

Keeping PNAC Members Engaged

A strong Planning and Network Advisory Committee (PNAC) stays active when members feel they are contributing to real change — not just attending meetings. Between meetings, the best activities are usually short, meaningful, relationship-centered, and connected to lived experience and system improvement.

Here are some ideas that tend to work especially well with PNACs, Peer Leaders, and advisory groups:

Voice & Feedback Activities

“What Are You Hearing?”

Ask members to casually gather themes from people in services, families, peers, or communities:

- What is working?
- What is frustrating?
- What is missing?
- What gives people hope?

At the next meeting, members bring back 1–2 themes instead of formal reports. This keeps the PNAC connected to real community voice.

Experience Snapshot

Each month, ask members to complete one short reflection:

- “One thing the system did well this month...”
- “One barrier I noticed...”
- “One thing that helped someone feel respected...”

These can become discussion starters or even anonymous quotes in reports.

Curiosity & Learning Activities

Mini Learning Challenges

Send out one short article, video, podcast, or infographic each month related to:

- recovery
- Peer Support
- trauma-informed care
- respectful curiosity
- cultural humility
- community inclusion
- systems advocacy

Then ask:

“What stood out to you?”

Not homework. Just engagement.

“Mystery System Walk”

Members try experiencing a system as if they were new:

- calling a hotline
- trying to find services online
- reading intake paperwork
- navigating transportation
- looking for resources after hours

Then they report:

- What was confusing?
- What felt welcoming?

- What felt discouraging?

This creates powerful systems insight.

Relationship-Building Activities

Peer Connection Partners

Pair PNAC members together between meetings for:

- one coffee
- one phone call
- one check-in

This builds belonging and retention.

Celebrate Successes

Have members submit:

- community wins
- recovery victories
- outreach stories
- acts of kindness they witnessed

Start each meeting with “Hope Highlights.”

That changes the emotional tone of the committee.

Action-Oriented Activities

Micro-Projects

Instead of huge committee assignments, create tiny achievable tasks:

- review one flyer for accessibility
- test a website page
- suggest outreach locations
- help rewrite one form in plain language
- identify barriers to attending appointments

Small wins keep energy alive.

Community Ambassador Role

Invite members to:

- attend one community event
- share one resource
- invite one new voice into the conversation
- talk about PNAC in their circles

People stay engaged when they feel they represent something meaningful.

Creative Activities

“If I Could Change One Thing...”

Members submit ideas anonymously between meetings.

Then:

- vote on one
- discuss feasibility
- maybe implement it

This creates ownership.

Storytelling Project

Members contribute:

- recovery stories
- hope statements
- lessons learned
- “what helped me” messages

Could become:

- newsletter content
- awareness campaigns
- presentations
- onboarding materials

Advocacy & Systems Influence

Policy Pulse

Once a month send:

- one proposed rule
- one policy update
- one legislative topic

Ask:

“How would this affect people receiving services?”

This helps members see their role as system influencers.

Fun Matters Too

A PNAC that only discusses problems will burn people out.

Consider occasional:

- virtual coffee chats
- appreciation spotlights
- trivia
- wellness check-ins
- “music that gives me hope”
- photo sharing
- celebrations of milestones

Connection sustains participation.

One approach many strong PNACs use is this balance:

Type	Goal
Voice Gathering	Stay grounded in community
Learning	Build confidence
Relationship	Increase belonging
Action	Create impact
Hope/Fun	Prevent burnout

You could even create a simple “Between Meetings Engagement Menu” where members choose one optional activity each month instead of assigning the same task to everyone.