



Welcome & Introduction

Welcome! NCPDP's executives, staff and Board of Trustees thank you for volunteering to be the leader of a NCPDP task group! The work achieved in task groups is one of the most significant means by which NCPDP drives industry change, interoperability and innovation. Whether a seasoned or first-time task group Lead, leading and guiding task group participants and the work performed can be challenging at times. For this reason, NCPDP University has created a training guide full of helpful tips and techniques that can be used to make your leadership of the task group and the work performed, successful.

The guide will cover:

- Task Group Leader Roles and Responsibilities
- Quarterly Updates
- Task Group Participant Responsibilities
- The Standards Development and DERF Process
- Guidance Documentation Best Practices
- Industry Engagement Policy
- Guidance Documentation Best Practices

Thank you, again, for your willingness to serve in this capacity with NCPDP. Should you have any questions regarding the guide content, please contact your NCPDP task group staff liaison or one of the work group co-chairs under which your task group convenes.

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Task Group Leader Roles and Responsibilities

This section will detail the task group leader's role, responsibilities and how to effectively facilitate task group calls. The information contained in this section is based on the established concept of the "Five Cs" frequently cited by experts as critical elements for leading task groups or chairing committees. The Five Cs contribute to being an effective task group leader and will help ensure your experience is a positive and productive one.

What is a task group leader? A team leader that plays a critical role in ensuring that a group of people complete a task or project as expected. Driving to a consensus, which is the cornerstone of the work performed within NCPDP task group and work groups, is a rewarding and challenging experience but leads to significant personal and professional accomplishments. Utilizing the following Five C's will help you become a valued task group leader.

Control

In order to carry out responsibilities for convening meetings, chairing discussions and facilitating the process of working towards stated goals, task group leaders should:

- Determine the length of the call, generally limit to one hour and maintain a regular schedule for calls.
- Assist task group participants in setting realistic expectations of workload.
- Keep the meetings on track while facilitating productive discussion.
- Plan your task group calls over the quarter. It is excellent to prepare agendas in advance, but task group work may require activities to be completed/prioritized depending on external timeframes such as DERF deadlines. The task group leader should plan their meeting activities accordingly.
- Although not required for task group meetings, agendas are a good way to:
 - Keep your task group meetings structured. Some task group leaders prefer to prioritize based on importance; some follow the first in, first discussed method. Talk with your liaison to determine how best to handle agenda items.
 - Help prevent tangent discussions and stay on task to accomplish each meeting's goals.
 - Assist in maintaining a record of activities; prepare meeting notes and quarterly task group recap reports.

Communication

Communication is critical in any group or meeting. Miscommunication almost always leads to issues that can derail productive discussions. task group leaders should:

- Attend all scheduled calls. If you are unable to attend, you should communicate with the staff liaison as far in advance as possible.
 - In order for a task group call to proceed as scheduled, at least one task group leader must be present.
- Establish the importance of dialogue among participants in reaching task group goals.
- Work with staff liaison on any additional internal or external communication needs such as in *NCPDP Now*.
- Deliver a quarterly recap at work group meetings.

Task Group Leader Roles and Responsibilities

- Each quarter, task group leaders are requested to complete a task group Recap Report for presentation at the work group meeting.
- If there are sub-task groups, the sub-task group leaders should provide summaries to the task group leaders.
- A task group Recap Report form is supplied by the work group liaison before each quarterly meeting. The recap includes:
 - The goal of the task group.
 - The task group's parent Work group.
 - The task group's meeting dates, since the last recap report.
 - The accomplishments, recommendations, questions needing response by the parent work group and next steps.

Cohesion

Members of a task group should experience a “commonality” of purpose, a sense of connection to others in the group. To encourage cohesiveness, task group leaders should:

- Strive to involve task group members and encourage participation in the discussions.
- Recognize and show appreciation of members' contributions and commitment to the Group.
- Monitor DERFs and developments in other work or task groups, as well as within the industry. Often, work done outside your task group can impact your work. Keeping on top of this can help ensure greater harmonization among all standards.

Consensus

Task group participants can have differing opinions on topics raised in task group discussions. As the task group participants work through issues and obstacles, discussions should be driven by the task group leader to determine how the group will arrive at a final recommendation on the given issue. To promote consensus, task group leaders should:

- Define consensus: Consensus does not mean 100% agreement by everyone, rather there is a mutual feeling that all concerns of the group have been addressed (i.e., everyone has been heard and understood.).
- Set the expectation with the group on how they will arrive at a final decision or recommendation (e.g., by simple majority show of hands, voice votes, etc.).
- Keep the discussion on track and the focus on the specific task group goal to help drive consensus.
- Task group leaders should also be mindful, during times of group participant debate on issue(s), of their demeanor to ensure professionalism decorum is maintained.

Coordination

Task group leaders will also work together with the NCPDP staff liaison to coordinate the task group meetings. The responsibilities of the staff liaison are as follows:

- Manage task group documentation and calendar events on the NCPDP Collaborative Workspace.
- Administrative call responsibilities (e.g., timely commencement of a scheduled call, tallying straw poll responses, muting/unmuting attendees).
- Assist task group leads to ensure attendees follow anti-trust policy.
- Keep track of important organizational dates (e.g., DERF submission deadlines).
- Help answer any questions regarding NCPDP, standards and processes.



Task Group Leader Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, the staff liaison will work with the task group leader on:

- Determining the best day and time to hold task group call.
- Compiling call notes or other documentation pertinent to the task group.

Facilitating Task Group Calls

Introduction

Often, task group members may have schedule conflicts and cannot always attend every task group call. Although the notes are posted on the collaborative workspace, it should be a best practice to give a quick summary of the task group purpose, progress to date and the specific agenda item(s) under review.

Things you may want to include in the introduction are:

- Introduce yourself and other co-leaders, if applicable, along with the task group staff liaison.
- Identify any special guests invited to the call if needed.
- Read any necessary “parliamentary” procedures governing the meeting.
 - Do not place call on hold.
 - Provide name before speaking.
 - Mute phone when not speaking.
 - Acknowledgement of anti-trust policy.
- Name of the task group and the parent work Group, along with task group leader and NCPDP staff liaison names.
- Goal and purpose of the task group and a reference to any parent or co-dependent task group(s).
- Summary of what occurred on the previous call and any decisions made.

Facilitation

Techniques for meeting facilitation vary among task group leaders and it may take some time to determine what works best for your task group. Below are some tips and techniques that can be used to ensure success.

- Strive to involve task group members and encourage participation in the discussions.
 - Establish the importance of dialogue among members in reaching task group goals.
 - Ask task group members who have not spoken for their opinions and input.
- Check for and be aware of a lack of understanding of the subject matter and insert clarifications when it appears some members are “lost.” Intervene when members are clearly misunderstanding each other and ask for clarification from the member who has just spoken. If necessary, restate goals or give a high level recap.



Task Group Leader Roles and Responsibilities

- Encourage good communication behaviors such as not talking over others, interrupting or showing disrespect.
- Be cognizant of discussion time and any specific deadlines that need to be met.
- Address situations where the same point is being repeated multiple times. Capture and restate the points made and ask the task group members for any **new/different** thoughts, recommendations or concerns.
 - Coordinate documentation of the task group discussion so that it is available for future reference, eliminating guess work of what may have occurred.
 - Summarize accomplishments and review deliverables at the end of the meeting.
 - Take steps to ensure discussion is not dominated by one individual.

Engagement

Task group leaders often need to encourage members to participate in the discussion. Many calls end up as a conversation between the same few participants. To ensure all business areas are considered, task group leaders should engage members and encourage participation in the discussion. To engage members, task group leaders can:

- Recognize and show appreciation of the members' contributions and commitment to the Group.
- Ask open ended questions to trigger new discussions, ignite the thought process.
- Ask for volunteers to perform research or complete specific action items to be brought back to the task group for review. Describe the requested work as an opportunity to enhance the task group member's knowledge base and to improve the NCPDP standards.
- Ask for opinions and thoughts from specific business areas.
- Keep a positive tone. Engage task group members to make them feel they are contributing to solution development.

Conflict

Some meetings seem to be spent arguing over every decision. Although some level of conflict is usually inevitable and often productive, task group leaders should:

- Intervene when a discussion becomes too heated, turns personal or is clearly unproductive.
- Use their mediation skills to help resolve the conflict.
- Redirect the discussion to another topic.
- Table the issue until the next meeting to allow more information to be gathered.
 - Make sure to name person(s) responsible for gathering the information.

Understand that arriving at complete consensus among the Group will not always be possible.

- When consensus is not progressing:
 - Table the item for additional research and discussion. Invite subject matter experts to attend future calls to weigh in.
 - Ask the NCPDP staff liaison to take a hand count on webinar to obtain preliminary indication of task group agreement.

Should the task group fail to reach consensus, after exhausting all efforts, the task group leader should inform the work Group co-chairs who can determine next steps.



Task Group Leader Roles and Responsibilities

Taking Action

- Note taking
 - NCPDP staff liaisons will assist with documentation support
 - Meeting notes provide support for future meeting agendas and action items
 - Document task group member assignments related to actions items or deliverables
- Next meeting action items
 - It is highly recommended task group leaders reserve a few minutes at the end of each meeting to propose an agenda for the next meeting.
 - Action items for the task group should be included on meeting agendas.
- Collaborative Workspace

The Collaborative Workspace is a shared NCPDP workspace where task group documentation is posted by NCPDP staff for sharing with task group members.

 - If operational changes are required to be made to NCPDP systems any follow-up conversations with NCPDP staff regarding these changes must be communicated by your staff liaison task group (e.g., requested change of internal system, web update). Task group members or leaders should never make direct requests of NCPDP. All requests must be communicated through your staff liaison.

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Quarterly Task Group Updates

This section discusses the task group leader's role and responsibilities associated with creating and presenting quarterly updates to the sponsoring work group(s). As you know at NCPDP, obtaining consensus is key to the standards development process. The task group leader plays a crucial role in ensuring the team arrives at solutions acceptable to the broad membership.

Most of the detailed work at NCPDP is performed in the task groups. Critical steps in the approval of the task group's work takes place at the quarterly work group meetings. Because not every attendee at work group has been able to attend your specific task group, you are a critical piece in the communication process as you will be responsible for informing the general membership on the issues and merits of the work the group has done. For this reason, task group leaders are highly encouraged to attend quarterly work group meetings to provide updates in person.

Preparation is crucial. Key items for a task group leader to keep in mind as they prepare and present their task group update:

Prepare

- Complete and submit the task group update to your NCPDP staff liaison prior to the designated deadline. This will allow membership to access and review the material prior to the work group meeting.
- If timing allows, review the task group recap with your task group ensuring consensus of content. This will help eliminate any disagreements at work group on the work performed within the task group when you, as the task group leader, present the information on behalf of the work performed by your task group attendees.
- If needed, create a brief presentation to help the audience understand the issues. Prepare the presentation prior to the work group meetings and provide it to the NCPDP staff liaison at least one week before the work group meeting.
- Remember, much of the work group audience may not be familiar with the issues. Be patient when debriefing on issues and don't assume everyone is aware of the subject/topic. Present examples to the group whenever possible.
- Prepare subject matter experts. Communicate with your SME(s) if you think they could provide assistance during the work group recap by clarifying a specific topic or providing additional context that work group participants may need.

Present

- Solicit comments/questions. Pause! (Rule of thumb on a pause is to take eight (8) seconds) It can take some time for someone unfamiliar with the issue to formulate a question.
- Listen! Remember concerns and objections are an opportunity to make the solutions better.
- Solicit participation in future task group meetings. Do not be disappointed if you leave work group with more issues to address as they are critical points a task group needs to be successful. If there are one or two persons, or a constituency that has not been represented in the task group, ask for their help. Most will be willing to oblige.
- Remind the work group of your task group's meeting schedule if it is regular and encourage all to sign up on the Collaborative Workspace.

A Data Element Request Form (DERF) is the most common method of requesting the adoption of a new standard, implementation guide or code set or the modification of an existing standard or guide.

Task groups are typically created to address business needs where their work results in recommendations to change an existing standard or develop a new standard. As a result, DERFs are often drafted and submitted by a task group.

Should the task group submit a DERF, it is the task group leader's responsibility to manage the DERF development process by the task group and monitor timelines to ensure expectations are met. The following guidance provides DERF management tips to assist with this process:

DERF Preparation

- Complete all task group homework assignments associated to the business case
- Evaluate positive, negative and transition scenarios to ensure a comprehensive review has been completed to eliminate any un-intended impacts
- Leverage the most current published version of the Standard to draft examples and outlines, to identify co-dependencies and risks
- Determine if DERF will include changes to the External Code List (ECL). If it does, determine if the changes qualify for Emergency or Expedited ECL status.
 - DERFs for SCRIPT and Specialized Standard: An ECL DERF can only qualify for Expedited status if there is a law or other regulation requiring the ECL value to be implemented before implementation of the next MMA named version of the standard. The annual implementation date of these expedited values is October 15th. Earlier adoption would be by trading partner agreements.
 - DERFs for the Telecommunication Standard: An ECL DERF can only qualify for Emergency status if there is a law or other regulation requiring the ECL value to be implemented before the scheduled Annual ECL implementation date under which it would normally fall. If approved, Emergency ECL DERFs follow shortened implementation timelines.

DERF Content

- Summarize in a clear and concise manner what the DERF is requesting
 - The first few sentences of a DERF document are what is captured and presented in the DERF summary document posted as work group material. NCPDP members leverage the DERF summary document to organize and prioritize their review.
- Define the business case(s) that support the requested changes
 - This information should be comprehensive. Often, DERFs are referenced later in time when users are implementing the change and need to understand the background and requirements.
- Identify all NCPDP Standards and transactions for which the changes apply
 - Define the situations of use or any specific exceptions
- Ensure field definitions and values are outlined, where applicable
 - Define any field limitations that may apply
- Define and differentiate between supporting documentation used for clarification purposes and guidance intended for publication.

DERF Review

- Review the DERF with the task group to prepare for work group presentation including content, wordsmithing, grammar, spelling, etc.
- Task group consensus is recommended before submitting the DERF for presentation to the work group
- In the event there is no task group consensus, the following options are recommended:
 - The DERF can be held in the task group for presentation at a future work group meeting in order to provide time for additional discussion, documentation of examples, inviting subject matter experts, etc.
 - The DERF can be presented at the work group meetings as a proposed DERF within the task group recap to obtain a larger group consensus without an intention for final disposition
 - The task group can determine another recommendation works better
 - The task group can move the DERF forward without consensus
- Prior to submission, the task group should consider if there are other impacted task group(s), within all work groups and ask those task groups to review the DERF.

Timing of the DERF

- Due date for DERF submission is approximately 30 days prior to the quarterly scheduled work group meetings (See <https://standards.ncpdp.org/Our-Process.aspx> for a DERF/New Project Form Calendar)

DERF Presentation to Work Group(s)

- A task group leader is responsible for presenting the DERF at the work group meetings and be able to answer questions regarding its content. At the discretion of the work group co-chair, the co-chair may present the DERF and have the TG leader available for discussion/questions.
 - A task group leader may appoint a task group member to present the DERF at the work group meetings if unable to attend or ask a task group member to assist with the DERF presentation.
- In the event there was unresolved contention within the task group regarding the details of the DERF, this information should be presented to the work group.

DERF Disposition to the Task Group

The status of the DERF is to be reported at the first task group meeting following the work group session in which the DERF was presented.

- Approved Status
 - Provide next steps of either publication or ballot.
 - If the goals of the task group are met by the DERF approval, the task group should not be disbanded until the final disposition of the ballot in order to assist with potential ballot comments
- Pended Status
 - Review the recommendation(s) from work group(s) for the pended status reason(s)
 - Return the DERF to the task group agenda to determine the task group's next steps
 - Schedule joint task group calls as needed, to address concerns presented by any specific work group or task group



DERF Process and Task Group Responsibility

- Clearly mark and summarize any modifications made to the DERF, for presentation at the next work group meeting
- Denied Status
 - Review the work group decision and rationale for denial
 - Return the DERF to the task group agenda to determine the task group's next steps

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This section discusses the best practices for task group guidance documentation creation and updates as outlined by the NCPDP Standardization Committee. It is up to the task group co-leads to ensure best practices are reviewed and being followed when a task group is creating or updating documentation for publication.

- New documentation should take no more than **18 months** to create.
 - If pressing issues arise, they should be expedited to keep new documentation on track.
- Updating documentation should take no more than **6 months**.
- Engage Work Group Co-Chairs in a more active role to assist guiding the documents under their domain to completion.
- Engage assigned Standardization Co-Chairs to be engaged throughout the process to expedite upcoming Standardization Committee review.

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Guidelines for NCPDP Commitment

- Only certain staff and the Board of Trustees can commit financial or other resources of the Council
- NCPDP's Antitrust Policy must be adhered to at all times
- Due diligence and consensus building procedures must be followed that allow for fair and balanced representation of all aspects of an issue

Work group co-chairs, task group leaders, committee chairs and committee vice chairs are the only ones authorized to meet to speak on behalf of the task groups or work groups, efforts and business. They must report back to the appropriate work group, task group or committee on the outcome of any such meetings. Only the authorized designee should be meeting with these groups which must be approved by the Standardization Co-Chairs and the President of NCPDP.

Any commitment made outside of these guidelines will result in NCPDP being unable to support, financially or otherwise, that commitment.

Work group co-chairs, task group leaders, committee chairs and committee vice chairs do not have the authority to commit the organization to anything – engage NCPDP staff early and often.