

CAC-Community Engagement Experience

Christopher Greer: Building Local Connections



Christopher Greer has been with the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC) Office for over 13 years, often engaging with community members. He is the Assistant CAC/Sealer of Weights & Measures.

How do you approach working with your communities?

Even though I grew up in Tulare County, surrounded by and involved in production agriculture, I had no real idea what the County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC)'s office was. This is why I find it so important to share what our department does and who we are with our communities.

Can you give an example of a successful community engagement event?

My team gave a workshop for over 120 Tulare/Visalia School District staff, such as maintenance employees and janitors, who occasionally handle chemicals on school campuses. We went over personal protective equipment, properly reading chemical labels, licensing requirements and much more. We also discussed rodenticides and disinfectants in relation to the Healthy Schools Act. This type of outreach is important to ensure that those applying chemicals at schools keep our kids safe.

What advice would you offer to other CAC offices interested in engaging with their communities?

There are many ways to learn about local events, and I often hear about these when interacting with other local government entities. Through COVID, Tulare County's Health & Human Services Agency developed partnerships with CBOs and self-help groups, and we receive notifications of community events and health fairs through their [Community Care Coalition](#). Being involved with our [local Farm Bureau](#) has also led to connections with local Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, and school outreach events.

What advice would you offer to CAC staff who interact with the public?

It's human nature to want to start a conversation with your side of the story. However, communication should be a two-way channel, where both parties are listening as much as they are talking. It's hard and takes practice, and I am continually striving to be a better listener. I've found that starting with natural conversations where I show my sincere interest can lead to trust. Even though there are many times when a topic arises outside of the CAC jurisdiction, my CAC is great about instilling in us that we are there to help as public servants, including connecting the public with someone who can help them.

What advice would you offer to community members?

We are here for you and all our county constituents. We want to make sure that everyone is following the laws regarding pesticides, marketplace equity, agriculture, and other services. You should not hesitate to contact us to learn about what your rights are or to get help with pesticide issues. You have the right to reach out to us without employer retaliation, and we can also keep your concerns anonymous. You can reach us by email, phone or coming into our office. Even if your question is not related to us, we'll help you navigate the system and connect you with the appropriate office.