



Guide to Coaching

For New Episcopal Community Leaders

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/new-episcopal-communities/coaching/>

What is Coaching?

Without a doubt, strong coaching is a vital ingredient to the success and well-being of most of our New Episcopal Community leaders. Coaching is not training, therapy or even mentoring. It is a relationship that cultivates your growth as a Christian leader, and helps lead you toward wise action in pursuit of your community's goals and outcomes.

Some coaches describe their style as "content-rich," meaning that they will be more directive, basing their own success in starting new communities, and coaching others that have. Others are trained in "content-free" coaching, meaning they understand their job to be to draw out *your* capacity to learn, problem-solve and plan for the future.

Coaching sessions last about an hour, and it's most helpful if they're scheduled at least once a month. Remember, regularity helps foster relationship and trust, and eliminates that sense of "having to perform" for your coach!

Steps to finding a Coach...

The best coach is outside of your diocesan system, and does not play a supervisory role (Canons, Bishops, etc. do not make good coaches for an NEC leader). At times you may need coaching around how to manage expectations, how to communicate well with your diocesan leaders, or even on how to end your project gracefully. You'll need a coach who has no secondary motive other than supporting you and your work.

Here are a few steps that may be helpful:

1. Do a little research on potential coaches. You might first look through the New Episcopal Communities coaching website, and talk to the Staff Officer for Church Planting for recommendations on who might fit your needs and learning style.

2. Look for a coach who is excited about your idea, and who is excited to work with you on your vision for a new community!
3. Contact two or three coaches that you might like to work with. Ask about their style, experience, and philosophy of coaching. Ask about their payment rates (you can expect to pay about \$75-\$150 per hour, depending on the coach's certification and experience.) Share your vision for your New Episcopal Community, and make sure they're on board to support you in this work.
4. Make a plan to pay for your coaching. Will the expense come out of your NEC grant, your continuing education funds, or will your diocese be chipping in?
5. Contract with a coach. We suggest you meet with your coach at least monthly. In your contract, clarify at whose initiative you'll be meeting, how you'll meet (phone, zoom, etc.) and what the coach will expect you to bring.
6. Covenant with your coach to reevaluate after 3 or 4 sessions. Is the coaching relationship helpful and moving you toward your goals? If not, it's okay to look for a different coach.
7. Let your diocesan leaders know that you're working with a coach, and update them quarterly on how it's going. This knowledge will help them be more confident that you're getting the support you need, and more willing to help pay for coaching down the road (for you, or for the next NEC leader in your diocese!)

Topics to cover with your coach

- Naming your own, authentic, "why?" and "who?"
- Discerning, inviting and nurturing your core team of leadership
- Identifying the outcomes you hope for in this new community - what difference are you hoping to make in God's world? What would success look like for this community?
- Identifying measurable goals and steps - for the next 90 days, 1 year, and 3 years out.
- Developing strategies for relationship building and networking in your neighborhood (that engage the gifts of your whole team!)
- Developing strategies for communication, budgeting, worship, community building, etc. within your new community
- Defining and reaching "sustainability" for your community and its context
- Your leadership gifts (the Clifton StrengthsFinder is a great tool for this), how you're using them, and what complimentary gifts you may need to look for in team members
- Communicating effectively with your diocesan leaders, and others who have oversight of your work?
- Tending to your own self care and social base

How to prepare for a coaching session

Coaching works best if you come prepared. To prepare for a coaching session, you might ask yourself:

- What am I celebrating?
- What decision or task is upcoming that I know I need to prepare for?
- Is there a place I feel stuck?
- Is there something I know needs to be done but that I've been avoiding for some reason, or that I don't know how to do?

A good coach will hold you accountable to the things you'd committed to doing at your last session - so review these, and reflect on what was done, left undone, and why.