

NAF Academy Application Guide

2016-17



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WHAT DISTINGUISHES A NAF ACADEMY

Year of Planning

Advanced planning and the engagement of all members of the academy design team—from teachers to administrators to business partners—is essential to a successful academy launch. New academy sites participate in a structured development cycle called the Year of Planning (YOP). Schools starting an academy or multiple academies benefit from guided technical assistance enables a school interested in starting an academy to begin the start-up process with support from NAF prior to enrolling students.

The Year of Planning is rigorous and time consuming, but it creates a solid foundation for academy success. Therefore, a dynamic [academy design team](#) must be organized to meet planning requirements in a timely manner. YOP provides sufficient time for schools to organize as a small learning community, select and train instructors, and recruit students for the initial class. This process follows a sequence of activities that allows schools and districts to align and integrate resources and programs to serve both the academy implementation and broader school improvement.

Upon acceptance as a YOP site, completion of the NAF agreements, and payment of the YOP services fee, schools are entitled to NAF's technical assistance, staff development activities, use of NAF's curriculum, and any additional opportunities associated with network membership.

Some Resources Available to Support YOPs:

- Each school accepted into YOP will receive a *Year of Planning Guidebook*, which provides an outline of startup activities, as well as a set of deliverables, and accompanying tools and strategies for academy planning teams.
- Technical assistance through:
 - professional development events
 - webinars
 - and ongoing consultation with NAF staff

After successful completion of the academy development process, the school's academy will be granted full membership status and will be prepared to launch and operate their academy successfully.

The YOP process is a synergistic effort. Each school and district not only works with NAF to develop their plan, but also collaborates with other schools to share their experiences and support each other. Schools establish lasting relationships during the startup year that benefit their academies in the years ahead.

The Year of Planning guides each academy through three phases in the academy planning, development, and growth process. They are defined as:

Phase I: Team Building and Leadership

An academy design team determines the rationale for developing an academy and defines their vision and goals.

Phase II: Educational Design Development

NAF's *Year of Planning Guidebook* identifies decision points and the elements that need to be put in place during the year. Academy design teams provide documentation of these decisions and outcomes in online evidence folders.

Phase III: Launch and Monitoring

Academies graduate from the Year of Planning and gain status as full members of NAF's network. Academy design teams continue to work with NAF through regional meetings, national conferences, and technical assistance.

National and Regional Support

Members of the NAF network have exclusive access to an array of opportunities and resources to support their professional needs and further the success of NAF academies. Some of the opportunities the NAF network benefits from are:

National and Regional Business Partnerships

NAF has built strong relationships with top corporations on both the national and local level. These relationships help strengthen the NAF curriculum, increase access to work-based learning opportunities, and ensure career success. Through NAFTrack Certified Hiring, several of America's top companies have committed to give special consideration to college graduates and eventual job applicants who, as high school graduates, earned the NAFTrack Certification. The partners include: AT&T, Cisco, EMC, HP, JPMorgan Chase, Juniper Networks, KPMG LLP, Lenovo, Promontory Financial LLC, Verizon, and Xerox.

Professional Development Opportunities

NAF provides several professional development opportunities year-round from webinars to regional workshops to our annual summer conference - NAF Next. These opportunities allow teachers, administrators, and business professionals to network, learn about the most effective ways to prepare NAF academy students, and leverage the power of the national network.

Resources for Continuous Improvement

As industries evolve, it is vital that NAF academies continuously improve to prepare students for future success. NAF staff members guide the network through academy implementation and development by conducting periodic site visits. In addition to hands-on support, network members have access to resources in the members only Academy Support Hub (ASH).

Awards and Scholarships

NAF and our corporate partners provide several grants and scholarships to inspire and support the next generation of leaders. Scholarships are available to students and alumni and academies can apply for various grant opportunities throughout the year. Exemplary network members and academies receive awards and national recognition at the annual NAF Next conference.

WHO CAN APPLY

Once you have read about the NAF educational design, reviewed [NAF's standards](#), and decided that NAF academies are a good fit for your school or district, you may apply for the Year of Planning or Fast Track process. Applications are accepted from high schools and districts. If you want to start more than one academy or enter into a district contract, please contact Christel Kaufman at ckaufman@naf.org.

*Incomplete applications do not roll over into the next academic year; you must reapply.

Year of Planning Applicants:

Schools that want to start one or more academies and have very little or no experience in creating a career-themed academy should go through NAF's Year of Planning Process.

Districts that want to open multiple academies may apply through a district contract process. If you are a district that would like more information on this, please contact Christel Kaufman at ckaufman@naf.org.

If you enter as a YOP in the 2016-17 class and you are able to complete the YOP process in one year (including payment of all fees), you will graduate to an open academy in July 2017. YOPs will receive a membership agreement when they graduate.

Fast Track Applicants

There are two types of Fast Track applications. Fast Track Existing Academy Application and Fast Track NCAC/Linked Learning Certified Application.

A functioning academy that has been using most of the [NAF standards of practice](#) should apply for Fast Track Existing Academy Application. If an academy has an NCAC or Linked Learning certification that is no more than 3 years old, they may apply for Fast Track NCAC/Linked Learning Certified Application.

If a district wishes to apply for Fast Track, each of the district's academies need to complete the Fast Track application in order to verify eligibility.

If you enter as a Fast Track academy in 2015, you are designated as a Fast Track academy for one year, however, you will function as an open academy once your application process is

complete. Fast Track applicants will receive a membership agreement with their acceptance letter.

*Application fee is non-refundable for Fast Track applicants.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

The Application Center is for applicants wishing to enter the YOP or Fast Track process for the 2016 – 2017 academic year. If you want to start more than one academy or enter into a district contract, please contact Christel Kaufman at ckaufman@naf.org.

The timeframe for each application process varies greatly – from 3 days to 3 months. Refer to the pages 9-16 for more information.

Application Deadlines:

- **NAF Next – NAF’s annual conference for professional development:** For academies applying for the 2016-17 class that want to go to NAF Next in July, your application must be completed **payments are due on June 17, 2016.**

Key Dates:

January 2016	Application Center opens
May 27, 2016	All applications must be completed for those attending NAF Next 2016. This means all process steps in NAF’s Application Center are complete and acceptance letters received.
June 17, 2016	All payments due for those attending NAF Next 2016.
July 18 – July 20, 2016	NAF Next 2016 – Orlando, FL – YOPs must attend

APPLICATION & MEMBERSHIP FEES

Year of Planning (YOP) and Fast Track Fees

New Academies	2016-17	2017-18
Year of Planning	\$10,000	\$12,000
Fast Track	\$4,000	\$4,000
District-wide Contracts	Negotiated	Negotiated

YOP fees are \$10,000.00 per academy, with a price reduction if you have more than 5 academies in one district.

Fast Track application fees are \$4,000, with a price reduction of \$500 if you have more than 5 academies in one district. All Fast Tracks must pay membership fee of \$2,000. [Please see our benefits of YOP document.](#)

No services will be rendered for YOP and Fast Track until payments are made.

Membership Agreement & Fees

In order to be a part of the NAF network, your district must enter into a membership agreement with NAF. The NAF annual membership fee is \$2,000 unless otherwise negotiated in a district contract. The fee helps cover the costs of curriculum, professional development, and resources provided by NAF to support the academy. [Read more about the benefits of membership.](#)

NAF's academies are intended to improve student outcomes in school, in higher education, and in professional and career opportunities. As part of these goals, NAF encourages the use of NAF-approved curriculum and assessment tools in order to demonstrate college and career readiness.

YOP's will receive a new membership agreement once they graduate – unless your district already has one on file with NAF.

Fast Track applicants will receive a new membership agreement with their acceptance letter – unless your district already has one on file with NAF.

HOW TO APPLY

All applicants must apply through the [Academy Application Center](#). Every scenario may be different, however there are 4 basic pathways to apply to become a NAF academy. Each application pathway takes a different amount of time to complete. It is imperative that you read the instructions about the pathway you are taking so you have a clear understanding of the amount of time your pathway takes.

1. YOP – Non-District Contract (page 9)
2. YOP – District Contract (page 12)
3. Fast Track – Existing Academies: both district and non-district (page 13)
4. Fast Track – NCAC Certified/Linked Learning Certified Academies: both district and non-district (page 14)

*Incomplete applications do not roll over into the next academic year – you must reapply.

Tools and Resources to Support Application

General Resources

NAF Educational Design

- [Overview](#)
- [NAF Academy Themes](#)
- [Academy Standards](#)
- [Team Performance Model](#)
- [Academy Design Team Guidelines](#)

Application Materials

Costs and Agreements

- [YOP Services Agreement \(for non-district contract YOP's\)](#)
- [Options Letter \(if going to NAF Next 2016\)](#)
- [Membership Agreement](#)

Theme Specific

- Engineering Curriculum Providers
 - [Project Lead the Way](#)
 - [STEM 101](#)
 - [Paxton Patterson](#)
- [AOE Curriculum Options Form](#)
- [AOHS Options and Technology Form](#)

HOW TO APPLY

YEAR OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Non-District Contract

The YOP application process for non-district contract applicants takes an average of 2-3 months to complete.

- Step 1** Contact your regional Network Liaison (page 15) to create an Okta account **and** assist in the application process. If you have an Okta account proceed with signing in and making application.
- Step 2** Go to the [Academy Application Center](#) and provide your contact, district, and high school information.
- Step 3** NAF staff will review your submission. Once this is complete you will receive an email directing you to move forward with your application (this usually takes 24 hours).
- Step 4** Submit billing, director information, and interest survey.
- Step 5** A review will be conducted of your [interest survey](#) and you will be contacted by regional staff to discuss the next steps, make sure your questions are answered, and you have all the information you need to move forward. Once NAF staff directs you to move forward go to step 6.
- Step 6** Design Team Preparation – ***See Page 12-13 for more details***
- Step 7** Applicant provides 3-5 letters of support - ***See page 12 for more details***
- Step 8** Applicants who wish to attend NAF Next 2016 must provide an options letter. If you are an AOE or AOHS applicant you must provide a curriculum options letter for AOE or AOHS. This must be completed prior to scheduling the formal interview.
- Step 9** Notify your NAF contact from step 5 – via phone call or email – that you have completed steps 6-8 and are ready for a formal interview. Refer to the [rubric](#) and [Interview Questions](#) to prepare with your academy design team.
- Step 10** NAF regional staff schedules a formal interview.
- Step 11** Formal interview takes place.
- Step 12** Determination is made regarding acceptance as a NAF YOP or non-acceptance. NAF regional staff will notify you via email with the final application decision.
- Step 14** If you receive a formal email with acceptance, you must fill out and send the YOP Services Agreement and pay the \$10,000 YOP fee in order to complete the process. Payment should be sent to: NAF at 218 West 40th Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10018.

Design Team Preparation

Studying and Orientation

While making application and before scheduling your final, formal qualified interview with NAF staff as an applicant for the Year of Planning process, a school and district should assess their needs, readiness, and whether starting a NAF academy is the appropriate strategy for them. An [academy design team](#), which may include teachers, district administrators, school administrators, business partners, alumni/students, parents, and higher education partners, can answer these questions which help define the purpose of starting a NAF academy.

Guiding Questions:

- What does school reform look like to us?
- Can our school benefit from a career academy? If so, how?
- What technical assistance provider/process would best suit the needs of the school and the needs of the students?
- What types of outcomes do we expect to see in our students?
- What stakeholders should be involved in the planning process?
- Which business and community partners would be interested in partnering this work?
- How do we involve parents?
- What are the responsibilities of the academy design team?
- What is the time commitment expected of the academy design team?
- What can we expect in terms of district support (both personnel and financial)?
- Where will the startup fees for an academy come from?
- Do we have a copy of the formal interview questions? Are we familiar with the rubric that will be used to score our interview? [Access the formal review questions here.](#)

Relationship and Trust Building

During this stage, individuals or groups gather support from stakeholders, build relationships, and continue to form a functional [academy design team](#). This team will complete the qualified interview with NAF staff using GoToMeeting software. If accepted, the academy design team will continue throughout the YOP process.

Recruiting new team members involves sharing the purpose, allowing prospective members to sit in on early meetings, and delegating roles and responsibilities. Over time, as the team evolves, it is essential that members gain a sense of mutual trust and reliability. Team members need to know that they can count on each other, and that the team operates in an atmosphere of openness, in which all contributions are valued, creative ideas are encouraged, and judgment is suspended.

Design Team Preparation

Guiding Questions:

- Do we have sufficient stakeholder representation on our academy design team? Business partners, teachers, administration, district representation, community partners, non-pedagogical staff, parent, students, and post-secondary-education.
- Who else would we like to have on our team?
- Do our members share a mutual sense of commitment to the planning effort and to the roles and contributions of others?
- What are the roles of each individual on the academy design team?
- Are team members' relationships characterized by honesty and forthrightness? Can issues and challenges, as well as successes, be dealt with openly?
- Can team members rely on each other and honor the specific commitment they have made?
- Who will lead the meetings?
- What is the meeting schedule?

Staging and Goal Clarification

The academy design team builds the foundation for a strong application, and ultimately, the academy, by creating a clear, shared vision and focus.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the vision statement for the group?
- Which career theme will be your academy's focus? If it is engineering or health sciences, decide which curriculum providers to use.
- Have we mapped our community business partners for viability and support of the theme?
- Who has ultimate responsibility for completing the NAF application process? Who is taking the lead on this?

Step 7 - Letters of Support

As part of the application process you must demonstrate support from your community members by gathering 3-5 letters of support. A letter from the district indicating support of this initiative is mandatory. This letter should indicate a desire to support the program upon inception as well as a clear willingness to participate in planning activities in partnership with the school. At least one letter should be from a business partner, college or university, local intermediary organization, government agency, or community partner. These letters must be uploaded prior to the qualified interview.

HOW TO APPLY

YEAR OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS – *District Contracts*

The YOP application process for district contract applicants takes approximately 5 days to complete once the district contract has arrived at NAF.

Step 1 Contact your regional Network Liaison (page 15) to create an Okta account **and** assist in the application process. If you have an Okta account proceed with signing in and making application.

Step 2 Go to the [Academy Application Center](#) and provide your contact, district and high school information. Fill out an interest survey.

If we have not received a signed district contract, your application will be held at this point in the process until the contract is received.

Step 3 NAF staff will review your submission. Once this is complete you will receive an email directing you to move forward with your application (this usually takes 24 hours).

Step 4 Submit billing and director information.

Step 5 Review the [academy design team](#) document and begin the process of creating your team immediately. Follow instructions under Design Team Preparation pages 10-11.

HOW TO APPLY

FAST TRACK APPLICATIONS

Fast Track Existing Academies

**Please be advised that Fast Track application fees are non-refundable.*

The application process takes approximately 2-3 months to complete (including application fee, evidence and site visit) followed by membership payment.

- Step 1** Contact your regional Network Liaison (page 15) to create an Okta account **and** assist in the application process. If you have an Okta account proceed with signing in and making application.
- Step 2** Go to the [Academy Application Center](#) and provide your contact, district, and high school information.
- Step 3** NAF staff will review your submission. If accepted at this point, NAF staff will contact you to continue to the application process (this usually takes 24 hours).
- Step 4** Fill out the Fast Track Assessment. A score will be generated to determine fidelity to the NAF educational design. If your score permits, you will be directed to create an online evidence binder and sign and upload acknowledgement of application fee agreement.
- Step 5** You will be sent an Application Fee Invoice. ***If you are a district contract applicant skip steps 6 & 7 of this process.***
- Step 6** You must pay the application fee invoice before you can continue with the application process.
- Step 7** NAF staff reviews your online evidence binder for alignment to your assessment.
- Step 8** NAF staff schedules and conducts a site visit.
- Step 9** NAF staff sends a formal acceptance with Membership agreement or non-acceptance letter (if there is a Membership Agreement in place already, NAF adds you to the list of academies in your district).
- Step 10** Once we receive a signed membership agreement, we will invoice you for membership fees.
- Step 11** Pay membership fees.

HOW TO APPLY

FAST TRACK APPLICATIONS *(continued)*

NCAC Certified/Linked Learning Certified Academies

The application process for NCAC or Linked Learning Certified academies takes approximately 4-6 weeks to complete (including application fee, verification of certification and virtual visit) followed by membership payment.

NAF recognizes the certification process for NCAC (National Career Academy Coalition) and Linked Learning as demonstrating alignment with NAF's standards of practice. **Your certification report must be no more than 3 years old to qualify for this track.** If you are NCAC or Linked Learning certified, you can proceed with the following:

- Step 1** Contact your regional Network Liaison (page 15) to create an Okta account **and** assist in the application process. If you have an Okta account proceed with signing in and making application.
- Step 2** Go to the [Academy Application Center](#) and provide your contact, district, and high school information.
- Step 3** NAF staff will review your submission. If accepted at this point, NAF staff will contact you to continue to the application process (this usually takes 24 hours).
- Step 4** Go to the Application Center and add your billing and director information. Load your NCAC or Linked Learning certification report. If your certification report is no more than 3 years old, you are in! At this time you will need to sign and upload your acknowledgement of the application fee agreement.
- Step 5** You will be invoiced for your application fee. This must be paid in order to move forward in the process. **If you are a district contract applicant, skip step 5.**
- Step 6** NAF staff schedules a virtual site visit to review NAF expectations and create an action plan.
- Step 7** Once you have been accepted you will receive a formal acceptance letter with a Membership Agreement. If there is a Membership Agreement already in place, NAF adds you to the list of academies in your district.
- Step 8** Invoice is generated.
- Step 9** Pay invoice.

QUESTIONS & CONTACT

For questions or concerns contact:

Christel Kaufman, Director of Growth & Development
ckaufman@naf.org

Regional Network Liaison Contacts for information and creating Okta accounts:

Region 1: Jennifer Geisler – JGeisler@naf.org the states Jennifer covers are Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey

Region 2: Josh Benfield – Jbenfield@naf.org the states Josh covers are Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Washington DC, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and U.S. Virgin Islands

Region 3: Fred Press – Fpress@naf.org the states Fred covers are Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Texas

Region 4: Ana Morrison – Amorrison@naf.org the states Ana covers are Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii

GLOSSARY

Year of Planning (YOP) – The process of planning for the implementation of a NAF academy that takes an average of one year.

Fast Track – The process in which an existing academy can apply to become an official NAF academy in a shorter amount of time compared to completing the Year of Planning Process. Existing career academies and NCAC/Linked Learning certified academies are eligible to apply.

Academy Application Center – The online space where all applicants can complete the YOP or Fast Track application process. <http://naf.org/ash>

NAF Next – NAF’s annual professional development conference for teachers, academy directors, counselors, advisory board members, business partners, district administrators, and anyone committed to a quality NAF academy.

Academy Design Team – This is a purposefully created team that is focused on academy design with student success at its heart. This representative stakeholder team includes school staff, school administration, district staff, parents, students, business partners and higher education representatives.