Before Pilot Launch

1. **Establish a strong YSA and single adult regional program.** Pathway is easier to implement if there is already a strong YSA and single adult organization across the region. In New England, an enthusiastic and visionary leader was called to be the “agent” stake president for YSA activities in the region. This president had a holistic vision of developing a vibrant YSA community that emphasized service, education and wholesome recreation; Pathway was part of that vision, making it much more than just a program to be implemented. During his tenure, a very active YSA-led regional structure has been established, and several formal YSA units/groups were started outside our traditional YSA center of strength in Cambridge.

2. **Determine the ideal location.** The ideal site balances the following characteristics: A central location in an area of relatively high density target enrollee population. As explained previously, the ideal students may not necessarily be traditional single ‘YSAs,’ but can come from a mix of backgrounds. We have found that this diversity of age, experience, and maturity, greatly benefits the program.

3. **Have strong stake leadership support.** An enthusiastic stake president should be chosen to oversee local implementation of the pilot, with assistance from his counselors and the high council. This leadership is essential even if the pilot draws participants across stake boundaries. Once the program is up and running, the stake’s leadership burden is reduced somewhat, but is critical during the early phases of logistics coordination and recruiting. Our stake president leader organized several meetings (presided over by the area seventy) where the Pathway Program was explained to bishops, high councilors, parents, and potential recruits. The participation of priesthood, auxiliaries, and ward and stake councils is critical to making this effort a seamless part of the welfare efforts versus just another church program.

4. **Dedicated space.** The stake president will need to find (in the case of a local institute building) or provide (in the case of his own stake center) dedicated space for the Pathway Program. BYU-Idaho can provide details of physical facility requirements. Be aware that if an institute building is used, institute rules must be followed, which may place limitations on the participation of students older than 30; because we used stake center space, this was not an issue.

5. **Call competent and dedicated missionaries.** Significant effort must be expended in receiving local revelation and calling the right couple to be Pathway missionaries. While the stake president could make this calling, having the area seventy identify and call this couple ensures the program is viewed as truly “regional” rather than a stake effort. One of the Pathway couples serving in Hingham, Massachusetts, was called from the Providence Rhode Island stake. This was a retired couple serving in the Boston Temple. He was a former college educator and stake and ward leader, and both he and his wife have a great love for YSAs and single. The search for the right couple took some time, with the Lord providing assurance that the right couple had been prepared. While most couples receiving the call may have some apprehensions (“this is a new program—will it work?”, "do I have the necessary computer skills?"), the Area Seventy can play a role in reassuring the missionary couple and providing tangible support.
6. **Establish recruitment goals, begin recruiting early, and distribute the responsibility.** If you have chosen the right location and leadership, the program should then make sense to local leaders as a wonderful way to rescue “lost sheep,” meet welfare needs, and provide tremendous opportunity to a segment of their stakes, wards and branches. As the area seventy, take the lead in meetings with local leaders in asking them to think about those who might benefit—single moms, YSAs who didn’t or couldn’t get into church schools or go on missions, immigrants, those lacking confidence or direction, and invite them to seek out this sometimes invisible, but critical portion of our church membership. Establish goals as to the size of the pilot (25 students seemed an ideal size for us), and hold your initial outreach/education meetings early in the process.

7. **Consider calling an additional missionary couple with responsibility for recruiting and nurturing students.** As the complexities of getting the program established mounted and many requests for information began arriving, we called another missionary couple for the pilot. They initially were assigned just to bolster recruiting efforts in the local stake, but soon accepted a broadened role to recruit in the region, follow-up promptly with prospective student requests / applications. They soon joined the weekly meetings of the new class.

8. **Coordinate multi-stake execution and emphasize multi-stake cooperation.** While the presence of the Area Seventy lends some weight to this kind of program, it is also important to explicitly message that this is not just a stake program but a regional program. We strove to create a true sense of regional cooperation by 1) discussing the program in coordinating councils and in one-on-one meetings with stake presidents, 2) reaching out to and informing additional key individuals in different stakes (such as service missionaries, education coordinators, welfare specialists, etc.), 3) involving individuals from multiple stakes in execution and 4) regularly discussing progress and successes in regional meetings.

**At Launch / Post Launch**

1. **Be visible and available.** Occasional visits and e-mail notes of appreciation to the students and to the leaders of the program are well received. The missionary couple that plays the primary role in organizing the weekly class sends a weekly summary note of encouragement to our students. Our second couple sends a summary of the progress of the students on a spiritual and intellectual level to a broad set of leaders. These communications are incredibly inspiring and should be met with enthusiasm and the deepest gratitude by the Area Seventy.

2. **Utilize your executive secretary in the program.** The time of the Area Seventy is scarce, and there are occasionally issues and problems arising that need to be addressed as can be expected with any program. In New England, the executive secretary has been heavily involved in interfacing with leadership, filtering and synthesizing information that tracks the progress of the program, addressing technological issues, and attending classes on occasion.

3. **Provide structured feedback on the program.** Given the still early stage of program rollout, organized and detailed feedback on aspects of the program that worked, didn’t work, and areas of needed adjustment are valuable to reposition this effort into what it needs to become. The Area Seventy can play a role in organizing, reviewing and presenting these insights.