Central San Academy

Citizens Academy 101
CASA Webinar

Christina Gee
Management Analyst
Central San Academy Program Coordinator
About Central San

- A special enterprise district
- Governed by a five-member elected Board of Directors
- 278 employees (294 budgeted)

- Located about 30 miles northwest of San Francisco
- Serving nearly 500,000 residents and >3,000 businesses
- 146 square mile service area

- >13 billion gallons treated per year
- 1,500-mile sewer system
- Recycled water distribution
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility (HHWCF)
- Environmental education
Central San Academy

• Established in 2016 to invite our customers to get to know us
• Classes held every spring over six consecutive weeks
  • Five evening classes from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
  • One daytime facilities tour from 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
• Curriculum covers administrative, engineering, and plant operations, culminating in a graduation ceremony
• Sessions are taught by leadership team, staff, and our Board President
• Held at Headquarters and Collection System Operations facilities
• 2016-2019 sessions were held in person
• 2021 session was held virtually
Our 156 Alumni Ambassadors

- Majority are working professionals from the private sector
- Civically engaged and community minded
- From our service area and beyond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>% of Participants</th>
<th>In Service Area</th>
<th>Out of Service Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>15% (6% unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason Cited for Attending (% of 40 Total 2019 Participants)

- General interest in environmental issues (15%)
- General interest in local government operation (8%)
- Exploring a career in wastewater or local government (10%)
- Desire to become an advocate (25%)
- General interest in wastewater treatment (40%)
- All of the above (3%)
# In-Person or Virtual?
The Pros and Cons of Presenting in-Person vs. Virtually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS OF IN-PERSON</th>
<th>CONS OF IN-PERSON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to foster engagement and build camaraderie</td>
<td>Less accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More time available for curriculum</td>
<td>Greater financial impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer technical difficulties</td>
<td>More complicated to administer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Staff Time Investment**

- Estimate staff time costs for preparing (and delivering, if applicable) presentations
- Most staff time will be spent by the program coordinator
- Ask your Finance workgroup to create a project code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Estimated Staff Time Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$15,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$4,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial Impact

- Majority of the costs: refreshments and staff time
- Consider facility fees for any classes held off site
- Prepare to spend more in your first year
- Cost-saving efforts over the years
  - Limited staff attendance requiring overtime
  - Transitioned to electronic class materials
  - Eliminated an advertisement cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Cost per Participant (incl. staff time)</th>
<th>% Change in Cost per Participant vs. Previous Year</th>
<th>Cost per Participant per Hour of Class Time</th>
<th>% Change in Cost per Participant per Hour of Class Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>$1,513.41</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$100.89</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$334.53</td>
<td>-78%</td>
<td>$22.30</td>
<td>-78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>$381.05</td>
<td>+14%</td>
<td>$23.82</td>
<td>+7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$295.64</td>
<td>-22%</td>
<td>$10.37</td>
<td>-56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building Internal Support

Why hold a citizens academy?

- Improve transparency and customer service
- Create ambassadors
- Highlight what your agency does for the community
- Strengthen your agency’s reputation
- How to alleviate concerns
  - Offer assistance with creating presentations
  - Share success stories
  - Be flexible
  - Free food
Getting the Word Out

• Agency website
• Customer newsletter
• Flyers and brochures on site
• Press release
• Staff and Board
• Agencies and community groups (e.g., chambers of commerce, cities, other public agencies, local colleges/universities, sustainability groups)
• And again... *free food*
Hosting a Successful Academy

• Be ready for curveballs
  • Consider room sizes and microphones
  • Stay on top of timekeeping
  • Have a contingency plan for late-comers and no-shows
  • Balance PowerPoint presentations with group activities and live demonstrations

• Know that your first year is a learning experience

• Hospitality (and free food) goes a long way

• Use analytics to improve future sessions
I will be very sad when the Academy is over. What a fabulous experience this has been. Thank you so very much for the opportunity to learn, meet nice people, and have fun!!

After the first class, I found myself looking forward to Tuesday evenings. The efforts, hard work, and preparation showed from the beginning. It was a class that was done with class. Your grade is an A+.

I could have listened for hours more … the class was even better and even more comprehensive than I had hoped. Thank you!

What an amazing class, experience, and challenge!! Many many thanks. Really well organized and meaty – all information relevant and almost addicting – we all wanted more!! You treated us like royalty 😊
What’s Next?

- We hope to resume Central San Academy in person this spring with a shorter curriculum
- Currently 80+ people on our mailing list
Questions?

Contact Christina at cgee@centralsan.org

or visit our website for more info centralsan.org/academy