

PASSION GROUP PROGRAM

Standard Operating Procedure

Applying For and Creating a Passion Group

Document ID SOP-PGP-001	Version 1.0	Effective Date [Pending Ratification]	Review Date [Annual]
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1. Purpose and Scope

This Standard Operating Procedure outlines the process for proposing, applying for, and launching a Passion Group within the Exist With Initiative's Passion Group Program. It is intended to ensure consistency, clarity, and accountability at every stage — from a member's initial idea through the group's first official meeting.

1.1 Who This SOP Is For

- Prospective Grove Keeper (members interested in proposing a new passion group)
- The Board of Directors (responsible for reviewing applications and granting approval)
- ****Future**** Board Liaisons (assigned to support and mentor new Grove Keepers)
- ****Future**** Current passion group leaders seeking to reference established procedures

1.2 Related Documents

- Grove Keeper Agreement
- Passion Group Application
- Passion Group Charter/Mission Statement

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Passion Group	A member-led community within the nonprofit organized around a shared interest, skill, or purpose, formally recognized by the Board.
Grove Keeper	The founding leader of a passion group — the member who proposes the group, completes required steps, and assumes ongoing leadership responsibilities under the Grove Keeper Agreement.
Board	The nonprofit's Board of Directors, which reviews and approves passion group applications, assigns liaisons, and maintains oversight.

Board Liaison	A designated board member assigned to mentor and support a new Grove Keeper through the launch process and beyond. The Board Liaison is chosen by majority vote of the current Board of Directors. Board Liaisons are assigned after submission and approval of the Charter.
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Passion Group Application	The document used to apply and structure the prospective Passion Group. Completed by the Grove Keeper to define the group's purpose, values, structure, and initial membership.
Grove Keeper Agreement	The formal agreement signed by the Grove Keeper and a board representative outlining mutual responsibilities and the term of commitment.
Charter	The approved foundational document that defines the group's mission, scope, and operating rules, referenced throughout the group's life.
Launch Report	The performance summary/document. Submitted following the inaugural meeting of the Passion Group by the Grove Keeper. This document includes a general summary of the first meeting and any metrics/qualitative measures.

3. Eligibility Requirements

Before submitting an application, the prospective Grove Keeper must confirm they meet the following criteria:

- Individual interested in becoming an active member of Exist With Initiative and maintaining good standing within the nonprofit organization.
- Willingness to commit to a minimum one-year term as Grove Keeper.
- Availability to complete required launch training and/or orientation.
- A clearly defined group concept that aligns with the organization's mission and values.

4. Step-by-Step Process

PHASE 1

Before any formal submission — clarify your idea

#	Responsible Party	Action	Notes / References
1	Prospective Grove Keeper	Identify a passion, skill, or purpose that could form the basis of a new group. Confirm it is not already served by an existing group.	<i>Review the current passion group directory before proceeding.</i>

2	Prospective Grove Keeper	Informally gauge interest from potential founding members.	<i>This step is informal — no forms required yet.</i>
3	Prospective Grove Keeper	Review this SOP and the Grove Keeper Agreement in full to understand the scope of responsibilities.	<i>Grove Keeper Agreement, Section 2.</i>

PHASE 2

Formally submit your proposal to the Board

#	Responsible Party	Action	Notes / References
4	Prospective Grove Keeper	Complete the Passion Group Application, defining the group's purpose, values, proposed meeting cadence, and initial structure.	<i>Passion Group Application Document.</i>
5	Prospective Grove Keeper	Complete and submit the formal Passion Group Application to the Board.	<i>Submit via the designated channel specified by the Board.</i>
6	Board	Acknowledge receipt of the application within 5 business days.	<i>Liaison assignment initiates the review relationship.</i>
7	Board	Review the application for alignment with organizational mission, duplication concerns, and feasibility.	<i>Suggested period to review: 15 days, the board must communicate a decision within 30 days.</i>
8	Board	Communicate the decision to the applicant: approved, approved with conditions, or not approved with feedback within 30 business days.	<i>All decisions delivered in writing.</i>

PHASE 3

Complete training and finalize the group's foundation

#	Responsible Party	Action	Notes / References
9	Grove Keeper	Complete all required training designated by the Board prior to the first official meeting.	<i>Onboarding must be completed before Step 13.</i>
10	Grove Keeper & Board Liaison/Board	Meet with the assigned Board Liaison/Board to review expectations, communication protocols, and reporting schedule. Meetings will be scheduled with the appropriate authority based on availability.	<i>Minimum one meeting required before launch.</i>

11	Grove Keeper	Finalize and submit the Passion Group Charter, incorporating any Board conditions from the approval.	<i>Charter defines scope, norms, and operating rules.</i>
12	Board	Review and formally approve the Charter. Countersign the Grove Keeper Agreement.	<i>Grove Keeper Agreement, Sections 4 & 5.</i>
13	Grove Keeper	Confirm founding membership. Invite and onboard founding members, sharing the group's purpose and charter.	<i>Minimum of 3 founding members required.</i>
14	Grove Keeper	Schedule the inaugural meeting, reserve a venue or platform, and communicate details to founding members with adequate advance notice.	<i>Minimum 7 days' advance notice recommended.</i>

PHASE 4

Hold the first official meeting and establish operating rhythms

#	Responsible Party	Action	Notes / References
15	Grove Keeper	Facilitate the inaugural meeting. Introduce the charter, establish group norms, and confirm the recurring meeting schedule.	<i>Document the meeting with summary notes.</i>
16	Grove Keeper	Submit a Launch Report to the Board summarizing the inaugural meeting, attendance, and any early observations.	<i>Submit within 5 business days of inaugural meeting.</i>
17	Board Liaison/Board	Conduct a post-launch check-in with the Grove Keeper to assess early group health and address any questions.	<i>Schedule within 30 days of inaugural meeting.</i>
18	Grove Keeper	Begin maintaining group records: meeting notes, number in attendance, and any expenditures or activities requiring Board awareness.	<i>Ongoing responsibility per Grove Keeper Agreement.</i>
19	Board Liaison & Grove Keeper	The Board Liaison and Grove Keeper will meet once per quarter to discuss current KPI and deliverables. Other meetings can occur at a more frequent interval at the request of either party.	<i>Ongoing responsibility for both the Grove Keeper and Board Liaison.</i>

5. Timeline Summary

The following represents the expected timeline from initial concept to group launch. Actual timelines

may vary based on Board scheduling and training availability.

Milestone	Target Timeframe	Notes
Application submitted	Week 0	<i>Application submitted</i>
Board acknowledges receipt	Within 5 business days	<i>Clock starts at submission</i>
Board decision communicated	Within 30 business days of receipt	<i>From receipt of complete application</i>
Training completed	Before first meeting	<i>All required training must be finished</i>
Liaison meeting held	Before first meeting	<i>At least once pre-launch</i>
Charter approved & Agreement signed	Before first meeting	<i>Board countersignature required</i>
Inaugural meeting held	Within 60 days of approval	<i>Grove Keeper to schedule promptly</i>
Launch Report submitted	Within 10 business days of inaugural meeting	<i>Submitted to Board and Board Liaison</i>

6. Board Responsibilities

The Board plays an active role throughout the process. In accordance with the Grove Keeper Agreement, the Board commits to the following:

- Provide a clear application and onboarding process with timely communication.
- Assign a Board Liaison/Board member promptly upon application receipt.
- Complete application reviews within the 30-business-day target.
- Make required training/orientation resources available at no cost to the Grove Keeper.
- Offer ongoing mentorship and support through the assigned Liaison.
- Recognize and celebrate Grove Keeper contributions to the organization's mission.

7. Non-Approval and Resubmission

If a passion group application is not approved, the Board may provide written feedback (upon request) explaining the reason(s). The Board retains the right to refuse written feedback for any reason. Common reasons for non-approval may include:

- Significant overlap with an existing passion group
- Insufficient alignment with the organization's mission or values

- Incomplete application materials

The prospective Grove Keeper may address the Board's feedback and resubmit after a minimum of 30 days. Resubmissions follow the same process from Step 4 onward.

8. Leadership Transition and Dissolution

8.1 Stepping Down as Grove Keeper

- The Grove Keeper must provide the Board with a minimum of 30 days' written notice before stepping down.
- A leadership transition plan must be initiated prior to departure, including identifying and onboarding a successor where possible.
- The departing Grove Keeper should brief the Board Liaison/Board on group status, open items, and membership context.

8.2 Grove Keeper Succession

- The succeeding Grove Keeper must be in good standing as a member of Exist With Initiative.
- The succeeding Grove Keeper must complete all the required Grove Keeper trainings/orientations.
- The succeeding Grove Keeper must review and sign the Passion Group Application agreement completed by the outgoing Grove Keeper.
- The succeeding Grove Keeper must receive a letter of recommendation from the outgoing Grove Keeper, and be approved by the Board.

8.3 Group Dissolution

- If a group can no longer sustain activity or finds no successor Grove Keeper, the Board may initiate a dissolution process.
- Members of a dissolved group will be notified and, where possible, referred to related existing groups.
- Group records and any organizational resources must be returned to the Board upon dissolution.

9. Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	6.15.26	B. dela Torre	Initial release

This document is owned by the Board of Directors and is subject to annual review. Proposed amendments should be submitted to the Board in writing. Questions regarding this SOP may be directed to the assigned Board Liaison or any board member.

10. Approval

Role	Signature	Date
Board Member	<i>Bri dela Torre</i>	07/26/26
Board Member	<i>Justyn Zeider</i>	07/26/26
Board Member	<i>Reed Antonich</i>	07/26/26