



National Robotics League

How to Start a Regional Program

Gather the Players

To start a program in your area, it helps to have the support of area community and industry leaders, educational representatives and the local/national NRL staff. The key to establishing a successful program begins with the amount of interest the individuals have and how the excitement can be sustained.

An educational representative is a school/educational program representative who will help to involve area schools and educational programs. This person can be a high school teacher, college/university/trade school educator or STEM outreach coordinator. An industry sponsor is a member of a local business or association who can help communicate the vision for supporting a manufacturing workforce development program in the community.

First Meeting

Provide background on why there's a need to establish a manufacturing workforce development program. Identify the advantages and purpose of establishing an NRL program in your local community. Also take the time to highlight the necessary steps to starting your program. It is recommended that one of NRL representatives attend as a guest speaker to provide more information and answer questions.

Moving Forward

It is recommended that a strategic planning session be held to establish the method, procedure schedule and future activities needed to get started. There are three reasons:

- Determine true community interest: A great deal of organizational skills is needed to set up a local program. Invite key leaders who share the vision and responsibilities in getting started. This is key to the success of the program.
- Assess the local excitement: Sitting in on a planning session tends to get people very excited about what can be done and gets the groups off to a great start.
- Understand the effort required to establish the NRL program: Make sure everyone is on the same page and working toward the same agreed upon goals.

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Form a Committee

There should be no more than 25 and no fewer than 10 folks. Please note that these individuals will most likely serve as the main volunteers for your competition. Therefore, it is important to have as many committee members as possible. People that should attend are:

- Area industry leaders and/or local NTMA Chapter leadership
- College Instructors
- Middle and high school teachers
- Local robot builder or another NRL regional team (if possible)
- Facilitator (NRL rep)
- Potential sponsors
- Local/State Workforce Development agencies
- Champions

Pre-meeting

- Read the NRL "Event Timeline and Checklist"
- Have a discussion with the NRL representatives
- Review the updates on the NRL website
- A week prior to the initial meeting, have each attendee formulate what they see their responsibilities to be, and what they can provide to the program.

Meeting Agenda

- Discuss and agree on why you are launching the program
- Discuss and decide on how your region's mission and vision will reflect the NRL's mission and vision
- Determine everyone's combined assets. *While NRL has a national competition and many support services, it will be up to your local team to design a program that you can market to your target audience. The key here is to start using what you have or can easily get and then build from there.*

Asking these questions can help your group understand what it has to work with:

- How many individuals are committed to the success of this program and does it include the local NTMA Chapter leadership?
- What does each of them bring to the program?
- Do you have any relationship with state workforce development agencies or other key agencies?

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- Is your local industry willing to donate start-up funds? Are you able to fundraise?
 - Are companies willing to use in-kind services to support your program?
 - Do you have any local pro-Bot builders or other regional teams that are familiar with Bot building?
 - Do you have media contacts?
- Building your strategy for implementation
 - Establish a schedule with deadlines and committing to sticking to those deadlines
 - Create subcommittees and layout objectives for each. Depending on your needs and knowledge base here are few examples of committees:
 - Executive Committee
 - School Recruitment Committee
 - Industry / Post-Secondary Engagement Committee
 - Competition Committee
 - Rules and Safety (Technical) Committee
 - Teacher Training Committee.
 - Finance/Fundraising Committee
 - Marketing/PR Committee

Once the NRL Program is ready to implement, it's important to establish a date for a local competition. It is at this point that your efforts will begin to take shape and you will discover areas that have not yet been highlighted. Remember, it will be fun, but stay nimble as you proceed in the most rewarding time of your life by helping, teaching, and creating an environment for learning the technical skills needed in the 21st Century.

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