

National Pre-College Pipeline Programs Network

Next Steps - CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT

Prepared by Stanford Thompson – January 2019

Getting Started Developing a Formal Network

Networks (Associations) of this nature are typically developed in stages. Below is given a general outline of a pathway this collective could take, and the content developed within each stage.

Stage One – Development of Guiding Principles and Documents

In this stage, a small group of leaders with shared interest in founding the Network come together to draft a core set of guiding principles for the collective including:

1. **Definition of Core Membership** – What is the primary mission of the organizations represented by core members? What is their target population served? What are their shared fundamental elements of intervention/approach?
2. **Definitions of Auxiliary Membership** – Will there be additional allowed members beyond core membership? What will the categories of these additional members be?
3. **Mission of Association** – What is the primary purpose of the Network?
4. **Name** – What should the Network be called?
5. **General Governance** – What will be the voting rights of each category of Network membership? What will be the size and general composition of the governing board?

Stage Two – Vetting Draft Principles and Documents

In this stage, draft principles and documents are circulated to all potential members of the Network for comment and feedback. This may be done electronically, but is enhanced, where possible, by facilitated large-group discussion. There may be multiple iterations of revision between Stage One and Stage Two until it appears that the majority of potential members endorse the guiding principles and documents.

Stage Three – Development of By-laws

Using the above principles (and with ultimate assistance from an attorney) the leadership group will develop a draft set of by-laws for the Network. Such by-laws will codify the items outlined in Stage One and will also include (and not be limited to):

1. **Further Definition of Board Membership** – Board terms and qualifications.
2. **Nomination and Approval of Board Members** – Rules as to how the membership and/or board members bring forward, review, and install new board members.
3. **Board Officers** – Titles, responsibilities, and terms of board officers.
4. **Committees of the Board** – Composition and responsibilities of Standing Committees and rules for their appointment and operation. Rules for appointment and oversight of Ad Hoc Committees.
5. **Dues** – Rules for levying and approving of membership dues.
6. **Budgetary Approval and Oversight** – Responsibilities of board and full membership for approval and oversight of budgets.
7. **Other Basic Requirements as Desired and Deemed Necessary** – This may include rights/responsibilities of members and/or board to hire the executive officer of the Network, additional guiding statements (e.g. vision and values statements), etc.

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Stage Four – Vetting the Draft By-laws

In keeping with the transparency deployed in Stage Two, draft by-laws will usually be circulated to all potential members for comment and feedback. This can again be done electronically and enhanced by group meeting. This process is done both to potentially improve the by-laws, but also to be sure that a perceived majority of potential members would be likely, when they came to a vote, to approve the by-laws.

Stage Five – Development of Initial Operating Plan

Either after Stage Four, or if additional volunteer leaders are available, in parallel with Stage Three, a Network Implementation Plan is drafted including recommendations for:

1. **Location of Network Offices**
2. **Initial staffing plan and budget**
 - A. Budget to include recommendations for initial funding strategy and dues
3. **Initial Workplan/Strategy** – Including short-term goals for Network ramp-up, operations, and member service.

Stage Six – Vetting of Draft Initial Operating Plan

Again, either in conjunction with, or in succession to Stage Four, feedback from the potential full membership is sought for the draft operating plan. If it appears that there is majority agreement on the initial operating plan, the project is, when final rendition of by-laws is complete, moved to the next stage.

Stage Seven – Registration of Membership and Votes of Ratification

At this stage, all members who believe they meet the qualifications for membership specified in the by-laws, register themselves as qualified members. After the registration is complete, a vote is held to approve the by-laws. When the by-laws are approved, the membership then follows the procedures specified in the by-laws to nominate and approve the new board members and officers for the Network. When that is done, tax-exempt incorporation papers are filed (if the Network isn't incubated in an existing non-profit organization), the Network is registered with home offices in a given state but with a national charter, and the Network proceeds to open for business. After this, the Network moves on to implement the initial operating plan.