



A Dozen Essential Actions for Leading the Launch or Coming Alongside a New Congregational Expression

It is a foundational commitment of the Columbia Metro Baptist Association that the best approach to starting new congregational expressions is for the congregations to take the lead and do the starting, planting, and/or sponsoring. This is long-term the best method for creating congregations who serve as vital and vibrant missional communities.

It provides a connection with multiple congregations who can mentor the church planter, coach the planting process, and broker for the new congregational expression the very best resources, connections, and networking. It is often the best way for existing congregations to participate in Kingdom growth in fulfilling the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment. Further, it continually motivates existing congregations to think as much about the scattered Church as they do the gathered Church.

At the same time, serving as the primary sponsor or an assisting sponsor of one or more new congregational expressions is not a name-only relationship with a new congregational expression, but a deep, genuine, and authentic ongoing relationship. It involves commitment, time, resources – and yes – work. Many actions are crucial to the successful sponsorship of new congregational expressions.

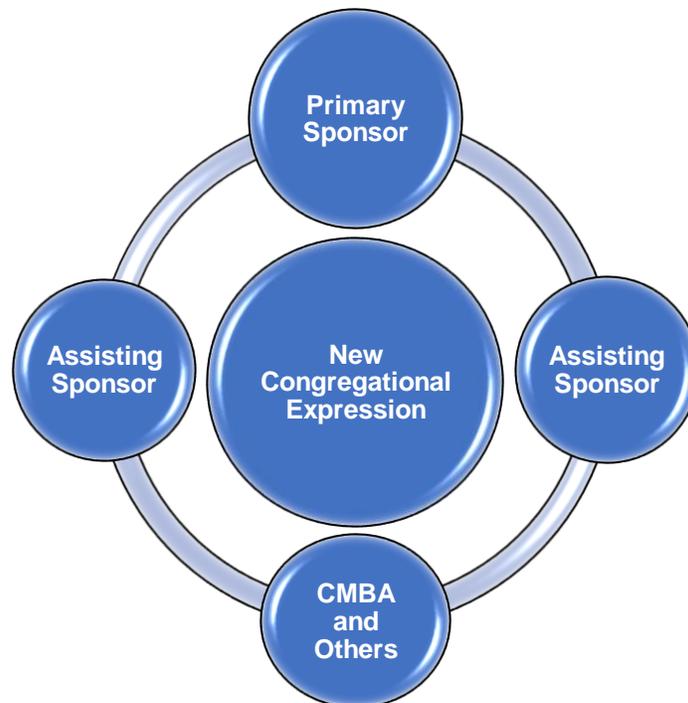
A primary sponsoring congregation and at least two assisting congregations will be needed to engage in these actions. Often this is the best model. It provides a minimum of three congregations who are praying for this new congregational expression, a sharing of the load of volunteers and financial support, and other forms of synergistic partnership.

One of the most value parts of this model is that perhaps the primary sponsoring congregation has some experience in starting new congregational expressions. Through the three or more congregations sponsorship model the lead church can mentor the other two congregations in what sponsorship involves. Later one or both of the assisting congregations may lead a sponsorship team and mentor two other congregations.

Here are a dozen actions for your consideration. Not all are needed in each new congregational situation, but these do help form a solid foundation for the new congregational expression.

1. Develop a prayer movement for and between the sponsoring congregation(s) and the new congregational expression.
2. Provide times of visibility, fellowship, and worship of the sponsoring congregation(s) and the new congregational expression with one another.
3. Provide mentoring for the church planter and coaching for the new congregational expression leadership.
4. Meet regularly with the church planter and the new congregational expression leadership for prayer, support, planning, evaluation, and motivation.
5. Recruit volunteers from the sponsoring congregation(s) who can provide spiritual and leadership support to the new congregational expression as their commitment to missional engagement.

6. Support with resources and volunteers the new congregational expression as they engage in evangelism, outreach, fellowship, and discipleship events and processes so that people connected with the new congregational expression can be free to directly engage their target group(s).
7. Provide/assist with first-quality preschool childcare and appropriate preschool spiritual formation so that the core group can be in worship and small groups engaging with one another and new people connecting with the new congregational expression.
8. Provide/assist with Christian education and spiritual formation for youth/students grades 6-12 so that a firm foundation can be developed for this age group. Model for the new congregational expression how this can be done with excellence.
9. Assist the new congregational expression with obtaining space/place for worship, discipleship, fellowship, and storage if it is not feasible to do this within the sponsorship congregation(s) facilities.
10. Provide any appropriate and needed administrative support for the new congregational expression – including but not limited to assistance with managing their finances, organizational documents, and other routine and essential administrative tasks.
11. Establish a Visionary Leadership Community from the sponsoring congregation(s) and the new congregational expression to serve as the guiding coalition as the new congregational expression grows and develops the ability to provide its own guidance. Empower the new congregational expression with leadership independence right on time – not too early and not too late.
12. Provide needed financial support for the new congregational expression. Seek other sources when the financial support from the sponsoring congregation(s) and the new congregational expression itself are inadequate. Know that CMBA is willing to be part of providing financial resources to the new congregational expression, as may other denominational and parachurch sources.



For more information about leading the launch or coming alongside a new congregational expression, contact the Columbia Metro Baptist Association at CMBA@ColumbiaMetro.org or 803.619.7110.