Cops and Kids Together – Providing solutions through sports and education

STEPS TO DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL PAL PROGRAM

Examine the reasons for starting your PAL. Does one or more of the following conditions exist in your community?

1. A potentially dangerous situation exists which may lead to juvenile crime or violence.
2. An increase in incidents involving youth during non-school hours.
3. There is a lack of suitable recreational facilities and educational activities for youth in your community.

Survey your community to determine what programs are wanted but not yet available.

- Review juvenile crime statistics
- Contact Parks and Recreation and other agencies to solicit their assistance
- Local law enforcement agencies, schools, juvenile justice commissions and neighboring police agencies can help in assessing your communities’ needs.

A PAL program cannot materialize without a commitment from the Chief of Police or the Sheriff. Meet with them to discuss how they envision the PAL structure. Along with the chief administrator’s support, community backing is vital for a PAL. Once support is developed, a Board of Directors should be formed.
I. Step One - Develop the Structure
A. Establish a Board of Directors
The Board of Directors should consist of key figures including, but not limited to, the chief of police or sheriff, police officers, media representatives, businessmen and women, corporate leaders, an accountant, a lawyer, an insurance representative, school personnel, parents, clergy, parks and recreation department representatives, and service club representatives. It is helpful to have recognizable individuals in your community involved in your PAL in an effort to further your initiative. The Board of Directors should determine its function as either a Functioning Board or as a Policy-Making Board.

A Functioning Board is a working board with specific job functions. The board must meet regularly to actively promote and to help fund the PAL program. The Executive Director is either a full/part-time salaried employee (police officer or civilian) or a volunteer who has administrative abilities. He or she needs working knowledge of the PAL concept and must be able to provide leadership and guidance for the organization: however, the board is not actively involved in the work and management process.

A Policy-Making Board oversees the executive director, who manages the program: however, the board is not actively involved in the work and management process.

II. Step Two – Establish Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws

Once the board has been established; articles of incorporation, by-laws, tax status and insurance needs must be developed. To complete the organizational process, Articles of Incorporation and By-laws must be drafted.

1. Schedule a meeting with your Board to discuss the establishment articles of incorporation. Remember to retain minutes of you meetings as these are important for documenting all stages of the incorporation.
**Note:** To be a new member of NAPAL the local PAL must include their bylaws and articles of incorporation the word PAL or Police Athletic League in their name of the organization.

**GUIDELINES FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING**

When forming your PAL it is important to discuss the fundamentals of starting the program and to designate certain responsibilities to those involved. Below are some guidelines for your initial meetings.

1. **Your First Meeting**
   1. Call together all interested individuals (recommend at least 4)
   2. Elect a temporary Chair and Secretary
   3. Adopt a motion to form a chapter
   4. Appoint a Bylaws Committee to develop the organization’s Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
   5. Designate time and place for next meeting
   6. Adjourn meeting (by general consent). **On all IRS documents, the date of the first meeting is the date of incorporation.**

2. **Your Second Meeting**
   1. Call meeting to order
   2. Read and approve minutes of previous meeting
   3. Approve, adopt and sign the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws
   4. Elect the officers in accordance with the Bylaws
   5. Discuss programs and projects, and create a tentative schedule
   6. Establish date and time for the next board meeting
   7. Adjourn meeting

2. Organize a set of Bylaws for the organization.

3. Establish a bank account.

4. Incorporate. In order to incorporate you must –
   - Choose and reserve a name
Submit both the Articles of Incorporation and the application for franchise tax exemption (Form 1023/SS4) to the Secretary of State and pay the filing fee. The Federal tax exemption (Form 1023/SS4) must be filed within 15 months after incorporation. After receipt of the exemption letter, there must be an annual report submitted to the state and federal governments for retention of this status.

5. Also file for a 501 (c) (3) Federal tax exemption with the Internal Revenue Service. You must have a set of bylaws to incorporate with the IRS.

III. Step Three – Purchase Insurance
All PAL programs must be covered by individual insurance programs.

Note: (National PAL offers insurance coverage through preferred companies).
In order of importance, the insurance needs that should be considered are:
1. General liability
2. Directors and officers liability
3. Participant coverage
4. Workers Compensation Insurance for employees, if applicable
5. Auto insurance for PAL vehicles, if applicable
6. Fire and Property insurance for your PAL building and equipment, if applicable.

IV. Step Four– Develop Program Goals & Objectives
Once the organizational process is complete, the Board must decide on goals and objectives of the organization and the programs that are most needed in the community and the most manageable for your PAL. For initial success, think small, targeting a specific area or group. You can begin by participating in a National PAL sponsored program, e.g. boxing, basketball, baseball, etc. or establish one team instead of a league, and gradually build from there. Initially, determine the programs most needed in your community and those most manageable for your PAL. Athletic programs attract the most youth, but others are also popular. Be sure to include both boys' and girls’ activities. Do not duplicate an existing program in your community, or you may encounter resistance. Attempt to initiate new activities.
Use the expertise of personnel from established PAL programs to help develop strategies to achieve the goals and objectives and be sure to empower the youth in the process of developing your PAL.

**V. Step FIVE- Develop an Operating Plan**
There are four (4) fundamental ingredients paramount to a successful PAL: staff, volunteers, facilities and finances.

**A. Staffing**
Staff can be sworn officers, civilians, retired police officers, etc. Each PAL is unique and the decision on how to staff a PAL is best made on the local level.

**B. Volunteers**
It is recommended that you find a variety of people to volunteer for your programs. Police officers are important volunteers in that they emphasize and reinforce the PAL message to the kids participating in the programs. Coaches and schoolteachers are experienced leaders and valuable assets when working with children. Background checks must be done on all prospective volunteers working with children.

**C. Facilities**
Utilizing free public space and facilities for your PAL is both convenient and cost efficient for your programs. Parks, community centers, schools, churches, and police recreation buildings often offer this service to PAL. It is important to develop a working relationship with various organizations so that they may help you in the maintenance of playing field, facilities and in the use of recreational equipment.
As your PAL grows, it will demand increased recreation and office space. It is important that you expand your facilities in conjunction with the growth of your PAL. It will help to be aware of abandoned buildings, warehouses, and government property that may be purchased at a discounted rate.

**D. Financing**
Financing your PAL is a challenging task. However, money is available if you look in the right places, and if you are able to tap the necessary resources. It is always good to apply for city, state, and federal grants, but you should not heavily rely on them.
Your best resource for funds is your business and working community. Approach a business and/or a community leader to chair your fundraisers. Plan special events that include your community so that they may be educated and more aware of your PAL and of the programs you offer to them.

**VI. Step SIX - Marketing PAL**

The following areas should be considered when marketing your PAL.

1) Know the youth in your community so that you may target your programs accordingly
2) Solicit contributions and support from parents and volunteers,
3) Contact the business community for donations of their time and money, and
4) Identify leading corporations and foundations that may award special monetary grants and/or ongoing support.

When applying for grants, it is important to follow individual grant guidelines specifically. Each grant application process is unique to the organization offering it.

Collateral media, literature, personal appearances, and fundraiser events may also prove successful in marketing your PAL.

Develop contact lists your local television and radio stations, as well as local newspapers, to help promote your programs through advertisement and general reports on your programs and special events on a regular basis. PAL newsletters and other mass mailings provide general information about PAL and help expose your organizations to the community.

Finally, always remember to recognize and to show appreciation for your volunteers and PAL contributors!

For more information, contact the National PAL office at 561/745-5535.