

2026

**BUILDING A STRONG  
COOPERATIVE  
FOUNDATION**

BOOSTING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT  
FOR YOUR ANNUAL MEETINGS

**MINI TOOLKIT**

Presented by:



**March 2026**

MCDC and MCOC are equal opportunity employers and service providers

# > Annual Meeting Member Engagement

## CHECKLIST

### Pre-meeting Engagement

#### Gather Input Ahead of Time

- Review By-laws for procedure and process regarding notices, by-law changes, nominations, and voting.
- Send out surveys or polls to members in advance to collect their priorities, ideas, and concerns for the meeting agenda.
- Determine if the meeting is in person, virtual, or hybrid. If a virtual or hybrid plan is in place in advance, make sure all components are working.
- Share agendas, reports, or relevant documents before the meeting so members can prepare and participate more efficiently.
  - Have printed copies available at the meeting.

#### Preparation for Meeting:

- Determine the numbers you need for a quorum and design a check-in space to track members' attendance
- Identify who will be speaking on which part of the agenda and make sure all are prepared and practiced.
- Ensure that any visuals for the meeting are ready and that if using slide decks, sounds, etc., all is ready to go.
- Make sure that you have determined how and who can vote – and if you have board openings, determine how you are accepting nominations

### Structured Collaboration During the Meeting

- Use visuals, videos, and infographics to present complex information clearly.
- Create opportunities for members to ask questions or share feedback.
- Organize Q&A sessions for member participation.
- Arrange breakout sessions or small group discussions for networking.
- Set up live polls or surveys to capture member opinions during the meeting.

### Celebrate the Co-op and Members' Successes

- Recognize members for milestones, contributions, or achievements.
- Showcase the success of the co-op, even the small ones.
- Highlight members' success stories or cooperative impacts in the community.
- Offer awards or special recognitions for active participation from members in the co-op.

### Provide Networking Opportunities

- Set aside time for informal networking or discussions at the beginning and end of the annual meeting.
- Include dedicated sessions for members to meet cooperative leaders or board members, like a mingling session.
- Organize interactive displays or booths showcasing cooperative projects, partners, vendors or relevant happenings in the community.

### Follow-Up Communication

- Send a thank-you message to members, highlighting key takeaways and outcomes of the annual meeting.
- Distribute a post-meeting survey to collect member insights on the event.
- Share opportunities for members to get involved in committees, projects, and upcoming events/workshops being hosted by or in conjunction with the cooperative.
- Spotlight engaged members or success stories in newsletters and social media.

# > Top 10 Annual Meeting Member Engagement Tactics for Cooperatives

01

## HIGHLIGHT CO-OP and MEMBERSHIP SUCCESS STORIES

- Include a "State of the Cooperative" from a Board Member or General Manager that addresses the co-op's performance and future plans.
- Highlight the success of the cooperative over the last year – while also addressing any needs or challenges the co-op faced. Make sure to include financial information on the cooperative for members!
- Dedicate a segment to showcasing how members have benefitted from the cooperative (testimonials, videos, live presentations, showcase tables in lobby).
  - These should be relatable stories that inspire pride and connection of being a cooperative member.

02

## MAKE MEETINGS INTERACTIVE

- Building upon your members' demographic and how they will respond, try to engage your members and give an opportunity for every member's voice.
  - Live polls, Q&A sections, voting apps to make the meeting more engaging,
- Use visual aids like videos, charts, and infographics to communicate complex information clearly.

03

## USE CLEAR and TARGETED INVITATIONS

- Send out well-designed invitations via multiple channels (email, social media, mail) that clearly outline the meeting's agenda, purpose, and why a member should attend.
- Highlight within the invitation how members' input directly impact decisions.

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04

## PARTNER WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS and ORGANIZATIONS

- Collaborate with schools, youth and community groups/clubs to increase awareness of the annual meeting. A small token toward a fundraiser for a youth group to put up flyers around town is an idea.
- Work with the school to see if attending the annual meeting will be counted for HS credit or extra credit.
- Hire an HS group (4-H, FFA, Key Club, etc.) to provide childcare for your members. Not only will you have additional youth in attendance addressing succession of membership, but you will also open the doors for members to attend and participate.

05

## PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL VALUE

- Leaning into the Co-op Principles, offer an educational program before or after the annual meeting. These mini workshops or sessions can be relevant to members' needs (financial management, understanding the co-op principles,
- If using handouts, include some additional information on how co-ops work or how a member can become more engaged in the cooperative.

06

## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- Use social media platforms to connect with members, sharing updates, success stories, and opportunities for involvement leading up to the annual meeting.
- IF you have the capacity, look at creating private social media groups or communities for ongoing discussions and feedback. Caution: Only do this if you have someone who is knowledgeable about accurate information on the co-op and who will be engaged and monitoring the chat on the co-op's behalf.

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07

## FEEDBACK LOOPS AND MEMBER SURVEYS

- Regularly solicit feedback through surveys, focus groups, polls, and one-on-one opportunities on how members are feeling about the cooperative. Don't wait for the annual meeting to find out your membership is upset.
- Act on the insights gathered and share how member input influenced decisions during the presentations at the annual meeting.

08

## PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR ATTENDANCE

- Offer door prizes, raffles, or giveaways for attendees. This is a great way for partners and vendors to showcase their support while also enriching the value of attending.
- Many co-ops will raffle off co-op items like a month of free services.
- If you are asking for RSVP's – maybe use an incentive like "early-bird" raffle to get people to RSVP. (note – RSVP's to an annual meeting are not required though helpful, especially for emerging co-ops to understand if quorum will be met).

09

## FACILITATE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

- Create informal spaces before and after the meeting to encourage members' connections. Have staff and board members mingling during these times to strengthen the relationships between the co-op paid staff, board, and membership.

10

## SERVE FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- Offer complimentary meals, snacks, or refreshments to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Utilize a local club or business, or provide co-op based products to emphasize the value of cooperatives supporting cooperatives.

# › Top 10 Annual Meeting Member Engagement Tactics for Cooperatives

THANK YOU



## Connect With Us

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