



Chapter Lifecycle Workbook

State Chapter organizations are critical entities in the effort to provide accessible, high-quality, evidence-informed services for children and families. In order to ensure that State Chapters have the support and resources required to do this work, the regional and national partners that provide training and technical assistance to State Chapters developed a state chapter lifecycle model and workbook (adapted from Susan Kenny Steven's book *Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity*), with the input and guidance of State Chapters between November 2016 and April 2018. The goal of this workbook is to provide a structure for Regional Children's Advocacy Centers (RCACs), National Children's Alliance (NCA), and State Chapters to work together to assess strengths and areas of need using an organizational lifecycle framework. The intended outcomes for engagement in this process are to:

- Assist in the responsible allocation of training and technical assistance resources for Chapters;
- Provide information to help State Chapters in their long-term planning; and
- Create a better understanding of the connection between strong State Chapters and access to high-quality services provided at children's advocacy centers (CACs).

Chapter Lifecycle Workbook – Summary Sheet

Summarize the findings of this workbook on this page, and capture any organizational priorities revealed by engaging in this process in the “Priorities” box below.

DATE: _____

STAGE → COMPETENCY ↓	IDEA	START-UP	GROWTH	MATURITY	DECLINE	TURNAROUND
GOVERNANCE						
ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS						
FINANCIAL						
MANAGEMENT						
PROGRAMS						
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT						

PRIORITIES

INSTRUCTIONS

In partnership with your RCAC, review the following six competencies and the characteristics identified at each stage as critical for a strong State Chapter:

- **Governance** - *The non-profit business strategy. The Board of Directors. The organization's formal oversight.*
- **Administrative Systems** - *Data collection systems. Personnel policies and procedures. Administrative technology.*
- **Financial** - *Financial systems (bank accounts). Revenue/funding streams. Budget planning/ strategy.*
- **Management** - *Leadership. Organizational structure. Personnel.*
- **Programs** - *Statewide programs. Membership resources. Trainings. Legislative advocacy.*
- **Member Engagement** - *Membership guidelines. Engagement. Outreach. Value.*

The lifecycle stages at a glance:

Source: *Nonprofit Lifecycles; Susan Kenny Stevens, PH.D.*

- **Idea** - The stage in which there is no formal organization, only an idea and a personal mandate to fill a societal, programmatic or cultural gap in the community.
- **Start-up** - The beginning stage of organizational operations in which unbridled mission, energy, and passion reign supreme, but generally, without corresponding governance, management, resources, or systems.
- **Growth** - The stage in which nonprofit mission and programs have taken hold in the marketplace, but where service demand exceeds current structural and resourced capabilities
- **Maturity** - The stage of operation in which the organization is well established, operating smoothly and has a community reputation for providing consistently relevant and high quality services.
- **Decline** - The stage in which the organization's services are no longer relevant to the marketplace, self-indulgent, status-quo decisions are made, and declining program census creates insufficient operating income to cover expenses.
- **Turnaround** - The stage at which an organization, having faced a critical juncture due to lost market share and revenues, takes decisive action to reverse prior actions in a self-aware, determined manner.

While these stages exist on a continuum, it is not necessarily a linear path from one stage to another, and the period of time an organization might spend in each stage is rarely equal. This workbook is not intended to measure how far away the State Chapter is from an ideal organizational existence, but simply to identify areas where further investment could be helpful in pursuit of the State Chapter's mission.

In each section, please include examples pertinent to your State Chapter that have led to the determination made. For example, under the "Governance" competency, an example of being in the "Growth" stage could be that the State Chapter has engaged in a strengths assessment process for the Board of Directors.

Please also include any data that exist to support the determination in each section. Data could include survey results from a strategic planning process, program evaluation results, budgetary information, etc. Applicable data might not exist for every section, but please include all information that could be helpful for a training and technical assistance provider to understand where additional resources might be required.

GOVERNANCE

CORRESPONDING CHARACTERISTICS

STAGE

<p>IDEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No distinct organization • Lack of defined mission, work may be disorganized or inconsistent • No identified Executive Director, responsibilities are shared in ways that may not be effective • No board. Decisions are made without formal oversight • Lack of defined policies for governance
<p>START UP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is general agreement on the mission of the organization and what work is needed to support that mission • An Executive Director has been identified and the Executive Director's roles have been established • Board of Directors has been created, but may be lacking in diversity and members don't see themselves in a governance role. • Board members almost always have a personal connection to the founder or Executive Director • Essential documents have been developed with basic outlines of policies and procedures (e.g., bylaws, legal documents, etc.), but may have limited scope
<p>GROWTH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board is diversified and community members engaged • Board committees have been developed and work on specific activities • Goals are re-evaluated on a routine basis through a strategic planning process • Board is able to understand risk and make informed decisions expeditiously as opportunities arise • Personnel and other resources (space, technology) have been established to manage administrative systems • Policies and procedures are followed and evaluated regularly
<p>MATURITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong, diversified board exists with community and member representatives • Committees regularly meet and carry out beneficial activities • Board sets direction, is policy-oriented and leaves management to Executive Director • Board is organized for maximum effectiveness and has a structure for continuity of leadership and culture • Board members are actively involved in events and contribute to the organization
<p>DECLINE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board is complacent and disengaged • Board makes poor decisions and/or invest in activities that do not support the mission • The organization lacks "spark" or is experiencing one too many crises, causing distrust and diminished board attendance
<p>TURNAROUND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong strategic plan is developed and implemented that supports the mission • Leadership has evaluated past mistakes and built protections to prevent them from reoccurring • Board member recruitment, training (for current and new members) and self-evaluation occur in an informed way • Energy and enthusiasm for the work is building

GOVERNANCE

DETERMINED STAGE: <hr/>	<p>EXPLANATION – Using the bullet points above as a guide, please provide relevant details below that explain how you determined the stage in which your State Chapter currently operates.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>DATA BACK UP – Please provide any data, evaluation information, or examples of organizational documents, policies, and procedures that back up your determination (if applicable).</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

CORRESPONDING CHARACTERISTICS

STAGE

<p>IDEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal, centralized systems to collect and review data • Lack of policies and procedures to ensure consistency of work • Roles are not defined, tasks are distributed among members • Lack of adequate information to make data-informed decisions • May use in-kind systems
<p>START UP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection has begun, but may be fairly basic and could be stored in multiple locations rather than one coordinated system • A person or organization has been established as the coordinator of data, but exact roles may still be evolving • Inconsistent data may be exploratory in nature (i.e. needs assessments) and may not be clear or consistent enough to fully guide decision-making
<p>GROWTH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent, centralized data system exists and has begun to inform practices • Personnel and other resources (space, technology) have been established to manage administrative systems • Policies and procedures are followed and evaluated regularly
<p>MATURITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities pertaining to the management of administrative systems are well defined and understood by staff • Program evaluation and data management practices, including collection of feedback from program stakeholders, are consistent and effective • Organization operates from an outlined course of action for routine client, board and personnel matters • Data is used to inform and improve services on a statewide basis
<p>DECLINE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures are not followed consistently • Lack of accountability/evaluation related to projects, administrative functions and activities • Systems/technology are outdated • Data collection is irrelevant and/or inconsistent • Turnover in staff responsible for administration, lack of succession planning
<p>TURNAROUND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective succession plan has been developed to address any staff turnover • Policies and procedures have been evaluated and modified if necessary • Systems have been updated, data collected and evaluated

FINANCIAL

CORRESPONDING CHARACTERISTICS

STAGE

IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal financial systems and documentation (bank account, etc.) • Many contributions may be effort-based rather than financial (i.e. sweat equity) • Resources are borrowed from individuals and organizations in the movement • Limited funding from few sources, leading to instability
START UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal financial systems have been established (bank account, etc.) • Budget is often the sole financial document • The organization has dedicated resources to financial management, such as established personnel and/or contracted support • Some funding streams have been established, but additional research is needed to find a greater variety and larger funding amounts • Dues are collected from members
GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic funding exists to support current programs, but will need to grow to support new initiatives and evolving needs of members • Dues are consistently collected from members who see value in the work of the organization • Diversified funding streams and fundraising activities are sought out regularly • More sophisticated financial tracking systems are required • Legislative support exists, but needs continued support
MATURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves may exist in the event of unexpected expenses • Organization has multiple sources of income and is not dependent on one source of funding • Legislative support is stable and supports statewide initiatives • A formal financial plan exists and guides all funding practices
DECLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter has lost funding or is not receiving additional funding to meet evolving needs • Organization has lost touch with funders/donors • The Executive Director is not involved in meetings where funding decisions are made at local, and state levels. • Poor stewardship of funds - poor investments or not meeting grant objectives
TURNAROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter successfully sought diversified funding to meet current and future needs • Chapter's focus is on funding vital work that is aligned with the strategic plan • Chapter has created and follows an effective financial plan • There is a willingness to cut expenses to reflect realistic income and cash flow

FINANCIAL

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MANAGEMENT

CORRESPONDING CHARACTERISTICS

STAGE

IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No identified Executive Director, responsibilities are shared in ways that may not be effective • Decisions are made by those with the most influence, may not always be best for the movement as a whole • Work is done on a volunteer basis
START UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Executive Director has been established or other policies are in place to ensure management of the organization, but may need further development • Decisions are made in a more organized way and may be guided by a preliminary strategic plan • Staff are hired who are typically generalists, wear multiple hats and live the mission with complete enthusiasm
GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Executive Director has been established and sees infinite potential for services • Roles and responsibilities are defined, carried out, and communicated to the field in a consistent way • Staff are hired who are specialists who require competitive compensation
MATURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization's structure includes strong leadership and effective support staff • Staff have the tools they need to carry out their specific roles and responsibilities • Management is seen as leader among industry peers • CAC/Chapter Founding Members are successfully navigating any ambivalence or discomfort about changes necessitated by growth
DECLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan is not followed or updated to meet current needs • Lack of investment in personnel - training, job satisfaction, etc. • Management is complacent and committed to status quo • Staff transitions occur without succession planning • Lack of communication
TURNAROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager is decisive, able to size up problems and mobilize resources effectively. • Focus is on relationships • Chapter is investing in training for Executive Director and staff or considering staff changes if necessary • Chapter acknowledges problem areas and develops solutions that are clearly communicated to stakeholders

PROGRAMS

CORRESPONDING CHARACTERISTICS

STAGE

IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is fragmented, members act in silos • Programs are not yet defined • Lack of unified work around a shared vision
START UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members have begun to work together and share information/expertise • Programs may be largely based on guidance from existing organizations (CACs, NCA, RCACs, other Chapters) • Willingness to do almost anything to prove that services can and should exist
GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs exist and are consistently provided to members • Additional programs are being explored based on needs identified and are carried out through the strategic plan • Services begin to be less person-dependent and more positional • Programming is informed by subject matter experts and feedback from members
MATURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs are well-established, used regularly by members, and influential in the field • Effective programs are scaled up and provided statewide • Outcomes of programs are routinely monitored and used to make improvements • Organization resists the urge to play it safe and knows how to keep its spark alive through continual program renewal
DECLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs are not evaluated and updated to meet members' current needs • Lack of communication • Programs are based on temporary funding availability rather than members' true needs • Content is stale and does not incorporate current research/trends
TURNAROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on relevant, current programs based on a membership needs assessment • Programs have been evaluated to find areas of success and areas in need of improvement, changes are being made as needed • Data are collected and used to inform decisions

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

CORRESPONDING CHARACTERISTICS

STAGE

IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work needed to gain trust and buy-in • Lack of defined person to offer member support • Membership not clearly defined yet
START UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members have been identified • Efforts are made to identify and respond to members' expectations for Chapter resources and communication • Members are engaged in meetings
GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive efforts are made to engage members. • Roles and responsibilities of member organization and membership are clear • Outreach is conducted to engage new members • Data is gathered and used to inform programs to meet the evolving needs of members • Members are invested in the organization and see value in their engagement
MATURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization is well-known in the field and has consistent branding • Members find value in the organization and are aware of membership benefits • There are regular opportunities for members to contribute and provide feedback • Individualized services are available and prioritized to members in need
DECLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication between Chapters and members • Members no longer find value in the organization and may choose to end membership • Lack of trust and collaboration between Chapters and members
TURNAROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters has determined which programs are most valuable to members and let go of programs that do not add value • Chapters is focused on rebuilding trust and transparency through communication and team building • Chapters offers members opportunities to get involved through committees and workgroups • Chapter has improved its accountability to its members and follows through on commitments

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

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