

Seven Crucial Steps

Toward Developing a Successful Pregnancy Care Center

From the time interest is generated in a pregnancy care center (PCC) ministry, until the door of the center first opens, seven developmental steps must be taken. Omitting any of these seven steps weakens the overall foundation of the ministry and, ultimately, its effectiveness. While the desire to minister to women facing unplanned or unwanted pregnancies is commendable, it should not be shortchanged by careless preparation or hurried planning.

These seven steps can generally be completed in about eight months, once a strong steering committee is established. Some centers may be established in less time while others may take longer.

Additional assistance in PCC development may be obtained from Life Matters Worldwide. We also highly recommended that centers refer to our *Standards for Excellence* manual as an additional guide.

I. BUILD A STRONG CORE GROUP THAT SERVES AS A STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE PCC

From the time of its first meeting, the core group should function as an ad hoc committee with a chairman, secretary and treasurer. This is important in that it will eliminate problems when questions are later raised as to who is in charge and what has been decided. All decisions should be made by the steering committee and recorded. This committee should consist of not less than five members.

The best candidates for the steering committee should have a strong desire to see this PCC outreach become a reality; an uncompromising commitment to and thorough understanding of the pro-life ethic; certain skills (accounting, fundraising, administration, leadership, speaking, etc.) that will help facilitate the development of the PCC; a clear and consistent testimony of faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; and be an active member in good standing of a conservative, evangelical local church. A recommendation from the candidate's pastor is also strongly advised.

An open meeting sponsored by the church/churches interested in a PCC can be used to recruit members for this committee. This meeting will also serve as an educational and motivational event to generate interest in the PCC.

It is important to begin generating a mailing list of those who express interest in a PCC. This can be done by having an interest list posted in churches sympathetic to the PCC ministry. Personnel and financial support can be obtained from those listed.

II. ASSESS YOUR COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO PRODUCE A PROFILE OF RESOURCES FOR THE PCC

Community survey forms are available for [download](#) online and in the *Standards for Excellence* manual (under Sample Forms). They should be completed by the steering committee as its initial project. By completing this inventory of questions, information necessary for the PCC is obtained. The survey is comprised of twelve sections and can easily be divided among committee members with an assigned time for completion. The data obtained will provide the committee with information necessary for making referrals to valuable community resources. It will also show where and how abortions are being performed in the community.

III. INCORPORATE THE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER AND APPLY FOR TAX-EXEMPTION

Since funds will be raised and disbursed for the ministry, it is necessary that incorporation papers are filed for the PCC and that tax-exempt status is received from the IRS. Although it is possible for a PCC to come under the corporate ministries of a church, experience has shown that other ministries are less likely to support the center under this arrangement. Another good reason is that independent incorporation effectively limits the extent of legal liability in the event that the PCC should be sued.

Once incorporated, the legal governing body of the PCC becomes the Board of Directors. The board should consist of no fewer than five members. The Board of Directors is to be active, meeting monthly. They set policy, evaluate programs and activities, hire, evaluate (and fire) the PCC chief executive, and help secure the funds necessary for the ministry to operate. In addition, the Board of Directors is expected to head and participate in committee responsibilities that do not relate to the delivery of services to clients (e.g. finance, education, research, public relations, etc.).

Generally, through the process of steering committee activities and survey compilation, interested individuals are found who would be good members of the Board of Directors.

IV. ESTABLISH WORKING COMMITTEES, WHICH SUPPLY BASIC RESOURCES FOR THE PCC

The PCC cannot operate apart from a team of dedicated volunteers and funds. The Board of Directors must undertake the task of making Christians and churches aware of the need for the ministry and the opportunities to become involved. As a result of such developmental activities, funds are secured and volunteers are recruited to work in the PCC.

The main committees and key personnel positions are: Finance, Educational Research, Personnel & Training, Case Manager, Office Manager, Clothing Coordinator, New Mothers Coordinator, ChildBirth Instructor, Publicity & Promotion, Social Services Liaison.

Many groups wonder at what point they have adequate support to open a center. As a minimum, a sizable fund should have been built up for start up costs (\$5,000 - 7,000) and pledges of monthly support of at least \$1,000 should have been received.

V. APPOINT A CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO IMPLEMENT BOARD POLICY AND MANAGE THE PCC

The Board of Directors is solely responsible to appoint a chief executive, regardless of whether the position is salaried or volunteer. Accordingly, no one involved in initiating a PCC should make any assumptions regarding the directorship.

The chief executive's role is very important and a description of duties is available from Life Matters Worldwide. He or she should be involved in those committees that relate directly to delivery of services to clients and will serve as an *ex officio* (non-voting) member of the PCC's board.

VI. SECURE AND FURNISH A FACILITY TO HOUSE THE PCC

The work of locating the proper site for the PCC should have been in progress during the initial stages of the ministry's development. Site preparation should be completed within two weeks of the training, so the center can open immediately.

Ideally, the facility should not be located in a church building, but in a neutral setting accessible both to clients and to volunteers. Selecting a location on or near a mass transit line is important. Additional information about location and furnishings can be obtained from Life Matters Worldwide.

VII. TRAIN VOLUNTEERS WHO PROVIDE THE BASIC SERVICES OF THE PCC

The best way to make and keep confident and effective volunteers is to give them comprehensive training. Training seminars are high level events, designed to motivate and equip volunteers to do the work of the ministry. They generally run 12-15 hours in length.

Experience shows that a training seminar should only be scheduled when enough interest has been generated to recruit at least 10 volunteers. Training fewer volunteers than are necessary to the operation of the PCC often proves frustrating, due to the need of subsequent trainings.

The initial training seminar should be scheduled as close to the opening of the PCC as possible in order to avoid the loss of skills and interest accompanies delays.

Training for volunteers can be arranged through Life Matters Worldwide or other reputable organization. Groups are eligible for training through Life Matters Worldwide when they can demonstrate they have completed the first six steps of this seven-step protocol.

Prior to requesting an initial (first-time) volunteer training seminar with Life Matters Worldwide, review our [training policy](#). Complete the Questionnaire for Developing Centers (pages 4-6) and submit it with a [request for volunteer training](#).

Questionnaire for Developing Centers

STEP ONE: STEERING COMMITTEE

When did the steering committee begin meeting?

How often have you met since then?

How many, on average, have attended?

STEP TWO: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Date survey was/will be completed.

How have you compiled the information for easy accessibility?

STEP THREE: INCORPORATION

Date articles of incorporation were/will be filed with the state:

Date tax exemption application was/will be filed with IRS:

Date board of directors was/will be appointed:

How many board members do you have?

How many would you like to have?

List the professions represented on the board:

Give the name, address, and phone number of your board chairperson:

STEP FOUR: WORKING COMMITTEES

Public Relations

Who is/will be doing public relations (presentations, etc.)?

How many general meetings has this committee held?

How many attended these meetings?

How many pastors have you contacted and met with to discuss the ministry?

How many formal presentations have been done?

How many presentations are scheduled?

Do you have a promotional brochure? (attach a copy)

How many are currently on the mailing list?

Have you published a newsletter? If not, when do you anticipate publishing one?

How many potential volunteers have been recruited?

Development

Who is planning and carrying out development goals?

What is your development strategy?

What has been/will be done to raise funds (direct mailings, grant applications, banquets, church support, etc.)?

Finance

What is your estimated annual budget?

What are your estimated initial start-up expenses?

What is your present bank balance?

How much monthly support is currently pledged?

STEP FIVE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

What steps have been taken toward appointing a chief executive?

Date chief executive was/will be appointed:

Full-time? Part-time?

If part-time, how many hours do you expect the chief executive to work?

Amount of salary?

Has a job description been written for the position?

STEP SIX: FACILITY

What steps have been taken to secure a facility?

Date of projected occupancy:

Describe the location, number of rooms, access to public transportation and parking, etc. of the facility.

How much will you be paying monthly for rent, utilities, etc.?

STEP SEVEN: TRAINING

Date of training seminar:

Plan for promoting the volunteer training seminar:

Training manual used:

Name of trainer/organization:

Will you, by the date of the training, have all the other six steps completed?

Date for projected opening: