Structure and Funding for College Access Networks

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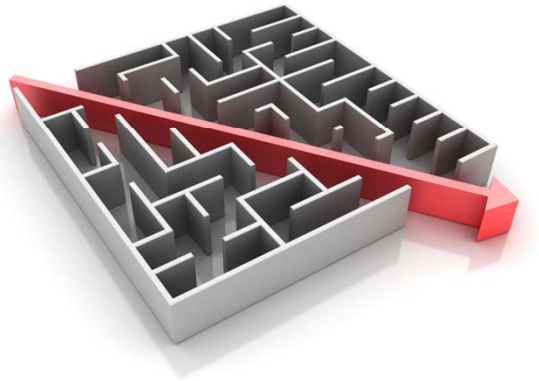
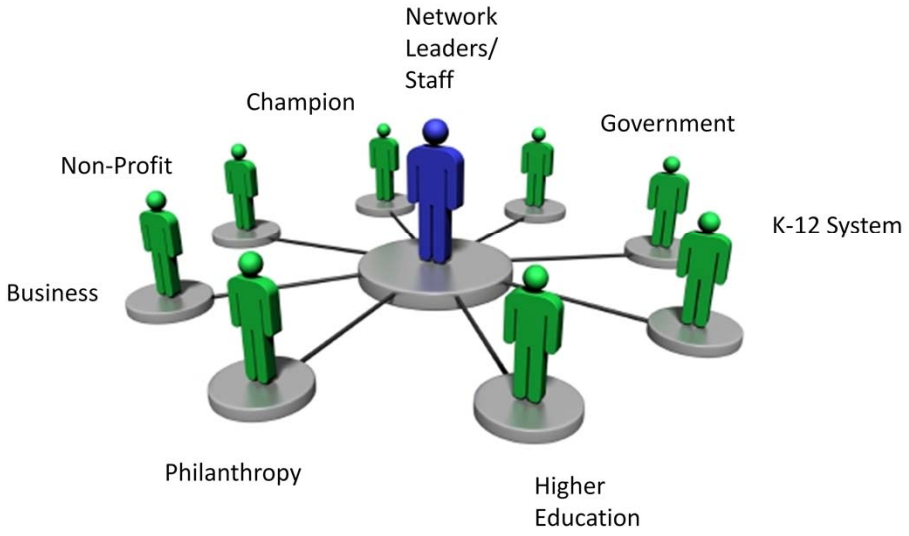
Guide for Network Development



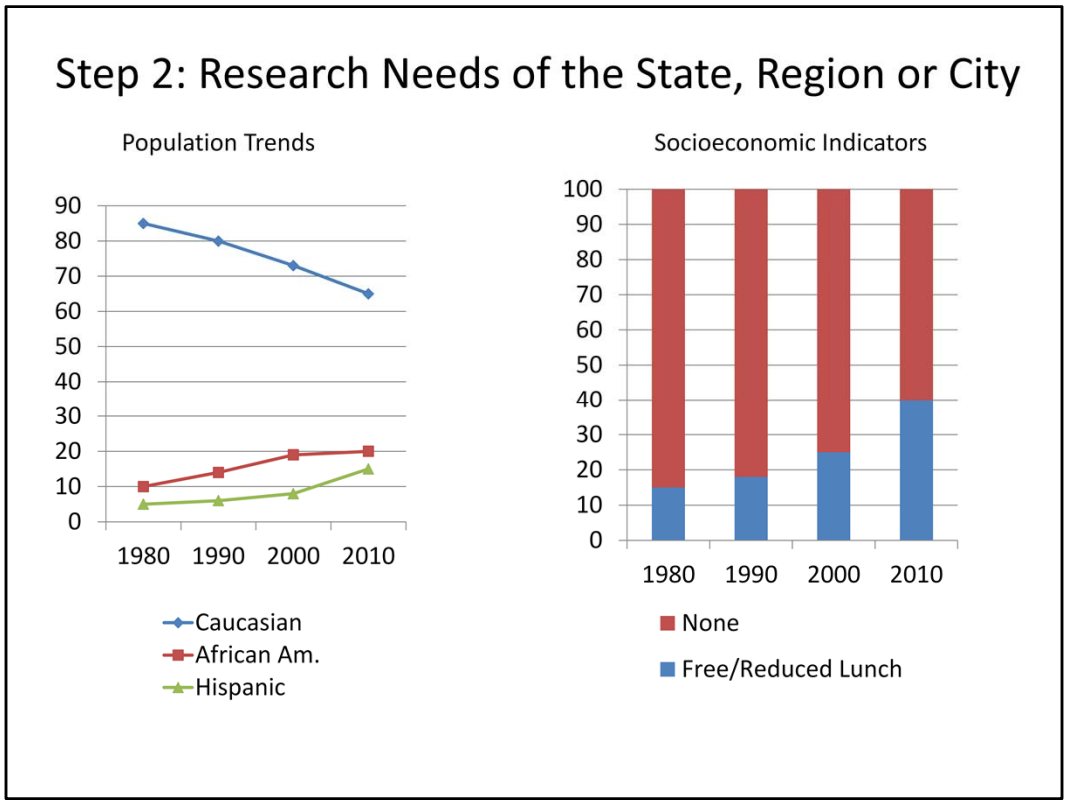
http://www.collegeaccess.org/networks

Various types of network structures.
Resources needed to create and operate a network.
Services most valued by network members and students.

Step 1: Establish a Planning Team



Get the right people at the table
Blue person equals backbone/leader/convener
You did this in November - check



Presented at November Meeting – check

Step 3: Take Inventory of Existing Programs and Identify Gaps

Mapping Existing Relationships and Like Organizations
_____ Organization/Program…

… in relation to other organizations providing "like" programs, products and services in the area*, including allies and competitors*

Organization/ Program/Entity	Geographic Scope	Mission/Impact	Connection With _____ Organization and/or Comparative Added Value (e.g., history of collaboration, competition)

To the extent possible, be sure to gather information from the following sectors:
- Postsecondary institutions (colleges, universities, technical/vocational);
- K-12 school districts;
- AmeriCorps programs;
- Nonprofit organizations;
- Government agencies;
- Philanthropic organizations including foundations; and
- Business and corporate communities.

Network example: Marin

Step 4:
Determine the Mission of the Network

Just finished that discussion! Great

Step 5: Secure Seed Funding

OR

For now – through ACPE and the CACG
Good to start this conversation now since CACG is already nearing it's end – funding through Aug 2015
Structure and money are close related

Incubation – at ACPE
Must decide now: will it stay long term? Will the goal be to eventually move it out?
MI and TN both started and then rolled out. MI set that goal from beginning bc Gov are term limited there and Gov wasn't eligible for re-election
Worked well for both.
Maybe CACG funded sites are now considering whether or not to stay at state agencies.
Better to decide at the beginning.
What are the options?

6.1: Embedded Network

Embedded vs. Stand-Alone

• An embedded network is one that is aligned with or part of another organization or program such
as an institution of higher education, a nonprofit organization, state agency, student loan guarantor
and/or a philanthropic organization.

The advantages of being an embedded network or aligned with another organization, include the costsharing models that may arise. For example, some of the fiscal and other management issues may be assumed by the organization or program with which the network is aligned. The challenge is that there may be some blurring of lines with regard to where the work of the program/organization ends and where the network begins. This may affect the autonomy of the network and result in competition for resources including staffing, and funding with the “host” organization.

6.2: Stand Alone Networks

A stand-alone network is a completely separate organization or coalition. A stand-alone network can be informal or formal.

The advantages of being a stand-alone network come with being an independent entity that is completely separate from another organization which makes it easier to define and articulate its work. There may also be a great deal of excitement generated with creating a new entity.

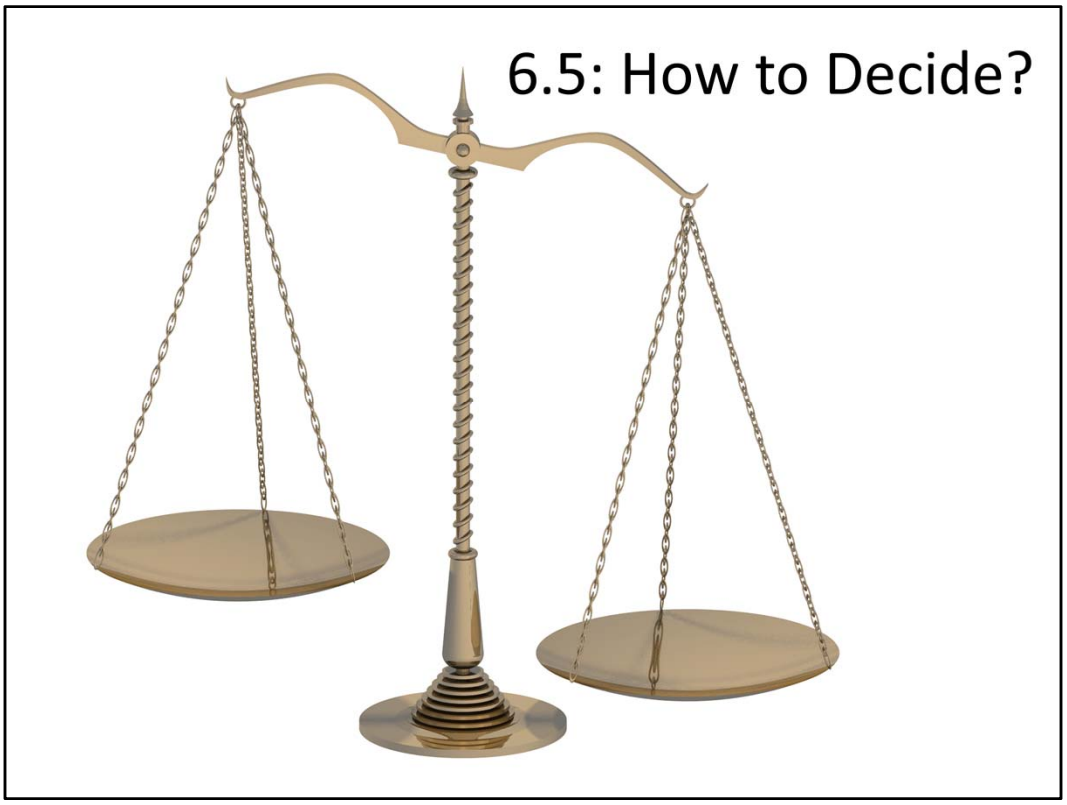
A challenge can be raising resources for the network, particularly in the early stages before the mission is defined and stakeholders (including potential funders) are fully invested.

6.3: Informal Stand Alone Network

An informal stand-alone network is a loosely bound group of programs and/or individuals who may or may not meet regularly to discuss issues of college access and success.

Dramatic picture – but if funding from scratch could feel this way. But remember – the members are the leaves

A formal stand-alone network, is its own separate organization, generally an organization that has been granted tax-exempt 501(c)(3) under the federal tax code.



Deciding Between a Stand Alone or Embedded Network

The decision about whether to be a stand-alone or embedded network will depend, in part, on the key stakeholders and their relationship to the network. It will also depend on any bias the planning team may have about whether or not another nonprofit is needed in that geographic area. For example, if network's biggest champion is a representative of an existing nonprofit, the network may simply be established as a subsidiary of or aligned with this organization. In another case, a potential funding source may stipulate that it is willing to underwrite network start-up costs only if it is operating as a separate entity.

Some of the networks surveyed by NCAN started out as embedded networks and once they had established a strong mission and focus, leadership team, stakeholder support, funding base and positive reputation, were "spun off" into a stand-alone network. The Michigan College Access Network started out as embedded within the governor's office and once established, become a separate 501(c)(3); the Tennessee College Access and Success Network started out as part of a large local nonprofit organization and when an executive director was hired and a funding base established, also became its own nonprofit.

Here is a quote from a citywide network leader. Their funding comes almost exclusively from local foundations that do not want to see another nonprofit organization started in their area.

"The network has no 501(c)(3) status or legal standing. Grantmakers make a grant to

(another nonprofit) or a constituent agency. The group of funders is adamant that they do not want to create another nonprofit organization. However, most of the time needed to run the organization is coming from the foundations' staff."

Board of Directors
Funding/Budget

Step 7: Develop a Budget

SAMPLE BUDGET FOR A STATEWIDE COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

	Year 1	Year 2
STAFFING		
Executive Director	85,000	88,000
Program Director	-	60,000
IT/Accounting/Other staff	45,000	47,000
Administrative Asst.	30,000	31,500
Fringe Benefits (@ 30%)	43,200	61,155
Subtotal Staffing	**203,200**	**227,655**
OPERATIONS		
Occupancy	25,000	25,000
ADP/Bank Fees	2,000	2,500
Telephone	6,000	7,000
Mileage reimbursement	15,000	15,000
Travel	8,000	8,000
Insurance	4,000	4,800
Supplies	5,000	5,000
Legal	5,000	1,500
Printing	10,500	11,000
Computer maintenance	3,500	3,700
Web site design/tracking	50,000	25,000
Accounting	3,500	8,500
Meetings/Conferences	25,000	25,000
Dues & Subscriptions	1,500	1,500
Postage and Delivery	4,000	4,000
Professional Development	20,000	20,000
Depreciation		5,000
Consulting/Evaluation	35,000	20,000
Furniture and equipment	15,000	10,000
Subtotal Operations	**238,000**	**202,500**

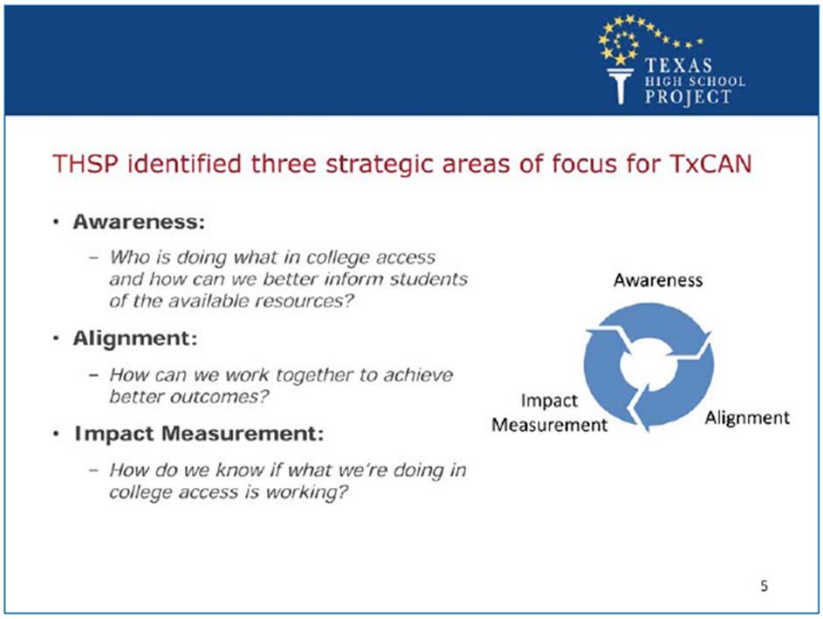
The next step is for the members of the board or planning team to develop a budget. This is not as difficult or scary as it sounds and is grounded in the mission the network wants to achieve, the staffing necessary to achieve it, and the operating expenses such as rent, meetings, technology, supplies, phone and other equipment required. The first step is to delineate all of these expenses; the next step is to project all the income (contributions, fees for service, sponsorships, etc.) the network expects to receive. The challenge is to arrive at a budget where income and expenses match. The leadership team will probably go through several iterations before a final budget is set. This is also a time to consult others who are managing networks; based on NCAN's experience, these individuals are collegial and generous when it comes to sharing their experiences.

- Reference NCAN Budget Webinar

CJ – check
Longer term plan if spin out?

Strong candidates for the executive director position will have at minimum the following qualifications:
Commitment to the mission of the network and the idea of college access and success for all students.
Advanced degree in education, business or a related field.
5-7 years nonprofit management experience.
Demonstrated experience in public policy and advocacy.
Strong leadership qualities including the ability to coordinate, motivate and lead initiatives.
Excellent interpersonal, organizational, and communication skills.
Public speaking experience.
Fundraising and financial management experience.

Step 9: Create a Strategic Plan



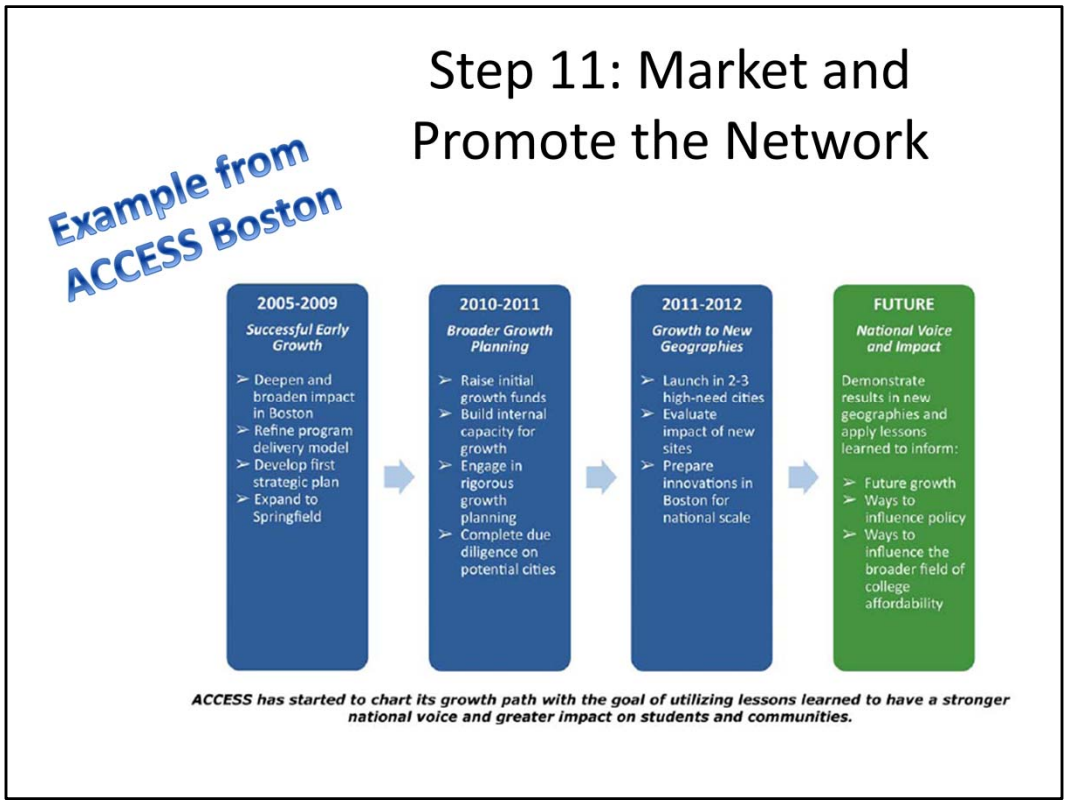
Example: Texas

If ultimate goal is to spin out of ACPE, then a strategic plan that includes that goal with steps to get there is important.

Example: St. Louis

One of the first steps in cultivating a diversified base of support is to write a case statement. A case statement is a message targeted to a particular audience and designed to establish an organization's merits and articulate benefits to a potential donor to stimulate a monetary response. The statement should be brief, targeted to the motivations of a specific type of donor, describe how the contributor's investment will solve a specific problem and be compelling. The case statement will be part of written requests that will be submitted to potential funders.

Another piece of the written request to potential funders is an impact statement. An effective impact statement should answer the following questions:
What is the organization aiming to accomplish?
What are the strategies for making this happen?
What are the organization's capabilities for doing this?
How will the organization know if it is making progress?
What has and hasn't the organization accomplished thus far?



Once established, the services of the statewide, regional or citywide network must be nurtured and promoted. The audience for this marketing will depend on the goal and activities of the network; if it provides direct services to students and families, they must be included as targets in a marketing effort. If the network only provides services to its member college access and success programs, the marketing campaign will be different. Potential audiences may include current and potential members and funders, K-12 and higher education representatives and the general public. Each audience will need to be addressed separately with targeted messaging and vehicles. The network budget should include some funding (or in-kind donations from a partner) to develop and implement a marketing plan and produce collateral materials.

Membership structure webinar and member services webinar
Michigan (with regrants)

U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Roger Parsons/Released

Step 13: Evaluation and Track Progress

Common Measures

National Student Clearinghouse

Measure the success of the network- measureable goals

Common Measures - http://www.collegeaccess.org/Common_Measures
NSC - http://www.collegeaccess.org/PressRoomDetails?dg=a37915e1-6a5e-41f8-88d3-63765ca9588e

NCAN Network Services

Support Services:

- Advocacy
- Success Digest
- Online guidebooks and materials
- Member-only grant opportunities
- Discounted NCAN membership for local network members
- Support and consulting to new and expanding member programs and networks.

Professional Development:

- Annual conference with network track
- Spring Trainings
- Network Learning Community

National College Access Network

Building Connections. Advancing Equity. Promoting Success.

Looking to the Future
• Spring Training: March 26 in Seattle/Tacoma
• Annual Conference: September 15-17 in Phoenix, AZ
• Guidebook online
• Document Sharing on Virtual Community

Discussion and Questions