## Considerations for the Network Leadership or Network Lead Entity

One of the first tasks for a group of community-based organizations (CBOs) coming together to form a network is to determine what the network’s structure and leadership should look like. Network models vary, and there is no one best model. A network’s leadership consists of the individuals who set its vision and strategy and who make decisions for the network. Some networks have a single CBO that acts as the Network Lead Entity (NLE) while others have a distributed leadership model with representatives from the network membership acting as a leadership committee. However your network defines its leadership, there are a number of leadership questions that should be addressed. A few helpful resources for this worksheet include the Aging and Business Institute’s [Network Readiness Assessment](https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/assessment-overview/network-readiness-assessment/), especially the first module on leadership, and this article on network governance: [Modes of Network Governance: Structure, Management, and Effectiveness](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/31025597_Modes_of_Network_Governance_Structure_Management_and_Effectiveness).

**Questions to Consider:**

* What does (or will) your network’s governance structure look like?
  + Who is on your network’s leadership team?
  + Does your network have a board of directors? If so, who is on that board (e.g., types of organizations, people, positions)? And if not, does your network need a board of directors? If so, who should be on it?
  + What role do members of your network play on the board of directors or within the leadership team, if any?
* What are the defined roles and responsibilities for the network lead entity and for partner and/or member agencies?
* What are your network’s current staffing levels (i.e., staff dedicated to the network)?
  + How is your network staffed? Does the network employ staff directly or is it staffed by members of the leadership team—or does it have another configuration?
  + Do these staffing levels meet the needs of your network?
  + What staff position does your leadership team wish it had that it currently does not?
* How is your network engaging state agencies (e.g., State Unit on Aging, state Medicaid agency, etc.) as part of its network development?
* How will your network identify, onboard and engage network members over time (e.g., communication, training, etc.)?

**Questions to Think Through**

* Considering your responses to the questions on this worksheet, what are the two biggest challenges facing your network?
* What are the two steps your network needs to take immediately (within the next three months) to address its challenges?
* What are two steps your network needs to take over the next six to 12 months to move forward in its development?