Start Up Chapter Guide
Module 2
Establishing Your Start-Up Chapter

ynpn | young nonprofit professionals network
building a diverse and powerful social sector
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Thank you for your interest in starting a chapter in your community!

This guide will give you the tools and step-by-step instructions to help you build your chapter, as well as an overview of the resources that YNPN National offers.

Objectives:
- Aware of YNPN history and context [Module 1]
- Understand relationship and affiliation structure between National and Local Chapters [Module 1]
- Understand the steps to becoming a start-up chapter [Module 2]
- Aware of different resources and technical assistance that are available for start-up chapters [Module 3]
- Feel ready and empowered to be part of the network [Module 3]
Introduction

Establishing a YNPN chapter is much like growing a tree. It is an organic process that happens over time and there are many factors involved depending on the size of your community, the number of nonprofit organizations that exist, local sentiment for the sector, and the number of people who may be willing to help launch your chapter.

During the first six months to a year, Start Up chapters will be expected to show progress in the following areas:

**Chapter Leadership**
- Build a committed leadership team who meet on a regular basis
- Develop a mission statement and agreed some goals for the chapter’s development

**Membership**
- Have a pool of potential/active chapter members
- Schedule consistent activities for members/potential members

**Website**
- Ready to get on NationBuilder:
  - Have a social media/web presence
  - Chapter has been collecting data in a systematic way
  - Chapter has demonstrated capacity to manage NationBuilder
  - Chapter has at least 200 email addresses on its list

Once sufficient progress has been made in these areas, the Start-Up chapter will be officially recognized as a Novice chapter.

Once a Start-Up chapter becomes a Novice chapter, the chapter can work on getting a legal status so that it can officially affiliate with YNPN National. Novice chapters will start the onboarding process for Chapter OS.

To be officially affiliated with YNPN National, novice chapters will be expected to have a legal status. In addition to that chapters are expected to show progress in the following areas:

**Operations**
- Financial management
- Defined membership

**Sustainability**
- Revenue Generation
- Partnerships

You will learn more about the processes of becoming a novice chapter in Module 3.

In the meantime, the next section will provide you with tools and resources for building your chapter leadership, membership, and chapter website.
Resources to Get You There!

Chapter Leadership Goals:
- Building a committed leadership team who meet on a regular basis
- Developed a mission statement and agreed some goals for the chapter’s development

In this section:
- Strategies for Recruiting Local Volunteers
- Board Roles and Responsibilities
- Leadership Succession and Recruitment Process
- Diversity and Inclusion

Strategies for Recruiting Local Volunteers

Starting a local YNPN Chapter takes a team effort. While many new chapters feel like they need to begin by recruiting their first board of directors, others find success in recruiting volunteers who are willing to establish the chapter without the long-term commitment of a board term. These initial volunteers can be part of an informal steering committee and then can become directors once the organization has the capacity and internal organization to form an official board of directors.

Recruiting volunteers really comes down to knowing your community and being willing to network. The following bullet points outline some ways that YNPN Chapters have found success in recruiting volunteers:
- Reach out to colleagues at your place of employment or at organizations where you volunteer
- Post notices on existing community list serves and online (e.g. Idealist, Craigslist, local volunteer message boards, etc.).
- Contact large local nonprofits (e.g. United Way, Red Cross, YMCA, colleges or universities, hospitals, etc.) to recruit from within their staffs. Large organizations will often have young employees and view participation in YNPN as a great professional development tool. It is often helpful to start with the HR department as your initial point of contact.
- Contact your local community foundation or other locally focused funders to recruit from within their organizations.
- Attend local nonprofit conferences to promote your chapter and recruit volunteers. Possible methods include adding a recruitment flyer into the conference participant packet, setting up an information table, or simply working the room.
- Contact local government agencies that deal with or make grants to nonprofit organizations.
• Contact your local nonprofit or volunteer center.
• Establish a relationship with a local college or university that may offer certificates, degrees, or specializations in nonprofit management. These programs often have many students interested in networking with other nonprofit professionals and getting involved with the local nonprofit community.

Board Roles and Responsibilities

As you start thinking about which board positions might make sense for your chapter, it might be helpful to look at the common board roles and responsibilities across different chapters. The following is meant to showcase possible positions and job functions that are needed to run a chapter, and is not comprehensive.

**Executive Committee**

The Executive committee usually consists of the Board Chair, Vice Chair (sometimes both of these roles are combined as Executive Chairs), Treasurer, and Secretary. The Executive Committee is responsible for chapter’s governance and decision-making in advancing chapter’s mission and vision.

**Board Chair and Vice Chair / Executive Chairs**

The role of the Executive Chairs is to ensure that chapter activities, and programming is in keeping with chapter’s mission and vision.

**Treasurer**

The treasurer is responsible for overseeing the management and reporting of chapter finances.

**Secretary**

The secretary is responsible for maintaining accurate documentation from chapter meetings, reviewing and updating documents as necessary and ensuring all documents are safely stored and readily accessible. The secretary can also be responsible in collecting all records for legal status compliance.

**Committees / Co-chairs**

**Communications / Marketing**

The Communications/Marketing committee will be responsible for communicating with chapter members about upcoming programs, or opportunities either at local level or national level.
Development / Fundraising
The development/ Fundraising committee will be responsible for fundraising for chapter funds, and lead development efforts as chapter continues to grow.

Finance
The Finance committee will be responsible for tracking chapter expenses, reimbursements and income.

Programming / Events
The Programming Committee will create programming and events for the chapter that will serve the interest of the members and the community.

Membership
The Membership Committee will be responsible for managing chapter membership, growing chapter membership through outreach and continued engagement, and analyzing membership data to inform board decisions.

Governance
The Governance Committee is usually responsible for board development and recruitment. The governance committee monitors board's composition and performance.

Leadership Succession and Recruitment Process

Chapters should set term limits for board positions, and create a process for succession, and taking on new board members. Some chapters have an open call for new board members, and candidates have to submit an application, and go through interviews. Depending on the size of your chapter, and member interest, these processes can vary.

When recruiting for these positions, chapters can start with members who have participated in chapter programs and events. There could also be some outreach and engagement to chapter members and their network who would be interested in leadership development opportunities.

Diversity & Inclusion
By making your chapter board recruitment process more inclusive, it ensures that your board represents the diverse communities that your chapter serves. Some strategies in a more inclusive recruitment process:

- Set achievable, measurable goals for staff diversity for network; identify metrics to measure progress against those goals; put in place feedback loops to learn and improve over time
- Understand pipeline of board recruitments, and find gaps, and from there seek new connections and broaden recruitment sources to include a more diverse candidate in the pipeline
- Articulate diversity and inclusion value to the network - this can be as simple as a diversity statement on your website, or your recruitment outreach
- Engage people from diverse communities in your chapters' events and programs
Membership Goals

- Have a pool of potential/active chapter members
- Scheduling activities for members/potential members

Finding Resources
Finding volunteers and keeping up momentum as you are starting a new chapter can be hard. When chapters are first established, we recommend focusing efforts on recruiting volunteers, building your membership by collecting emails, and focusing on programming. Start Up chapters need some basic resources in order to attract members, host events, and conduct day-to-day business. The following bullet points provide some suggested sources of in-kind goods and services that chapters will need at some point.

Meeting/ Event Space
- Many YNPN Chapters meet after business hours at a volunteer’s office and utilize an empty conference room. Hosting these meetings at local nonprofit organizations can be a great way for volunteers to get to learn about other organizations. It is also an easy way for volunteers to contribute, while showcasing their organization.
- Public spaces like libraries, coffee shops, restaurants, schools, etc.
- Volunteer homes.

Technology
Many chapters make use of such free email accounts as gmail or yahoo and take advantage of other free online tools such as Google docs, Facebook, and Doodle.

Once Start Up chapters become more established, National can support chapters to develop a website using NationBuilder.

Event Speakers/ Consultants
- Many seasoned nonprofit professionals respect the work of YNPN and are willing to volunteer their time to participate in a panel, speak at an event, or provide consulting services.
- Professors at local colleges or universities that deal with nonprofit management programs are often willing to speak at events. They often will ask if they can promote their programs at the event and it turns out to be a good partnership for both the nonprofit program and YNPN.
- Local professionals (i.e. attorneys, accountants, consultants, etc.) that specialize in nonprofit matters make great panelists or event speakers when talking about a specific topic. They also like to promote their services, which makes it a great marketing opportunity for their businesses.
Office/ Event Supplies

- Everyone knows that providing food at events helps to increase participation and overall enjoyment. Providing food for chapter events is a great way for a restaurant or caterer to promote their services to many organizations at the same time. Additionally, many supermarkets will provide food donations and simply need to be asked.
- Start Up chapters often need basic things like paper, copies, markers, flip chart paper, etc. Many chapters either ask volunteers to purchase these things from time to time or ask permission to use a limited amounts of work resources.

Promoting Your Chapter through Events

Putting on the first event is a major milestone for Start Up chapters. Given the amount of work involved in starting a chapter we recommend that you start simple. Events should serve a dual purpose: serve the mission of YNPN by providing a meaningful networking or professional development opportunity for young nonprofit professionals, and at the same time raise the profile of your chapter and create great opportunities to attract new members and collect email addresses.

The following bullet points provide some ideas of easy first events for Start Up chapters.

Social Events

- Organize a social event after an already scheduled conference or co-sponsor a social event with an already established organization such as the local chapter of the Association for Fundraising Professionals (AFP).
- Work with a newly opened bar or restaurant to host a happy hour. The bar or restaurant will most likely provide some sort of deal in exchange for exposure and many young nonprofit professionals will be eager to attend if it is a new and interesting place.
- Host an open house at a volunteer’s place of employment and provide refreshments. This can particularly work well if a volunteer works someplace especially interesting (e.g. museum, gallery, nature center, etc.)

Professional Development

- Secure a locally known speaker and organize a workshop or discussion focused on topical and timely issues.
- Start a book club and include nonprofit management related readings.
- Invite a Senior Executive from a local nonprofit to talk about his or her career path and issues affecting the sector.
**Website Goals**
- Have a social media/internet presence
- Ready to get on NationBuilder

**Social Media/Web Presence**
- Create an account for your chapter on different social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)
- Assign a person to manage and update these accounts.
- Make sure you include photos from your programs and events.
- Post relevant articles, or job postings from your community.
- Like or follow other YNPN Chapters’ social media accounts to get an idea of what other chapter are doing.

**Communications**
- Think about a communications strategy and goals
- Consider sending a newsletter update either monthly or bi-monthly
- Use free software such as MailChimp, ConstantConnect etc to manage communications with your members.

*Here* are some resources we have compiled on web development and website strategy.

**Assessment and Workplans**
To help Start Up Chapters in establishing a chapter, we have developed a workplan and an initial assessment guide so that YNPN National can provide assistance tailored to the needs of your Start-Up Chapter.
- **Workplan** [Make sure you download or make a copy the workplan to use it]
- **Assessment**

**Next steps**
- Complete workplan and identify areas where Chapter will need assistance or resources
- Contact YNPN Staff and schedule a call to talk about the process
- Sign up for Leaders' site
- Sign up for Chapter Leaders' Google Groups
- Review Module 3