

Creating Community Questionnaire

**This document was created with generalizations based on my personal experience homeschooling the last 12 years and on information collected in partnering with a variety of homeschool group leaders as a consultant or mentor over the last 3 years. It is meant to be used as a tool to brainstorm, not as an authority, for subject material could definitely be debated. It is not intended to label cooperatives as better or worse than programs, but is intended to give a form to questions which tend to come up after the formation of an organization. Please do not take personal offense. I believe many are capable of creating and managing a cooperative academic program, and maybe you'll use this form to help you discriminate and define in order to do just that!

Term A) Volunteer-Based Cooperative

Term B) Tuition-Based Academic Program

Cooperative Definition:
Noun

a jointly owned enterprise engaging in the production or distribution of goods or the supplying of services, operated by its members for their mutual benefit, typically organized by consumers or farmers.

Dictionary.com

Program Definition:
Noun

a set of related measures or activities with a particular long-term aim.

Dictionary.com

Comparison by Similarities: Exercise from The Lost Tools of Writing by Andrew Kern

What do both have?	What are both?	What do both do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *policies *classes *homeschooled students *parents who stay on site *leadership *fees *tutors *volunteer roles *syllabi *limited enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *organizations *communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *assist students with academics *provide group services
Brainstorm and list some more!		

Comparison by Differences: Exercise by The Lost Tools of Writing by Andrew Kern

Term A) Volunteer-Based Cooperative

Term B) Tuition-Based Academic Program

Both A & B Do (List Verbs)	A does more/less _____ (verb) than B (describe the difference).	A does _____ (verb) better/worse than B (describe the difference).
Assist Provide group services	A assists less with academics than B because volunteers are not compensated to do so and parents, and students are more likely to reach out to a paid employee than to a volunteer.	B assists better than A because A is dependent on a volunteer which may or may not be expected to have skills necessary for the position. B does provide better group services, such as leading labs or skill-based classes, than A because B has the ability to hire experts in the field.
Both A & B Have (List Nouns Both Have)	A has more/less _____ (noun) than B (describe the difference).	A has better/worse _____ (noun) than B (describe the difference).
Policies Classes Leadership Fees	<p>A has more policies than B because it serves a more general crowd which requires more management. This then requires more energy in enforcing the policies. B has fewer policies than A because it serves specific families with a more uniform intention.</p> <p>A has more classes than B because it serves a more general crowd which requires more selection. B has fewer classes because its intention is specific.</p>	<p>A has better/worse _____ (noun) than B (describe the difference).</p> <p>B has better classes than A because they are able to hire skilled employees, even outsourcing to an online master tutor.</p> <p>B has better leadership than A because B requires a team of invested leaders, HOWEVER, B requires much more of its leadership with the responsibilities that come from employing.</p> <p>A has better fees than B because the financial investment is less with all roles filled by volunteers.</p>

Tutors		B has better tutors than A because the funds allow for committed trainings and management of workers with clearly communicated expectations. It can be harder to manage a volunteer.
Volunteer Roles	A has more volunteer roles than B.	
Syllabi	A has fewer syllabi than B as it meets the needs of a more general crowd. B requires a syllabus for each course, but the entire program is surrounding around following a standard course of study.	
Limited Enrollment	A has less limited enrollment than B because it is easier to grow with volunteers than it is to grow with employees.	
Both A & B Are (List Groups Both Belong To)	*Column left blank for the more or less comparison.	A is better/worse _____ (group member) than B (describe the difference).
Organizations	Example: Jeff Foxworthy is not more or less a comedian than John Crist.	B is a better organization than A when it comes to an academic program because it is able to be specific and naturally discriminates to foster likeminded pedagogy.
Communities	Term A – Jeff Term B – John Group - Comedians	B is a better community when it comes to an academic program than A because it eliminates many variables which can exhaust leadership.

With this information I have defined the following:

A volunteer-based academic cooperative is a group of homeschooling parents which offers classes to children by having everyone contribute in some manner. Parents who would prefer to pay and not have a role on the community day would more than likely not choose this. Parents concerned about the availability of committed, equipped, capable volunteers would more than likely not choose this.

A tuition-based academic program is a group of homeschooling parents which pays an administrator to offer classes to children taught by employed tutors. Parents who prefer to work and not pay may still be comfortable as an employed tutor to earn income to pay for their enrolled children. Parents looking for viability and accountability may be drawn to this.

Consider this: Some parents want to be told what to do, and some want to tell others what to do. Some want to have a say in the academics, but not administration, and some in administration, but not academics.

QUESTIONS FOR CURRENT HOMESCHOOL GROUP LEADERS:

1. Define the service you offer to homeschooling families.

2. Are you paid for this service?
 - a) Have you worked with a CPA to discuss licensing and taxes for your business?

3. Do you hire workers as part of your business?
 - a) Have you worked with an attorney or CPA to classify your workers as independent contractors or as employees?

4. Did you enter into a licensing agreement with an affiliate company to offer your services?
 - a) Have you worked with an attorney regarding the terms of that agreement?

5. Do you carry insurance to transfer the risk associated with your business?
 - a) Are you covered for general liability? (facility and lawsuit)
 - b) Are you covered for accidental injury? (slip & fall)
 - c) Are your clients covered?
 - d) Are you workers, if applicable, covered?
 - e) Do you understand the term additional insured?

6. Where is your service offered?
 - a) Is the property owned by a 501(c)(3)?
 - b) Have you discussed the implications of a for profit business using a space which has a property tax exemption with the facility's staff?
 - c) Have you discussed the implications of a for profit business using a space which has a property tax exemption with the county assessor's office?

Describe a typical day with your group: What gives you life? What takes more energy than it is worth?

BUSINESS QUESTIONS

1. How much time will you have to designate to the financial and legal responsibilities of your cooperative or program?

2. What other roles do you have and what investment of time do they require?

3. What leadership role do you see yourself having in this new cooperative or program?

4. Will you organize as a cooperative and not charge for services?

a) Will you charge for insurance?

b) Will you charge for facility rental?

c) Will you charge for supplies?

d) Do you have a treasurer who will handle this?

e) What can you do to ensure this does not look like it is a person's income if they handle fees?

*Purchase "Money Management in a Homeschool Organization: A Guide for Treasurers" and "Homeschool Co-ops: How to Start Them, Run Them and Not Burn Out" both by Carol Topp, CPA.

5. Will you organize as a program and pay tutors?

*Purchase "Money Management in a Homeschool Organization: A Guide for Treasurers", "Homeschool Co-ops: How to Start Them, Run Them and Not Burn Out", and "Paying Workers in a Homeschool Organization" all by Carol Topp, CPA.

*Some terms to know: payroll, FICA, worker's comp, unemployment, labor division, minimum wage, quarterlies, service tax, sales tax

6. Will you incorporate as a nonprofit in your state?

*Purchase "The IRS and Your Homeschool Organization" by Carol Topp, CPA.

7. Will you apply for 501(c)(3) tax exempt status?

8. Will you require background checks?

9. Have you researched insurance?

Search "HSLDA Insurance for Homeschool Groups"

New questions! What questions did this process generate for you? Where will you go to find the answers?

ADMINISTRATION

1. Describe an ideal day of homeschooling, just in your home, what would it look like? Take your time. What would give you life and and be doable?

2. Describe an ideal day at your homeschool group meeting, what would it look like?

3. Who gives you energy? Who will work alongside you?

4. Who will tutor?

5. Who do you want to welcome in, but do not want to give a leadership role?

6. Who takes more energy than they give?

7. Who can you trust to help you create and influence this community? Be sure you place their student information in the student list.

8. List your core moms or dads in order of who has homeschooled the longest, but include in your notes who has applicable experience outside of homeschooling.

9. Will you administrate as THE PERSON in charge? No? Then who?

10. Who will help you write the policies?

11. Who will help you enforce policies?

12. How will you define policies and expectations? Meaning, will you research other programs or will you consult with other leaders?

13. How will you communicate policies and expectations? FB group? Website? Email? Documents?

14. Be specific: Who are you creating a community for? Your own children? What is important to you?

15. What ages will you serve?

16. Will you plan to meet more than one day per week? Consider local and state laws.

17. Where will you meet? Will you need a storage closet? A gym? Nursery? List options and rank them by preference.

18. How many classrooms will you need?

19. What time will you begin and end? Example Schedule. (Just to get started)

	5-7	7-9	9-11	11-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
Morning Time 9:30									
Block 1 10:00									
Block 2 11:00									
LUNCH									
Block 3 1:00									
Block 4 2:00									

Jot down some ideas for the day! What will it look like? How many students do you have in each category?

CURRICULUM

1. What materials do you love to use in your homeschool?

2. What materials do you know you want to use in your cooperative or program?

3. List skill-based classes you'd like to offer. math, phonics, Latin, spelling, composition (narration & written), logic, rhetoric, high school science, etc.

4. List classes you'd like to avoid. math (ha – this is the one thing I do not suggest offering to homeschoolers – I have my reasons)

5. List content-based classes you'd like to offer. History, literature, elementary science, etc.

6. What courses are you comfortable leading?

7. What courses will you offer grammar students?

8. What courses will you offer logic students?

9. What courses will you offer rhetoric students? Who can you talk to about credits?

10. Interview your core moms and dads. What courses do they want to see offered?

11. Who has a passion for:

Language (phonics*spelling*English Grammar*Latin*modern language)

History

Math

Logic or Rhetoric (speech or debate)

Science

Literature

Art

Music

Please refer all questions regarding this material to Jamie Buckland at jamie@jamiebuckland.net.

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