



Community Connections Handbook

PATH Intl. Community Connections Handbook

Introduction

This handbook can be used by those interested in creating a community group through PATH Intl. Community Connections. The first section of the handbook includes PATH Intl. procedures which are relevant to all community groups. The second section of the handbook provides suggestions and guidelines that community groups may find helpful.

Description of PATH Intl. Community Groups

The PATH Intl. social networking site connects members through community groups by linking individuals with a shared interest and/or purpose through involvement in the group(s) of their choosing. These groups foster community through member participation, member and mentor matching, support, resource sharing, and advocacy. Community groups align with the PATH Intl. mission, vision, strategic plan and practices, but they are imagined, created, defined and managed by their members. The association creates the environment for community groups to operate; however, the communities themselves are self-directed.

Structure of PATH Intl. Community Groups

Each community group is led by a community chair and a team of community leaders who represent the needs of their community members. The Community Chairs of the broad-based communities sit on the PATH Intl. Membership Oversight Committee (MOC) along with the region representatives. The chair of the Membership Oversight Committee represents the needs of both the regions and the communities to the other oversight committees and to the PATH Intl. Board of Trustees. The membership coordinator for PATH Intl. provides support for all community chairs.

Forms

All forms are available on-line at the Community Connections webpage: www.pathintl.org/path-intl-membership/my-community

PATH Intl. Procedures

Procedure 1.1 Formation of a Community Group

An interested individual or group of individuals demonstrates a desire to create a new PATH Intl. Community Group. This individual or group will provide evidence that the potential community has passion and vision to create and maintain a community group. This can be done by filling out and submitting the Community Group Application.

Procedure 1.2 Alignment with PATH Intl.'s Culture, Vision, Strategic Plan, and Practices

All community groups must align with the PATH Intl. culture, vision, strategic plan and general operating practices.

Procedure 1.3 Organization Chart

Community groups exist under the PATH Intl. Membership Oversight Committee. Broad-based community chairs sit as advisors on the Membership Oversight Committee (MOC) along with the elected region representatives. The chair of the Membership Oversight Committee represents the needs of both the regions and the communities to the other oversight committees and to the PATH Intl. Board of Trustees.

Procedure 1.4 Finances

All financial transactions are handled by the PATH Intl. office. Community chairs or leaders cannot sign contracts or make financial decisions on behalf of the association. All contracts, invoice orders, payments or other financial interactions must be processed through the PATH Intl. office to protect the community chairs and leaders and the association.

Procedure 1.5 Projects

Members of the community group can follow the processes of their specific community to submit a project proposal to the community chair. The community chair can in turn submit this proposal to the membership coordinator who will review the project, determine its alignment with the strategic goals of the association and if applicable, submit the proposal for approval to the appropriate oversight committee and staff member.

Procedure 1.6 Project Resources

Many project proposals that emerge from community groups may be simple to implement if endorsed and funding and resources may be allocated from existing budgets and programs. The staff membership coordinator will inform the community chair whether resources exist to implement the project and the timing of implementation.

There may be projects that will require significant financial, volunteer and/or staff resources to execute. If the project requires significant resources, please consider the following:

Procedure 1.6.1 Internal Funds

If the project has been endorsed, the chair and the appropriate staff member will develop a budget outlining required financial, volunteer and staff resources as well as any positive impact the proposal will have on revenue, brand image, or other assets of the association. The outlined budget will be incorporated in to the budget process of the next fiscal year. (July 1 through June 30) during the budget planning process (January through March prior to the fiscal year). The PATH Intl. Board of Trustees will approve or reject the resource allocation requested as part of the annual budget review and approval process. The staff membership coordinator will inform the chair of the decision after the budget has been voted on by the board. If resources are to be

allocated to the project, the staff membership coordinator will inform the chair when the resources are/will be available to begin implementation.

Procedure 1.6.2 Funding Limitations

Funding is dependent on the availability of funds and the results of the review process.

Procedure 1.6.3 External Funds

Special projects may be funded by corporate donations, sponsors, or individual donations. Community groups seeking external funds must work with the staff development manager to obtain financial support from these sources. The staff development manager is to be contacted in writing *before* soliciting funds from any source. If a community group is approached by an outside source, this contact should be referred to the staff development manager.

Procedure 1.6.4 Reporting Requirements

After the resources are made available the recipient community group will be required to submit quarterly progress reports for the duration of the project. When the project is completed a final report must be made. All reports must be made in a timely fashion to the membership coordinator.

Procedure 1.6.5 Making Changes in the Project after Approval

Any major changes in content, format, time frame, etc. must be approved in advance by the staff membership coordinator. Requests should be made in writing to the membership coordinator.

Procedure 1.6.6 Funding Accountability

All financial transactions for community projects will be handled through the PATH Intl. office. Funds will be distributed by request upon submission of a Reimbursement Request Form with original receipts. Reimbursement forms should be submitted by the community group chair to the staff membership coordinator. No member will have signature authority on behalf of the association.

Funds must be used within the time frame requested for the project. Upon completion, all unused funds will be returned to the general account. If the project is not completed within the identified time frame, the staff membership coordinator will request the remaining funds be surrendered unless a report has been filed justifying an extension.

Procedure 1.6.7 Budget Variances

If a project exceeds the costs established in the budget, the community group chair may apply for a budget variance to cover the excess cost. The request should be made in writing to the staff membership coordinator specifying the anticipated cost overrun and providing justification for the excess. No additional costs can be incurred without prior approval.

Procedure 1.6.8 Purchases/Mailings

All purchases, printing and/or mailings supporting a project must be done through the PATH Intl. office unless specific prior authorization has been granted.

Procedure 1.7 Ownership of Intellectual Property

All intellectual property developed by community groups with or on behalf of the association are the property of PATH Intl.

Procedure 1.8 Criteria for Community Termination

PATH Intl. may choose to terminate a community group if the community does not demonstrate active and on-going engagement, participation and representation of its members. PATH Intl. may also terminate a community group if the community does not align with the association's strategic plan, vision, mission, culture or practices.

Procedure 1.9 Removal of Community Members

Individuals may be removed from a community group if they are no longer a member of the association in good standing, if they violate the association's values and/or ethics, or if they violate the community's norms and expectations.

Procedure 1.10 Conflict of Interest

Members will adhere to the PATH Intl. policy on conflict of interest. Individuals as well as PATH Intl. staff will make the chair aware of relevant disclosures made by members. It is the responsibility of the chair to raise issues of conflict of interest during meetings and calls.

Recommendations for Operating Procedures

PATH Intl. asks that each community group either use these recommendations as its operating procedures, or create their own unique operating procedure manual. Operating procedures of each community group should be posted in the group's resource library so that all members can have access.

Recommendations Regarding Leadership

Initial Election of Community Group Chairs

It is recommended that the chair of a community group be elected from within that specific community. On the Community Group Application a chair is nominated by the individual applying or group applying. The nomination is submitted to the Membership Oversight Committee for approval.

Ongoing Election of Community Group Chairs

It is recommended that the chair of a community group identify one successor (or Chair-Elect) one year prior to the end of his/her term. Each community group will be responsible for creating its own internal processes for election. PATH Intl. asks that the nominees be presented to the Membership Oversight Committee for review and support.

Training of Community Group Chairs

The PATH Intl. staff membership coordinator will provide training and support for each community group chair. It is suggested that the existing community group chair assist in the training process from the time that the chair-elect is chosen to ensure successful transfer of responsibility.

Terms of Office

It is recommended that each community group use the traditional PATH Intl. term of office for a community group chair which is one year with the option of up to four consecutive terms. Community groups can choose different terms of office if they so desire.

Responsibilities of the Community Group Chair

It is important that each community group determine the responsibilities of the community group chair. Below is one example of how a community might word the responsibilities of the community group chair:

The community group chair is responsible for choosing the leadership team, providing leadership and accountability for the team, acting as the voice for the larger community within the Membership Oversight Committee, the initiation and/or management of projects, applying for resources, management of any resources and funding, identifying a successor and for keeping the members of his or her community actively engaged through on-going communication and outreach.

It is suggested to have whatever responsibilities the community group decides upon documented in writing so the community group chair can sign and formally agree to the responsibilities s/he will fulfill prior to taking the role.

Leadership Teams

The community group and the community group chair will need to determine a leadership team to assist in the management of the community. Leadership teams help to represent the needs of the community at large. They could research, propose and initiate projects that would benefit the community. They could help with outreach, communication and education for community members.

The community group and the chair might consider nominating members of the community or volunteering for a role independently.

Roles of the Leadership Team

Below are some possible roles that the Leadership Team could assume:

- *Chair-Elect* – Stands in for the community group Chair if needed, learns procedures for managing the community and assists with the leadership of the community.
- *Moderator* – Supervises the electronic communications throughout the community to ensure all communications meet member norms and expectations.
- *Content Manager* – Gathers, organizes and posts content specific to the community
- *Ethics Advisor* – Provides ethical advice for members of the community based upon the PATH Intl. Code of Ethics and the PATH Intl. Standards.

Recommendations Regarding Member Participation

Member Voting, Decision Making, and Polling

When members vote on association-wide issues they will use majority rules per the association's procedures. It is recommended that decisions within the community group leadership team be made using Roberts Rules of Order. If the community group chooses another operating principle, the community group chair should notify the PATH Intl. Membership Oversight Committee and the staff membership coordinator.

Member Norms & Expectations

Each community group should create its own member norms and expectations. PATH Intl. does expect that all community group members will uphold the values and ethics outlined in the PATH Intl. Code of Ethics and will align their community work with the association's vision, mission and strategic plan. PATH Intl. also requires that all members adhere to the Community Connections guidelines as posted on the log in webpage. If a member is acting outside of the norms and guidelines posted by the community or by PATH Intl., the community group chair is expected to mitigate the situation with the support of the

staff membership coordinator. In some cases a decision may be made to terminate the member from Community Connections.

Below is a possible statement regarding member norms and expectations:

Community group members will be respectful of each other's individual voices and diverse backgrounds as people from around the world meld together to form a unique cultural blend. PATH Intl. community group members strive to create a friendly, supportive and welcoming atmosphere where open, honest communication is encouraged.

Possible Community Group Activities

Community groups can engage in many different activities based upon the unique and organic development of interests that each group manifests. Here are a few examples:

Networking

The chief purpose of PATH Intl. Community Connections is to provide a space for members to network, connect, share resources and support each other professionally. Active dialog, face-to-face meetings and events, and posting resources are all options through PATH Intl. Community Connections. Remember, PATH Intl. Community Connections is "for members, by members" so if the community doesn't take initiative the opportunities do not exist.

Advocacy

Community groups can help advance the field through outreach, education and advocacy both association-wide and within the larger industry.

Technical Advising

Community groups may be asked by PATH Intl. committees or staff to provide expert advice and/or support for projects or issues that the association faces.

Projects

Projects that benefit both the specific community group and PATH Intl. as a whole can be proposed either by the community group chair and leadership team or by individual community members. A formal project proposal will be used to determine the appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed project. Projects must align with the PATH Intl. Strategic Plan and meet the needs of the individual community. (See Procedure 1.5)

Work Groups

In order to accomplish projects, the community group chair and leadership team can recruit members of the larger community to participate in work groups or task forces to complete projects.

Recommendations Regarding the PATH Intl. Social Networking Site

Social Networking Community Norms and Expectations Protocol

Members will follow the PATH Intl. Community Norms and Expectations protocol (see page 5) at all times. If members do not adhere to the norms and expectations they will be warned and provided with feedback about their behaviors. If they do not address these concerns they will be asked to leave the community. This process will be monitored by the community group chair with support from the PATH Intl. staff membership coordinator as needed.

Moderators

The community group chair and certain members of the leadership team will be moderators for the social networking site. This means that they can upload resources, edit content, change certain settings, etc. The

PATH Intl. staff membership coordinator will train the chair and/or other members of the leadership team on the above-mentioned activities.

Content in Resource Library

Members of the community can submit resources to the community group chair and/or designated members of the leadership team to be uploaded in the resource library. It is important that the content meets certain criteria in order to be uploaded. Community group chairs should create guidelines for content. Below are some ideas about what could be included in the guidelines:

- Sources
- Author
- Date
- APA style when/if applicable
- Keywords with which to search content
- Short description of the content
- Quality and applicability rating (the value of the content for the community group membership; how well written or displayed is the content?)

Recommendations Regarding Documentation

Required Documentation

The community group chair must provide PATH Intl. with the required documentation for specific tasks or action items. Forms can be found on the PATH Intl. Community Connections webpage at www.pathintl.org/path-intl-membership/my-community or can be requested from the staff membership coordinator.

The Path Intl. Community Connections work group and supporting staff members welcome recommendations for improving the helpfulness of this handbook as communities evolve. Please submit any suggestions to rdavis@pathintl.org.