National Association of County Agricultural Agents

NACAA Leadership Academy

Mike Estadt, Extension Educator, The Ohio State University, estadt.3@osu.edu; , Amanda Douridas, Extension Educator, The Ohio State University, douridas.9@osu.edu; Laura Kenny, Extension Educator, Pennsylvania State University, lbk8@psu.edu; Donna Hoffman, Extension Educator, University of Wyoming, dhoffman@natronacounty-wy.gov; Anna Duncan, Extension Specialist, University of Tennessee Extension, Dalton Dockery PhD, Southeast District Extension Director, NC State University, dbdocker@ncsu.edu

BACKGROUND

NACAA leadership desired an internal program to support development of future leaders. The NACAA Leadership Academy, now in its third year, has been training leaders across the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The goal is twofold: develop effective leaders within Extension and empower NACAA members to contribute to the organization through leadership. Supported by the NACAA Educational Foundation, the Leadership Academy hosts nine meetings covering a wide range of topics relevant to today's Extension professional. Each session culminates in participants working in teams to develop and deliver their own leadership presentation given at NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference.

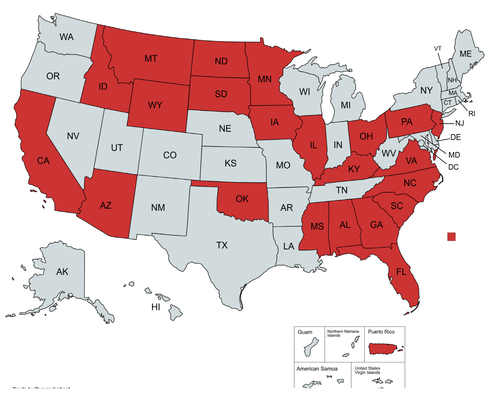
PROGRAM TIMELINE

- Spring: Application period opens. Applications are reviewed by the committee and acceptance is sent in late spring.
- Kickoff meeting: In-person each year at the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference.
- September – May: Participants meet 1 time per month online to hear from experts in leadership topics and complete skill-building activities.
- June: Group presentation run-throughs
- July-Sept: Groups present in-person at the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference. (AMPIC)

PROGRAM HISTORY

- 2021 – Planning beings. Committee outlines topics and structure.
- Feb 2023 – First call for applicants is opened.
- May 2023 – 19 participants from 13 universities across the U.S. and Puerto Rico make up the first cohort.
- Aug 2023 – First cohort meets at AMPIC
- July 2024 – First group presentations are made at AMPIC, and 2nd cohort meets
- October 2024-Cohort two program begins
- July 2025 – Second group presentations are made at AMPIC, and 3rd cohort meets
- October 2025 Cohort three program begins
- July 2026 Cohort three projects presented at AMPIC in Denver, Colorado

PARTICIPATION BY STATE/TERRITORY



GROUP PROJECTS

- Each year, cohorts are broken into groups of three to four and tasked with developing a presentation on a leadership topic not covered during their sessions.
- They work over several months researching and creating the presentation which is then delivered at NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference
- Through this they receive a published abstract and national conference presentation. In the first two years, group presentations have been highly attended by conference attendees with an average of 50 audience members.

The first cohort meeting at NACAA AM/PIC in Des Moines, IA in 2023.

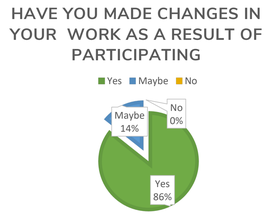
COURSE AGENDA

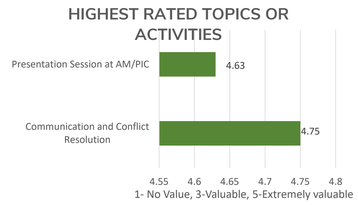
- **StrengthsFinders ®**
- **NACAA Structure and Opportunities**
- **Life/Work Balance**
- **Organizational/Schedule Management**
- **Emotional Intelligence/Compassion**
- **Thriving in a Multi-Generational Workplace**
- **Peer to Peer Learning**
- **Communications and Conflict Resolution**
- **Project Presentations Practice and Feedback**
- **AMPIC Final Presentations**

Full house at group presentations at NACAA AM/PIC in Billings, MT in 2025.

Group receiving their completion certificates after presenting at NACAA AM/PIC in Billings, MT in 2025.

EVALUATION





HAVE YOU MADE ANY CHANGES IN YOUR WORK AS RESULT OF THE SESSIONS YOU ATTENDED? IF YES, HOW?

"I can now observe specific behaviors from my boss and recognize his leadership style and work a strategy to prevent those behaviors from impacting my performance."

"I have decided to run for a national officer position."

"Yes, I have tried some of the various leadership techniques"

"Changes in prioritizing work and changes in how I provide feedback"

PRAISE FOR LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

- *"Participating in the 2023-2024 Leadership Academy has been an incredible experience. Our monthly sessions were truly impactful, providing valuable insights and practical skills. I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of such a dynamic program and look forward to seeing how it will continue to evolve and inspire future leaders in this association" Jose D. Arocho Jimenz*
- *"The Leadership Academy was a great networking opportunity to dive deep into leadership with a tight-knit group of peers. This academy has helped me expand my knowledge in leadership to benefit my Extension career."*
- *"I've really enjoyed the experience and highly recommend this program to other NACAA Members."*
- *"My experience at the NACAA Leadership Academy was transformative. It provided me with invaluable insights, strengthened my leadership skills, and connected me with a network of passionate professionals dedicated to advancing agriculture. As an Extension Agent in Puerto Rico, the knowledge and relationships I gained will continue to shape my work and empower the communities I serve on the island."*
- *"Surround yourself with great people, and good things will happen; I see the future of NACAA in this room!" Tyrone Fisher*
- *'The NACAA Leadership Academy helped me understand my strengths and how to utilize them in leading in the various aspects of my career as an Extension Agent.' -Heather Jennings*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the NACAA Educational Foundation for their financial support and to NACAA Leadership team for their time and participation.

nacaa.com/professional-development