

## Roadmap to Starting a Statewide Recovery Community Organization

**Visioning** The first step in establishing a statewide recovery community organization is community visioning. This can be done by holding stakeholder meetings across your state to find out what the recovery community wants, what their hopes of the future are, who will be involved and how the statewide RCO will be structured.

**Step One: Establish a Core Group** Start by identifying a core group of dedicated and committed volunteers. These “champions” should demonstrate leadership, communication and active listening skills. This group should also represent the diversity of the greater recovery community, including multiple pathways of recovery. A clear structure of the meetings will need to be created along with a variety of meeting options within regions, such as in-person, conference calls or virtually.

**Step Two: Develop a Shared Vision** A shared vision should reflect the divergent views and ideas of the recovery community across the state and encourage ongoing involvement in the planning process. Having a facilitator for the visioning process will help to manage the multiple ways to gather this information for your vision. This process will assist you in prioritizing your agenda. Think of your vision as your “billboard” - a picture of your ideal statewide recovery community organization for all to see.

**Step Three: Create Mission and Vision Statements** A *mission statement* will be your organization’s compass, outlining your fundamental purpose or “mission.” It is the path you will take to realize your vision or dream. Mission statements clearly identify who the organization serves, what needs you are trying to satisfy and how you will serve your constituents. A *vision statement* is a process to look to the future, identify obstacles that may be in your path and creates your organization’s unified focus.

**Build Your Agenda** Guided by the information collected from the recovery community during the visioning process, the next step is to create a strategic plan to prioritize what programs and activities the newly forming organization has, or needs, the capacity to do. If the first step is raising money, the organization’s leadership will need to build relationships with potential funders in a way that stays true to your mission. The strategic plan will need to be revisited often to guide your work during the timeframe it was created for.

**Organizational Structure** A solid organizational structure defines governance roles and internal processes and procedures, and establishes authority and decision-making procedures that help recovery community organizations be accountable to the community and funders. At this stage, bylaws will be created as the legal guidelines the organization will follow.

**Communications** Having a clear communications plan is key to outreach and mobilization of the recovery community and stakeholders. Begin by building a database of those who want to be involved- your members and supporters- using an email marketing platform. Be sure procedures are in place to ensure the confidentiality of supporters’ information. Keep everyone updated on your groups progress in forming the statewide RCO on a regular basis. Keep them engaged by asking for their input often.

**Celebrate your Successes** Don’t forget to celebrate and honor key leaders, partners, stakeholders and funders when you have reached key milestones in your strategic plan. The community will come to value your expertise as an RCO and the critical role you have in the state by providing a voice for the recovery community, our families, friends and allies.