



NWD SYSTEM: BUSINESS CASE TOOLKIT

Section 1: Getting Started: A Focus on Governance



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Section 1. Getting Started: A Focus on Governance

Overview



A high-performing and sustainable NWD System is built on the foundation of a strong state governance and administration structure, as outlined in the [NWD Key Elements](#). NWD Systems should also be guided by a clear mission; the Key Elements can also be used to guide states in developing this vision. NWD Systems that have a strong state leadership role in design, implementation, and on-going administration will succeed in creating comprehensive, streamlined systems of access. Governor and/or legislative support, as well as involvement of key state agencies, also proves critical in building a solid NWD System governance structure.

Snapshot from the 2019 NWD Grantee Business Case Collaborative

New York emphasized its efforts around governance, business acumen, and stakeholder engagement: *“We are launching a business acumen advisory board comprising of key stakeholders, consultants, state partners, and local network representatives to look at healthcare synergies and barriers to better streamline healthcare access for all.”*

Do This!



Step 1. Evaluate the governance structure of your NWD System.

A governing body is a partnership between a variety of entities involved in the long-term services and supports system. The governing body oversees and organizes the NWD System; gathers and incorporates input from stakeholders; and guides the LTSS system to be more streamlined, consumer-driven and person-centered, accessible, and cost-effective. To achieve these aims, the governing body should engage in activities such as those noted in the table below.

At a minimum, NWD System governance should include the state Medicaid agency; the state unit on aging; the state agencies that serve or represent the interests of individuals with physical disabilities and intellectual and developmental disabilities; and the state authorities administering mental health services. Other agencies such as departments of health, housing, and transportation are also potential partners. One agency should serve as the lead NWD System agency. Use the following checklist to assess the strength of your NWD governance and make improvements. Many of these items, such as strategic plans and stakeholder input, should be regularly revisited and updated. Record items such as key characteristics, meeting frequency, and plans for future action in the notes column.

Governance Element	Yes	No	Notes
1. Governor or legislative support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Governing Body Membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
a. State Medicaid agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. State Unit on Aging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. State agencies that serve or represent the interests of individuals with physical disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d. State agencies that serve or represent the interests of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e. State authorities administering mental health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Governing Body Actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
a. Clearly defined criteria to select and oversee the entities outside of state government that play a formal role in carrying out the NWD System functions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b. A variety of state administered funding sources, including Medicaid, to support planning, implementation, and on-going operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c. NWD System multi-year strategic plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d. Stakeholder involvement, including individuals using the NWD System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
e. Guided by a philosophy of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
f. Formal written assessment of all state access programs and functions, including eligibility determinations processes, across all populations documenting the challenges consumers face when accessing LTSS programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
g. Assessment of demand for all NWD System services and capacity to respond to demand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
h. Quality improvement process and evaluation of NWD System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Step 2. Strengthen your governance structure

Based on your evaluation of your governance in Step 1, decide where you need to grow your governance structure. Which groups are missing at the table? Who is at the table, but could be more engaged? What actions have you completed as a group, and what do you still have to work on? Working with an external facilitator may help your state advance to the next level in collaboration and partnership to build a strong NWD System governance. Alternatively, identify some NWD System champions to guide you through your next steps.

Some states have found particular, strength-based planning models helpful in growing their governance teams. Appreciative Inquiry is one example of a strengths-based model. [Appendix A](#) provides some additional detail on how to use appreciative inquiry to reflect on and grow your NWD System.

“A professional facilitator can help a group accomplish more in less time.

The main goal of a facilitator is to create a productive environment in which everyone’s opinion is heard, without a single viewpoint dominating the discussion. This allows for dynamic discussions that produce a wide variety of information and ideas that help the group achieve consensus-based problem-solving and decision-making resolutions. **Facilitators are not mere meeting managers.”**

- Retrieved [from Mid-Atlantic Network of Facilitators](#)

State Snapshot: Strengths Based Planning Models

Virginia used a strengths-based planning model called Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) with their statewide NWD System state-level advisory group. In Virginia, the NWD System is led by a Strategic Leadership Team of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), Virginia Navigator, and the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association (VHHA). This team leads a 37-member statewide Resource Advisory Council, with representatives from public and private LTSS networks, who meet quarterly to ensure good governance, provide leadership, enhance marketing and communications, strengthen person-centered practices, and streamline access to services. There is also a statewide group that focuses solely on technology, to ensure that development is fair and productive. On the community level, 25 Local Advisory Councils focus on strengthening community partnerships and regional expansion of the NWD System. The image below is the product of one of Virginia’s strategic planning sessions for the business case grant.



Step 3. Sustain your governance structure

Once your NWD System governance structure forms, efforts to sustain and cultivate the relationships prove essential to ongoing implementation. You may want to solidify collaborative governance relationships and responsibilities through regularly-updated memoranda, contracts, or process documents.

Step 4: Develop or refine your goals, objectives, and associated action plans

The governance team should identify clear goals and objectives, a concrete work plan, strategies for meaningful stakeholder engagement, and a quality improvement plan. The templates in [Appendix A](#) can help you establish and organize your goals, objectives, and action plans. By assessing your current system and envisioning your ideal system, you can identify concrete steps to take to achieve your goals. These steps will feed into your work plan. Your team should also complete a readiness assessment and develop a comprehensive business plan for the NWD System, as outlined in [Section 8](#) of this toolkit.

Additional Resources



- [Aging and Disability Business Institute: Readiness Assessment Tool](#): This in-depth tool aids organizations in assessing their structures and processes to identify areas for improvement. The resource also provides guidance on developing and sustaining partnerships.
- [Webinar: Is My Organization Ready? Assessing CBO Capacity to Partner with Health Care Entities](#): This webinar describes how organizations can assess their readiness to engage in new partnerships and details the steps that organizations will need to take to engage in these partnerships.
- [SMART Goals](#): This webpage provides an overview of how to make goals achievable using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) model.
- [What are the Objectives for Your Health Care Quality Report?](#): This webpage describes why objectives are important and provides guidance on how to develop them.
- [Appreciative Inquiry](#): Appreciative inquiry is a strength-based model of organizational change. This website includes educational materials, stories of impact and online resources to support the use of the model to initiate change.