

Recommended Minimum Start-Up Skills

Every NORC program needs to be sure it has a minimum skill set among its personnel before getting started. The recommendations offered here are guidelines, which need to be adjusted, depending on the size of your community and the number of seniors you will serve. Keep in mind that as your program grows, the skills you need are likely to expand and change.

At a minimum, a program should not get started without the following mix of skills:

Clinical case work
Clinical nursing
Community organizing
Leadership
Strong management
Administrative support
Fundraising and communications
Data collection and analysis

In the early years of your program, you will likely need to hire staff that offers a mix of skills – at their launch, few start-ups have the resources to hire people who can only play one role. For example, some programs will hire a director with strong community organizing experience, or a clinical social worker who can also manage the recreational or volunteer activities of a program. Keep that in mind as you begin your hiring process.

At a minimum, a NORC program needs the following staff in place before opening its doors:

- **Onsite director or coordinator** (a full-time position; typically, this is a manager who guides day-to-day activities and often serves in other capacities as well).
- A part-time **community health nurse** (initially available at least two days a week, and evolving into a full-time position).
- A full-time **social worker** (at least one is needed; this person may also coordinate activities or volunteers, or be involved in community organizing).
- **Administrative support** for the full-time coordinator (a minimum of half-time, this person is charged with setting up and maintaining systems to track meetings and contacts; establish a database of contacts; create fundraising letters and other communication tools; support outreach to senior residents and others in community).