. Calendar invites allow the participant to block their calendar upon receipt of the invitation and receive automatic reminders. Invitations should be sent at least four weeks in advance of the meeting for improved attendance rates.

Even if you do include a calendar invitation in your e-mail, reminder e-mails are a great way to help bolster attendance. Personalizing these e-mails will help even further; for example, e-mailing those who have not yet registered for your meeting directly inviting them to RSVP can encourage them to attend at a higher rate than a generic e-mail reminder.

## Meeting Activity Ideas

One of the more significant challenges Coordinators face is planning the content for a meeting. Having a meeting template in the form of your agenda can be a great place to start to fill in the “blanks” for each meeting. Some items will remain the same for each meeting such as:

- Welcome from host agency
- Introductory roundtables and welcoming of new attendees



- CPSE Update from CPSE Management Staff
  - CPSE Community Experience Manager will provide the names to you for each meeting when you provide your dates – the earlier the better!
- Training topic/presentation/speaker

What you choose for a training topic can vary by your Consortium's needs, meeting set-up (hybrid, in-person, web), where agencies are in the process, number of credentialed officers, and timing. Some options Coordinators have used include:

- External speakers
  - Government figures, non-profit organizations, researchers, etc.
- CPSE presentations
  - CPSE management staff will offer at least one new presentation a year for Consortia to choose from if desired
- Agency presentations
  - Either from host agency or other agency in the Consortium
- Vendor presentations
  - Useful if you have multiple agencies with the same vendor needs (RMS, GIS etc.)
- Interim reviews of accreditation documents
  - Have the meeting focus on a certain category or document and ask agencies to bring theirs to review in small groups
  - Have an agency getting ready for a site visit present their most challenging document to the Consortium ahead of time with plans for discussion at the meeting
- Mock site visits
- Mock interviews
- Updates from peer assessors or agencies who have recently gone through a site visit
  - Can be presentations, open discussion format, roundtable, or panel
- Updates from peer reviewers on what they're seeing in applications and tips for those applying for credentials
  - Can be presentations, open discussion format, roundtable, or panel
- Credentialing document review in small groups
- Regional updates and hot topics
  - This can include governmental changes, contract updates, mutual aid discussions, large scale events, disaster planning, task force updates, etc.

Leaving time at the end of your meeting for open discussion can also be a good way to encourage networking and idea sharing. To better facilitate this time if no one prompts conversation right away, consider using prompts on the agenda. Some of these can include:

- State/regional news to share and discuss

- Follow ups on CPSE peer assessor and peer reviewer continuing education, accreditation manager dayroom discussions, or other trainings
- Best practices or success stories
- Recent challenges in daily operations
- Accreditation or credentialing obstacles

## Managing a Web-Based or Hybrid Meeting

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, many Consortiums saw a shift to hybrid or web-based meetings. These meeting formats have held strong for many as they presented an easier method of communication, especially for those with wider region spans.

Hybrid and web-based meetings offer many advantages such as:

- Allowing more individuals to attend who may have longer travel times or do not have the resources to travel to an event
- Bringing in external presenters virtually without travel costs
- Web-based survey technologies for participation
- Minimizing planning time needed to find host agencies (fully web based)

While there are advantages, there can be challenges to these meeting types as well, such as:

- Multi-tasking online participants may reduce good engagement
- Finding ways to engage in-person and hybrid individuals equally
- Determining a flow for good networking time amongst in-person and virtual attendees
- Understanding technology capabilities of each host agency

Thankfully as the virtual meeting environment has evolved, there are many opportunities to improve upon a hybrid or web-based meeting to minimize challenges.

## Survey Tools

Virtual engagement tools such as Mentimeter, Zoom polls, and other in-meeting survey technologies are a great way to help boost engagement. While there are many companies that currently exist within this space, Mentimeter and Zoom technologies can be provided to your Consortium by the CPSE community Experience Manager.



**Mentimeter**



By utilizing in-meeting virtual polls, both in-person and virtual attendees can be engaged at the same time. Virtual software like Mentimeter also allows for a variety of question formats to be used like open-ended questions, picture tagging, quizzes, and more to bring your group together. Many times, the responses to the questions you ask can spur further discussion, allow you to call out specific individuals for more detail to continue discussion, and help you as the Coordinator plan future topics for meetings.



## Technology Considerations

Having the right technology can make a difference in the success of your meeting. If web-only, consider setting etiquette rules for participants to have their cameras on to encourage participation. As the speaker, ensure you are looking into the camera as you would in-person. Whether you use Teams, Zoom, or another video-platform, ensure your mic(s) and camera(s) are operational and your ability to share your screen is operational before the meeting begins. This is especially important for hybrid meetings where host locations may frequently change, and you may be unfamiliar with the technology set-up.

Consider sharing the meeting recording with your group after the meeting has finished. Not only does this assist in making members who could not join you feel included, but it offers another opportunity for you to communicate with your members, thank them for coming, and summarize the event. In this follow-up e-mail you can also probe or offer ideas for the next meeting(s) based on discussions held and receive feedback.

Mute all incoming individuals. This setting should be available in both Teams and Zoom platforms. While any individual could still un-mute themselves and contribute, having every participant enter with their mics automatically off will help minimize distractions from late attendees or those who may not immediately realize their background chatter has overtaken the meeting.

## Meeting Tips

Virtual meetings, just like those in-person, require a certain level of flexibility. Online meetings have the potential to cause more delays due to technical issues. In addition, unexpected conversations and discussions may occur, running short on time on your agenda. While sharing your agenda in advance is a good way to help keep your group on track, you may wish to explore these new discussions or find yourself short of time due to technology. Prior to the meeting, choose parts of your agenda you can be flexible with and push to a future meeting if needed.

Virtual meetings, just like those in-person, require breaks for longer periods of time. Think of when you would offer your guests at a meeting a brief break to stretch their legs and re-group. Offer the same to virtual audiences if the time frame calls for it.

Engagement is key when it comes to virtual meetings. Ensure online members are acknowledged the same way as those in-person when doing roundtables, asking questions, or introducing topics. If your chat room in the virtual environment is not going to be monitored, announce this to the group so virtual members know they will need to speak up when they wish to participate and don't feel ignored. If the chat is monitored, you can also inform your group of this; when someone makes a comment, make sure to acknowledge in the room with their name and department. Equally so, in a hybrid situation when the host agency room is a



fish-eye lens of all participants, it can be hard to see or hear individuals. Have participants identify themselves for the good of all participants online and in-person prior to speaking.

Keep it positive! Virtual meetings don't have to be awkward. Set the tone with an ice breaker to help everyone online and in-person feel comfortable. There are no shortage of these on the internet to give you ideas. You may also consider a virtual team building activity or brainstorming session with survey technologies, virtual mural boards, or other options to get all attendees hands on. Throughout your meeting and presentation, consider adding some humor or something unexpected where appropriate.

Provide opportunities for input. To hold a participant's attention, whether in-person or virtually, it is important to hear more than one voice. In your agenda, make it clear where individuals are expected to provide input whether it be introductory roundtables, discussion questions, in-meeting activities, etc. Asking questions can also assist in this – try to focus on questions that don't have a yes/no answer. Starting questions with "how" and "why" are great structures to develop longer answers.

Start and end on time. Test all technology prior to the meeting's start to avoid technical related delays. If hybrid, do not wait to start the meeting until all in-person attendees have arrived – this creates a division between your virtual and in-person attendees. If you wish to ensure all your in-person RSVPs are in attendance prior to starting, consider starting the official meeting agenda 30 minutes after the meeting is set to start. This way, in-person attendees have time to arrive, gather, chat, and get settled while online participants will join a little later when the meeting is ready to begin. Ending on time is just as important as starting on time. If you don't meet all the items on your agenda, select a few that can be brought back up at the next meeting instead. Flexibility is key.

## Getting New Ideas

Soliciting ideas from a web-based group isn't always easy, especially if engagement is historically a challenge. Consider using some tools highlighted above such as virtual surveys and polls to gain insight into what your members' needs and expectations are.

Observing trends on websites such as LinkedIn, Firehouse, and other professional websites may give you ideas for topics to discuss within your Consortium as open discussion prompts or activities.

Speak with other Coordinators. CPSE hosts Consortium Coordinator workshops quarterly which offers Coordinators an opportunity to share challenges, successes, and questions with each other as well as CPSE. CPSE also hosts a Teams Channel as well as a Consortium Coordinator SharePoint site for collaboration. Reach out to the CPSE Community Experience Manager to be added to these if you have not been already.





## Time Management

As a volunteer, CPSE understands you will be giving your time to your region on top of your daily responsibilities. This is deeply appreciated. To assist in lightening the load of being a Coordinator, consider the following tips:

- Utilize CPSE's Zoom Portal to host your hybrid or virtual meetings
  - CPSE staff will set up and brand the meeting and provide you with an updated distribution list after each
- Delegate tasks to co-coordinators
  - Consider applying tasks such as administrative, content development, scheduling etc. to them based on their strengths
  - If you do not have a co-coordinator, reach out to the CPSE Community Experience Manager to assist in recruitment
- Maintain a running list of ideas
  - Come across an interesting idea or speaker? Keep track of them and refer to the list when you have meeting spots to fill
- Use an agenda
  - Treat your agenda like a template to help you fill in the "blanks" for your meeting and reduce planning time
  - Agendas also help prepare your members for a productive meeting
- Reach out to others
  - Survey your members for ideas, topics, and presentations
  - Don't be afraid to ask someone specific to supply a presentation for your group on something their agency is doing
  - Hit a snag? Contact the CPSE Community Experience Manager for assistance

## Succession Planning for Coordinators

As mentioned multiple times in this handbook, the Coordinator role is the most important force behind the success of a Consortium. So, what happens when a Coordinator changes jobs, moves, retires, or otherwise finds themselves unable to contribute as they once did?

Succession planning is just as important to a Consortium as it is to a fire department. The planning process can be outlined in by-laws, established through officer roles, or maintained through informal processes. The following outline varying methods:

- By-laws
  - If a Consortium has by-laws, consider adding clauses to establish a succession plan. This may look like outlining officer positions and line of succession between each such as: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary. When the Chair leaves, the Vice-Chair

becomes the Chair, and the Secretary becomes the Vice-Chair. A new secretary will be appointed or elected.

- Something to consider when creating such by-laws are the term limits desired for each officer role. While these term limits can introduce new ideas and perspectives to the Consortium on a more regular cycles through new chairs, it can be a challenge to appoint new officers on a regular basis as well depending on a Consortium's size.
- Officer role establishment
  - Like the creation of by-laws, an understanding of hierarchy in officer roles can help with succession planning. Through this method, the hierarchy and succession process is more of a process known by the consortium rather than established by by-laws as there will be no term limits involved.
  - Through this process, an outlining of officer succession is known and understood by the officers should the main Coordinator leave the group.
  - This process may be outlined in Consortium documents or exist as a verbal arrangement amongst the officers.
- Informal processes
  - Some Consortiums decide their succession processes amongst the Coordinator and Co-Coordinator(s) when the Coordinator indicates they will be leaving. These processes are most successful when there is more than one Co-Coordinator to balance the work when one shifts to the Coordinator role.
  - When there is only one Coordinator and Co-Coordinator, the new Coordinator will want to recruit a new Co-Coordinator through existing members or through assistance from the CPSE Community Experience Manager.
  - When there are no Co-Coordinators in a Consortium and a Coordinator intends to move on from the position, the Coordinator should contact the CPSE Community Experience Manager immediately to start the recruitment process for Co-Coordinators to assume the position.

## Post-Meeting Communications

Communication with members in between meetings can be a great way to build relationships and network throughout the year, creating a stronger bond between members and your Consortium. These communications may include, but are not limited to:

- Post-meeting surveys
  - These can be done at the end of the meeting through Mentimeter, through browser pop-ups on Zoom, or through a link in a follow up e-mail from software like SurveyMonkey
- Minutes distribution/virtual recordings



- Email follow ups for the meetings with minutes or meeting recordings refresh members of the impact of the conversation, encourage them to follow up on any topics, and connect them to each other and the material further.
- Ensure to include next meeting dates, times, and links if applicable
- Distribution lists
  - Creating an email box that includes all consortium members is a great way to encourage networking and information sharing outside of meetings. Such applications allow for a single email with a question from a member to be distributed to all members at once, allowing for responses from anyone in the group to provide input.

## Other Ways to Get Involved

Outside of regular meetings with members, Consortium Coordinators and their members can be involved in their communities in many ways to help spread the word of the Consortium and the quality improvement model.

Some ways Consortiums have done this involve:

- Conferences
  - Presenting at local conferences about the Consortium or your experiences with CPSE is a great way to market your Consortium and the model
  - Hosting meetings at local conferences is another great way to attract interested parties who may not be aware of your Consortium and wish to join
  - Fire Chiefs Association Conferences are another place to consider having a table or information session to gain new members
- Plaque presentations
  - If an agency in your region has recently become accredited, coordinate with that agency to send representatives from the Consortium to present the agency with their plaque in front of their elected or governing officials
  - Not only does this foster stronger relationships between agencies and members, but it helps enforce the authority and importance behind accreditation to the governing body
  - The CPSE Community Experience Manager can assist with writing up details and facts about the agencies in your region to share with the governing body upon presentation
- Combination meetings
  - In states and provinces in North America especially, many agencies exist very close to state lines. Depending on host agencies for meetings, these agencies may be unable to travel to other areas of the region for meetings.



- Consider inviting these border agencies to your Consortium once or twice a year to network with your regional agencies nearby, especially if a host agency is closer to the border. Not only can this expand your reach, but can help agencies within mutual aid distance connect for disaster planning or other needs.
- Agency Assistance
  - Some Consortia have assisted their member agencies in the accreditation process in ways such as strategic planning. Other agency representatives have traveled to a single agency to host stakeholder feedback collection for their strategic plans. This is a great way to continue to foster relationships outside of meetings and act as continuing education for all involved.
  - Mock site visits and interviews – see more about these in the Resources and Appendix section



# Resources and Appendix

## Agenda Templates and Examples

*Web-Based Agenda Template*

### **XYZ Consortium Agenda – Quarter # 2025**

#### **Meeting Info**

Date/Time:

Meeting/Registration Link:

#### **Agenda Items**

<b>1000</b>	Introductions / Icebreaker - Name, rank, agency - Accreditation updates - Credentialed officer updates - Question of the day	All
<b>1030</b>	CPSE Update	XX, CPSE
<b>1115</b>	Training Topic / Speaker / Activity	XX
<b>1145</b>	Open Discussion / New Business	All
<b>1200</b>	Adjourn - Next Meeting: XX Date and Time	

#### **Training/Events**

- 1) [Excellence Conference](#): April 1-4, 2025 – Orlando, FL
- 2) [CPSE Training Opportunities](#):
  - a. [Quality Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services Courses](#)
    - i. January 22-24 - Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services, Holly Springs, GA
    - ii. February 5-7 - Perrysburg Fire Division, Perrysburg, OH
    - iii. February 11-13 - Imperial County Fire Department, Heber, CA
  - b. [Peer Assessor Training](#)
  - c. [On-Demand Training](#)
  - d. [Accreditation Handouts & Videos](#)
  - e. [CPSE Community Experience Webinars](#)



*Hybrid/In-Person Agenda Example:*

**XYZ Consortium Agenda – Quarter # 2025**

**Meeting Info**

Date/Time:

In-Person Location: 1911 Stewart Ave., Lawrence, KS 66046 (LDCFM Station #5)

Meeting/Registration Link:

**Agenda Items**

<b>0900</b>	Arrival, Networking, Light Refreshments	
<b>0930</b>	**ONLINE BEGINS** Welcome from Host Agency	XX Agency
<b>0935</b>	Introductions / Icebreaker - Name, rank, agency - Accreditation updates - Credentialed officer updates - Question of the day	All
<b>1000</b>	CPSE Update	XX, CPSE
<b>1045</b>	Break	All
<b>1055</b>	Training Topic / Speaker / Activity	XX
<b>1130</b>	Open Discussion / New Business	All
<b>1200</b>	Adjourn - Next Meeting: XX Date and Time	XX Agency

**Training/Events**

- 3) [Excellence Conference](#): April 1-4, 2025 – Orlando, FL
- 4) [CPSE Training Opportunities](#):
  - a. [Quality Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services Courses](#)
    - i. January 22-24 - Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services, Holly Springs, GA
    - ii. February 5-7 - Perrysburg Fire Division, Perrysburg, OH
    - iii. February 11-13 - Imperial County Fire Department, Heber, CA
  - b. [Peer Assessor Training](#)



- c. [On-Demand Training](#)
- d. [Accreditation Handouts & Videos](#)
- e. [CPSE Community Experience Webinars](#)

---

*Agenda Example 1*

---



Location: San Bernardino County Fire Protection District  
598 S. Tippetcanoe Ave, San Bernardino, CA

Date: 10/29/2024

Time: 0900-1500

### **Agenda Items**

<b>0900 - 0930</b>	Arrival, Networking, Light Refreshments	
<b>0930 - 0945</b>	Welcome from San Bernardino County Fire	
<b>0945 - 1030</b>	Introductions; Agency Updates - Accreditation and Other	
<b>1030 - 1045</b>	CPSE Updates	Mike or Kelly, CPSE
<b>1045 - 1115</b>	Presentation #1 - Credentialling	Mike & Ben, CPSE
<b>1115 - 1200</b>	Presentation #2 - Accreditation Timeline	Sofia, Yocha Dehe
<b>1200 - 1245</b>	Lunch Break	
<b>1245 - 1345</b>	Presentation #3 - ESRI Solutions	Baylie Scott, ESRI
<b>1345 - 1445</b>	Round Tables	
<b>1445 - 1500</b>	Raffle, Wrap-Up	



---

Agenda Example 2

---



**Texas Summer Consortium Meeting**  
Southlake DPS North Training Facility  
(100 E Dove Road, Southlake, Texas 76092)  
Hybrid Option Available  
Monday, August 12, 2024  
12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/flq4LdcxuBVjNHFN7>

<b>Noon – 12:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Sign-In/Lunch Distribution</b>
<b>12:30 – 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>FirstDue Presentation</b>
<b>1:00 – 1:30 p.m.</b>	<b>CPSE CEO and Strategic Plan Update</b> <i>Featuring Preet Bassi</i>
<b>1:30 – 1:40 p.m.</b>	<b>Department Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Recent Site Visits</i></li><li>• <i>Annual Compliance Reports</i></li><li>• <i>Information Sharing Requests</i></li></ul>
<b>1:40 – 1:55 p.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>1:55 – 3:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Motor Vehicle Collision Responses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>AWOS Technologies Presentation on Safe Vehicle Exits (25 minutes)</i></li><li>• <i>Houston Fire Department / Rice University Study (15 minutes)</i></li><li>• <i>Irving Fire Department Blocker Vehicle Deployment (25 minutes)</i></li><li>• <i>Department Roundtable: Accreditation Categorization, Response Strategies, and Performance Tracking (30 minutes)</i></li></ul>
<b>3:30 – 3:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>3:45 – 4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Edition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Overview</i></li><li>• <i>Proposals and Public Comments</i></li><li>• <i>Q&amp;A with Select Task Group Leads</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>Criteria 5B: Public Education with Landon Churchill of Spring Fire Department</i></li><li>○ <i>Criteria 9B: Communication Systems with Scot Swindall of West Metro (CO) Fire Rescue</i></li><li>○ <i>Criteria 9C: Administrative Support Services and Office Systems with Leonard Chan of Houston Fire Department</i></li></ul></li></ul>





---

*Agenda Example 3*

---



## Heart of America Accreditation Task Force



### Heart of America Accreditation Task Force Agenda – 4Q 2024

#### Meeting Info

Date/Time: November 7, 2024 (10:00 CST)

MS Teams Virtual Meeting: [Meeting ID: 299 979 729 299](#) Passcode: [aZTSoQ](#) (or [click to join](#))



In-Person Location: 1911 Stewart Ave., Lawrence, KS 66046 (LDCFM Station #5)

#### Agenda Items

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. NERIS update – Tom Jenkins
- III. CPSE Update – Mike Higgins
- IV. Educational Presentation: Credentialing – Mike Higgins
- V. Old Business
- VI. New Business
  - a. Consortium Coordinators meeting update
  - b. Possible consortium addition – [St. Louis Fire Department](#)
  - c. HOA Committee Election (Secretary)
  - d. Discuss 2025 HOA Meeting Dates & Locations
- VII. Training/Events
  - a. [Excellence Conference](#): April 1-4, 2025 – Orlando, FL
  - b. [Training Opportunities](#):
    - i. [Quality Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services](#)
      1. November 19-21 - Louisville Fire Department, Louisville, KY
      2. January 22-24 - Cherokee County Fire & Emergency Services, Holly Springs, GA
      3. February 5-7 - Perrysburg Fire Division, Perrysburg, OH
      4. February 11-13 - Imperial County Fire Department, Heber, CA
      5. March 4-6 - Rockford Fire Department, Rockford, IL
      6. March 10-12 - Bernalillo County Fire & Rescue, Albuquerque, NM
      7. **September 16-18 – Shawnee Fire Department**
    - ii. [On-Demand Training](#)
    - iii. [On-Demand Webinars & Documents](#)
- VIII. Next Meeting: TBD



---

## Agenda Example 4

---



North Carolina  
Accreditation Support  
Consortium

## NCASC Quarterly Meeting

August 21, 2024

**Matt Jacoby**  
Assistant Chief  
Cary Fire Department  
[matt.jacoby@carync.gov](mailto:matt.jacoby@carync.gov)

**David Farnum**  
Division Chief  
Charlotte Fire Department  
[david.farnum@charlottenc.gov](mailto:david.farnum@charlottenc.gov)

**Ryan Campbell**  
Battalion Chief  
Chapel Hill Fire Department  
[rcampbell@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:rcampbell@townofchapelhill.org)

The quarterly meeting of the North Carolina Accreditation Support Consortium scheduled for Wednesday August 21, at 10:00 a.m. will be held in the Greensboro Public Safety Training Facility, 1510 N. Church St., Greensboro, NC. The meeting will adjourn at 2:00 p.m.

### Opening Remarks

Facilitator, David Farnum  
Welcome any first-time attendees  
Recognize new departments being represented

### CPSE Update:

Kelly Martin, Community Experience Manager, CPSE

### Guided Discussion:

Agency experience during August 2024 CFAI Commission Hearings

- Describe your peer review, site visit, and commission hearing experience.
- How can the NCASC better assist agencies before, during or after the peer review process?

### Lunch

"La Farm," compliments of DocTract

### Presentation :

DocTract demonstration and review  
David Munro, DocTract

### Open Discussion

### Upcoming educational opportunities:

Quality Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services Workshop, Augusta Fire Department, GA  
September 25-27, 2024  
Primary Contact: Sarah Harvey, Fire Accreditation Data Specialist  
(O) 706-821-2513 [sharvey@augustaga.gov](mailto:sharvey@augustaga.gov)

Quality Improvement for the Fire and Emergency Services Workshop, Charleston Fire Department  
October 15-17, 2024  
Primary contact: Karl Morris, Assistant Chief of Planning/Accreditation Manager  
(O) 843-720-3060 [morrisk@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:morrisk@charleston-sc.gov)

### Adjournment



## Meeting Templates and Examples

---

### *Consortium Meeting Planning Example*

---

8/9/2024 1100-1200

# CA Consortium Co Coordinator Meeting

October Meeting – 10/29 (Tuesday) - 0900 to 1500 w/ a 1 hour lunch break @ San Bernardino

- Hosted by San Bernardino, Contacts are Adam and Rosina
- Vendor sponsorship
  - o Let them give a presentation/small pitch in exchange for sponsored food and swag
- Room will fit 100 people
- Presentation ideas:
  - o Welcome from San Bernardino
  - o Introductions and share what's going on with your agency
  - o CPSE Update – Mike or Kelly
  - o Credentialling - Mike and Ben from CPSE
  - o Sofia has a presentation on the process of what Yocha Dehe does year by year to become accredited including how to update SP and SOC for accreditation
  - o Majority of people want to talk about data
    - Potential presenters:
      - Jim White or Steve Olson from CPSE; Kelly can ask them if they have recommendations of Peer Assessors in southern CA
      - Find an agency within the consortium that can talk about what going through the data process was like
      - Bryan Gazzetta from Riverside
      - Chief Kinney from Yocha Dehe
      - Paul Rottenberg from Fire Stats
  - o Round tables
    - By CFAI status
    - Hot topics from survey results
  - o Raffle?
  - o January Meeting – at Cosumnes Fire Department
  - o Follow up meeting in first week of October to finalize things
- **Action Items:**
  - o Sofia – share survey results
  - o Kelly – send out zoom invite
  - o Lizy – mock agenda, meeting notes
  - o Adam – logistics, coordinating minutes, room block, draft invitation wording

---

*Meeting Planning Template*

---

# Consortium Meeting Planning Template

Quarter:

Date/Time:

Virtual Meeting Link:

Host Agency & Address:

Invites Sent Via:

Desired learning outcomes or topics:

--

Learning Option 1

Learning Option 2

Facilitator
Length

Facilitator
Length

Action Items with Assignments

--

Post Meeting Feedback

--



## Email Examples

---

### *Email Example – Recruiting New Members*

---



Dear Jason Zych,

As a member of the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) community and as a emergency services professional from Virginia, we'd like to extend an invitation to the next Virginia Consortium for Excellence in Emergency Services meeting on February 21st at 1:00 PM EST. The meeting will be held at the Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference (VFR) in Virginia Beach with a virtual option also available.

To provide some background, [Consortiums](#) are CPSE-supported regional groups created and run by local agency representatives. Consortiums exist to provide opportunities for networking, regional issue problem-solving, and collaboration through the accreditation and credentialing processes. An agency or individual does not need to be currently accredited or credentialed to join a Consortium. Each meeting consists of local agency discussion, an update from a CPSE staff member, and more!

This January meeting will provide opportunities for networking and discussion as well as an update from a CPSE staff member on accreditation, credentialing, and other programming.

You will also have an opportunity to assist in the planning of the Consortiums' future meeting topics and to hear from current CPSE agencies and designees about their experiences with CPSE.

**To register, please visit the [Virginia Consortium Registration Portal](#). Registration is required for both in-person and virtual attendance.**

For any questions, please contact Kelly Martin, Amy Valdez, or Joe Beaven.

See you then!

Kelly Martin  
CPSE Community Experience Manager  
[kmartin@cpse.org](mailto:kmartin@cpse.org)

Amy Valdez  
Consortium Coordinator  
Virginia Beach Fire Department  
[avaldez@vbqov.com](mailto:avaldez@vbqov.com)

Joe Beaven  
Consortium Coordinator  
Alexandria Fire Department  
[joe.beavan@alexandriava.gov](mailto:joe.beavan@alexandriava.gov)



---

*Email Example – Meeting Invitation 1*

---



## Meeting Details & Agenda

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

10am - 12pm

### Virtual Meeting Link

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02zoom.us/j/88506093805?pwd=eldCnlh5MVoRNIhWGltaXZlIkhiZ709>

### Agenda

#### Presentation: From Application to Approval

CPC Program Manager Mike Higgins will provide an in-depth look at the credentialing process, as well as answer any specific questions you might have.

#### CPSE Staff Update

CPC Program Manager Mike Higgins will provide an update on current operations and initiatives. Come prepared with questions!

#### Consortium SharePoint Site Updates: Corey Bowles

Chief Bowles will provide an update on the status of our SharePoint site, provide a quick demonstration on how to navigate it, and share how to get alerts when new documents are posted.

#### Agency Round Robin

Please come prepared to provide a brief update on your agency's activities and any assistance you might need from the consortium.

### Save the Dates

Quality Improvement for the Fire & Emergency Services Workshop

Coral Gables Fire Rescue, Coral Gables, FL



---

*Email Example – Meeting Invitation 2*

---

Good evening,

This is a final reminder that the first CPSE Consortium meeting of 2025 will be held next Friday, January 17, from 1300-1500 at the Valley Forge Casino and Conference Center, in the Laurel Ballroom, 1160 First Ave., King of Prussia, PA 19406. The meeting will be held immediately following the Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs meeting. There will be signage directing attendees. You should have received an email from CPSE last week containing the registration and virtual attendance link. If not, the link can be found at the top of the attached agenda.

Should you have any questions, please let me know. Thank you!

-Joe



## Contact Management Methods

1. [CPSE Zoom Portal](#)
  - a. Registration required for each participant, enhancing contact lists
  - b. CPSE will pull registration and attendee reports to build and expand your distribution list after each meeting
  - c. You can choose to ask for additional information at registration
  - d. CPSE can also assist in sending the invitations if desired
2. Contact QR forms connected to Excel/Google Sheets
  - a. Example 1:
    - i. <https://forms.gle/Cz7Hppf9VufvPFcr5>
  - b. Example 2:

### Heart of America Accreditation TF Consortium sign-in

1. Name \*

Enter your answer

2. Agency \*

Enter your answer

3. Email address \*

Enter your answer

4. Phone number \*



Enter your answer

5. HoA Consortium contact list: \*

- Please add me to the list
- I'm already on the list
- Please remove me from the list



### 3. MailChimp program

Email Address (required)	First Name	Last Name	Agency	Email Marketing	Sou
[redacted]@mydelraybeach.com	Ronald	Martin	Delray Beach	Subscribed	Adm
[redacted]@gainesvillefl.gov	Mark	Jones	Gainesville F	Subscribed	Adm
[redacted]@semtribe.com	Erin	Weiner	Seminole Tril	Subscribed	Adm

## Group Discussions/Ideas/Activities

1. Introductions/agency updates
  - a. Name, role, and agency
  - b. Agency status in accreditation (if applicable)
  - c. Updates on their accreditation process cycle (if applicable)
  - d. Number of designees in their agency and those newly conferred
  - e. An icebreaker
  - f. Example:



**Florida Consortium  
for Fire & EMS  
Accreditation &  
Credentialing**

**Agency  
Updates**



Current status in the accreditation or credentialing process



Upcoming goals or initiatives for your accreditation or credentialing process



What support or information you may need from the consortium to meet your goals or initiatives

### 2. CFAI related panels

- a. Create a panel of agency representatives who had recently gone through a site visit to share their experiences and for a Q&A
- b. Invite several peer assessors to share their recent visit experiences and for a Q&A
- c. Invite an agency who recently went before the commission to share their experiences and for a Q&A
- d. Consider asking the CPSE Community Experience Manager to schedule the CFAI Program Manager during meetings where these activities occur for an extra layer of Q&A and for feedback to be provided from these experiences to CFAI



3. CPC related panels
  - a. Invited newly designated individuals to share their experiences
  - b. Invited designated individuals to share a topic specific to their designation as a training topic
    - i. Example: ask a CEMSO to share something they see trending in the EMS world
  - c. Invite peer reviewers in your region to share what they're seeing in applications
  - d. Consider asking the CPSE Community Experience Manager to schedule the CPC Program Manager during meetings where these activities occur for an extra layer of Q&A and for feedback to be provided from these experiences to CPC
4. Document Review
  - a. Ask all attendees to bring their CRA-SOC or Strategic Plan to share with the group
    - i. If your group is too large for such a project, consider asking an agency preparing for a site visit and preparing documents to bring one of the documents for review by the group. Send documents for review prior to the meeting.
    - ii. This gives the group practice in reviewing other documents and seeing what other agencies are doing, but also helps the agency preparing
  - b. Select a category of the SAM and ask all attendees to bring their copies to share their challenges, questions, and ideas for writing to the category
    - i. Alternatively, invite an agency preparing for a site visit to bring their most challenging category for review and input by attendees. Ensure documents are sent in advance of the meeting for discussion.
  - c. Consider inviting anyone in process for a designation to bring their application for review by the group. This is especially helpful if you have a larger group of designated officers or chief officers in attendance. Send the document in advance.
5. Mock Interviews
  - a. Similar to document review mentioned above, invite an agency to share a challenging SAM document and bring the relevant personnel who would be interviewed. Share in advance so attendees can prepare questions to pepper the agency with to prepare for a site visit/hearing. This is especially beneficial if the agency is also hosting and can have their representatives present for that category.
  - b. Similar to document review mentioned above, invite an individual applying for a designation to share their application in advance. Attendees can prepare and bring questions to ask the applicant to prepare for submission/interview.
6. Mock Site Visits
  - a. Lite version: invite an agency to present their CRA-SOC as if they would to the peer team. As many CRA-SOC presentations are being done virtually prior to the

visit now, this will also help the agency prepare for this format, especially in the case of hybrid and web meetings. Attendees can ask questions and provide feedback just as a peer team would.

- b. Lite version: Mock interviews, as mentioned above.
- c. Expanded version: After reviewing a challenging document, consider asking the agency to host the next meeting to perform a site visit to areas surrounding that document during your training time.
  - i. This can include mock interviews or simply touring the relevant areas and asking additional questions.
  - ii. This can be performed without document review in an additional meeting if the document(s) is/are shared prior to the meeting occurring.
- d. Full version: a full site visit would likely need to be done outside of your meeting time with a few interested parties, or in the place of one of your quarterly meetings. These individuals would review all (or some) documents, perform a visit to the agency, interview relevant personnel, and tour relevant areas – just like a real visit. Should your group do this, a follow-up with a sharing of experiences from the agency and the mock team would make a great meeting activity for the entire Consortium.

## Icebreakers

There is no shortage of icebreaker ideas on the internet. Tip: answer your own question first or have a fellow coordinator do so to create a sense of psychological safety. Here are a few favorites:

- This or That/Would You Rather questions – encourage context for their answers
  - Is a hot dog a sandwich?
  - Beach or Mountains
  - Morning or night
  - Coffee or tea
  - Does toilet paper go over or under on the roll?
  - Would you rather speak all languages or be able to talk to animals?
- Professional questions
  - What's something you've always wanted to learn to improve your job performance?
  - What drew you to this industry and keeps you in it?
  - What's your best productivity or time management trick?
  - What's an icebreaker questions you hate being asked?
  - If you could give a presentation on anything you enjoy learning about or doing (work or otherwise) to an assuredly interested audience, what would you teach?
  - Describe your communication style in three words
  - How do you get motivated for difficult tasks?



- What's an underrated skill everyone could benefit from?
- What's one thing you wish could be automated in your role?
- What is something new or interesting you learned lately?
- Basic/fun questions
  - What's your most recent TV binge?
  - If you had to pick a walk-up song as an athlete right now, what would you choose?
  - Favorite Halloween candy to get as a child?
  - What's the best meal you've ever had?
  - What career do you think your pet would have?
  - If you were robbing someone, but your objective was to only minorly inconvenience them, what would you take and why?
  - What was your first ever concert?
  - What fictional world would you like to visit?
  - What's the best topping for ice cream?
  - What trivia category do you excel the most at? Sports, movies, history, etc.
  - Name your favorite dinosaur
- Deeper questions
  - What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?
  - If you couldn't be in the emergency services, what job would do?
  - If you could have any superpower what would it be, and why?
  - Where would you move if you could retire tomorrow?
  - If you were reincarnated as animal, which would you choose and why?
  - What was the last thing you did for the first time?
  - If you could invent a holiday, what would it be and what would you call it?
- Unique Traits
  - Have everyone share something they think no one else has done
  - Example: if someone says, "I've been to New Zealand" and another individual comments that they too have been there, then that person needs to supply another unique trait or tidbit about themselves

## CPSE Resources and Offerings

1. [CPSE Zoom Portal](#) - as mentioned elsewhere in this document, the CPSE Zoom Portal is a great way to lighten the load of being a Coordinator.
  - a. Registration required for each participant, enhancing contact lists
    - i. CPSE will pull registration and attendee reports to build and expand your distribution list after each meeting
    - ii. You can choose to ask for additional information at registration
  - b. Host privileges shared between CPSE and the Consortium



- i. You will not need to wait for a CPSE representative to start or end a meeting; it can be set to share these privileges with Coordinators as well
    - c. Publicly facing registration page linked to CPSE website
      - i. Allows participants to find you on their own while they peruse CPSE website for information
    - d. Free, advanced Zoom features
      - i. Polls, surveys, Q&A and more options available to you at no charge
    - e. Invitations can be sent by CPSE directly if desired
  2. Consortium SharePoint Pages
    - a. CPSE will create a SharePoint page for each Consortium as requested
    - b. This page can be used for discussion, document sharing, contact sharing and more
    - c. Contact the CPSE Community Experience Manager to create a page if you do not have one; the CE Manager can also add new users to your page as needed
  3. Consortium Coordinator SharePoint Page
    - a. In addition to individual Consortium pages, Coordinators have a SharePoint page to share ideas, documents, and chat
    - b. The CPSE Community Experience Manager will post relevant documents here as well as recordings from workshops
      - i. Speaker library – known speakers willing to work with Consortiums
      - ii. Presentation library – CPSE presentations available to book
  4. Presentation Library
    - a. CPSE management staff will offer at least one presentation a year for Consortiums to “book”
      - i. A list of these will be provided at the last Consortium Coordinator workshop of the year and will also be posted on the Consortium Coordinator SharePoint
    - b. On the Consortium Coordinator SharePoint page and Teams channel, the CPSE Community Experience Manager will upload “barebones” presentations based on handouts on CPSE University that can be utilized by Coordinators to teach a training topic
      - i. The CE Manager may also be available to teach upon request dependent on availability
  5. Speaker Library
    - a. CPSE Community Experience Manager maintains a list on the Consortium Coordinator SharePoint of speakers Consortiums have used with success that have agreed to have their information shared
    - b. This list will be updated as information is shared or as Coordinators modify it
  6. Mentimeter



- a. CPSE can add Consortium Coordinators to the corporate Mentimeter account to provide free access to survey tools to be used in meetings – contact the CPSE Community Experience Manager for access