



Community Council Members' Handbook Summary



Community Councils encourage, inspire, lead and support community inclusion and participation of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life.

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About this Community Council Handbook Summary

This document presents important content from the Community Council Handbook to help members understand the role of Community Councils and what is involved in your “job” as a Council member.

The web version of the Handbook, which also includes some of the appendices referred to in this document, is found at www.communitylivingbc.ca/community-council-members-handbook/.

Speaking of Developmental Disability

The term development disability is used here to be consistent with the language used by CLBC. Councils are encouraged to discuss the impact language has on community inclusion and on individual experiences of feeling welcome or excluded.

Different ways to support meaningful involvement of adults with developmental disabilities on Community Councils are found in **Appendix 1**.

About Community Living British Columbia

Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) is a Crown agency that funds supports and services that meet the disability-related needs of: 1) adults diagnosed with a developmental disability; 2) adults diagnosed with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or autism spectrum disorder, who also have significant limitations in adaptive functioning. Information about CLBC can be found at www.communitylivingbc.ca/about-us/publications/.

Community Councils: Champions of Inclusive Communities

13 Community Councils have been established across BC to invite adults with developmental disabilities, family and community members and service providers to work together to help CLBC achieve its vision of fostering “good lives in welcoming communities” for people with developmental disabilities. The vision is that we will all live in inclusive communities where no one is excluded. Each Council operates within a defined geographic area to encourage, inspire, lead and support community inclusion and participation of all people, including those with developmental disabilities, in all aspects of community life.

In an inclusive community, people feel like they belong. They are places where all citizens, including adults with developmental disabilities, have choices in where they live, in the work they do, and in the community activities in which they participate. They are communities in which people have friends, feel safe and play an active role. Supporting full participation of **ALL** citizens benefits everyone. An inclusive society values all of its members and the role each plays in enriching lives and reducing isolation. Inclusion also increases the pool of customers, employees, and volunteers that make communities better places to live.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Councils' Terms of Reference set out four key areas on which Councils can focus their work.

- 1. Work with your local CLBC Community Planning and Development Manager and staff to strengthen the communities' inclusion of all people**
- 2. Initiate projects to strengthen the communities' inclusion of all people**
- 3. Inform the CLBC Board and management through the Provincial Advisory Committee about province-wide barriers to inclusion and citizenship for people with developmental disabilities that require change**
- 4. Provide opportunities for individuals and families to connect and share information**

#1 above provides an opportunity for Councils and CLBC to work together to support each other to achieve common goals, resulting in more successful community building.

A way for Councils to think about how they do their work is to consider the following roles.

- **Convenor** - Bringing people together to explore issues or identify opportunities to act
- **Catalyst** - Stimulating change by identifying and mobilizing the different elements needed to make something happen, for example, resources and information
- **Connector** - Linking with others in community in support of a common cause
- **Advisor** - Sharing perspectives, information or insights to support something to be achieved

LINKS TO THE CLBC BOARD AND MANAGEMENT

The Board stays informed about Councils' work through its Quality and Service Committee. Two members of this Committee are non-voting members of the Provincial Advisory Committee meetings (PAC). The PAC is made up of adults with developmental disabilities and family members who represent the 13 Community Councils. The PAC meets four times a year to share what Councils are doing, discuss issues and challenges, identify ways they might be addressed, and recommend improvements to policy and practice.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

A membership term is two years; each member can serve three consecutive before needing to step off Council for at least one year. Councils have 7 to 15 voting members who reflect the geography and cultural diversity of the area covered by the Council. Recruitment strategies and activities that can create awareness and interest in your Council are found in **Appendix 6**. Councils determine the number of members; membership must meet these criteria:

- At least 50% plus 1 of Council members are adults with developmental disabilities and family members
- At least one Council member is an adult with a developmental disability
- At least 25% of Council members are people from the community, including business people, community leaders and other interested citizens

- Up to 25% of Council membership can be drawn from local service providers

APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Each year, Councils select a Chair and Vice Chair. The appointment is for one year and is done at the first meeting of the year, after April 1. If more than one member is willing to assume either of these roles, a vote should be taken by secret ballot. A description of the responsibilities of these two positions is found in **Appendix 6**. A service provider **cannot** hold the position of Chair or Vice Chairperson.

EXPECTATIONS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

All Council members are asked to agree to the following expectations which are set out in the Council Membership Agreement (**Appendix 4**).

- Focus on what matters
- Contribute their thoughts and ideas
- Be open and honest
- Respect confidentiality and not share other peoples' stories unless they have permission to do so
- Use respectful communication with a focus on listening in order to understand others
- Recognize that everyone's time is valuable
- Be aware of and, where necessary, remove barriers that limit member participation
- Be committed to the vision of more inclusive and welcoming communities for all citizens
- Be able to make time to participate in Council meetings, planning, and activities
- Live in the area covered by the Council
- Clear a mandatory criminal record check (no cost) **and** obtain a clean driver's abstract if they transport people with developmental disabilities as part of their work on the Council

COUNCIL MEMBER APPOINTMENT

Authority to appoint Community Council members is delegated by the CLBC Board of Directors to Directors of Regional Operations. While the Directors make all Council appointments, the Chair and Community Planning and Development Manager ensure the nomination process (discussed in detail in the Handbook) is followed.

How Community Planning & Development Managers Support Councils

The Community Planning and Development Manager is responsible for ensuring the Council receives the support needed to effectively carry out the Terms of Reference. They, or their designate, will:

- Attend Council meetings and events and work with the Council to plan or help implement community events or activities
- Involve CLBC staff and / or resources on Council activities and events that would be enhanced by joint CLBC planning and sponsorship
- Provide or assist with administrative and budget support
- Support and mentor the Council Chair and assist the Council to provide individual members with the support they require to do a good job

- Provide the Council with information about local, regional and provincial initiatives, particularly those that enhance citizenship and participation and, as appropriate, ask for Council members' ideas on these initiatives

Other CLBC staff whose job includes supporting Councils are: 1) Director of Individual, Family and Volunteer Engagement; 2) Family Partnership, Self-Advocate and Aboriginal Advisors; 3) Community Relations Specialists; 4) Online Content Specialist. A description of the role these resources can play is in **Appendix 12**.

Work Plans and Annual Reports

Each spring Councils review the year's work and the plan that guided it, and update or set a new plan for the coming year(s). The Council work plan includes goals that identify what the Council wants to achieve each year. The plan identifies what Council members will accept as evidence that they have met their goal(s) and made a difference in their community. Pacing the work and setting reasonable expectations are important things to remember.

Councils also prepare an annual report for the period of April 1st to March 31st, highlighting initiatives, projects and challenges the Council faced over the year, how they were addressed, and plans for the next year(s).

The Business of Community Council Meetings

Council members decide how often, where and when they will meet so the Council can do the best it can with available time and resources.

WHEN AND WHERE COUNCILS MEET

Most Councils meet monthly from September to June, some choosing not to meet during peak winter months when travel is difficult. Some have Committees that meet regularly or when needed, to plan and host events. Some Councils meet on a Saturday; others meet in the late afternoon or early evening. Certain Councils meet regularly in the same location; other Councils move between communities to accommodate members and / or to help the Council stay in touch with each town's or area's issues.

Meetings can be held at a CLBC office or in a community room at a local library or community centre. Meeting in community may invite passers-by to want to know more about the Community Council, giving the Council community visibility. Whatever space is used should support the group to engage in meaningful dialogue.

DECISION-MAKING

Council members decide together about work plans and goals and any community activities and discussions they will host.

Council members agree that in all decision-making they will listen respectfully to each other's ideas; work together to reach agreement on each decision wherever possible; and accept the majority decision (51% of a membership quorum) if everyone does not agree on a decision.

HOW COUNCILS COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR MEMBERS AND WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

Meeting minutes are taken at all Community Council meetings; some Councils nominate a member to take and distribute meeting minutes; others use the services of a person under contract; still others are supported by a CLBC administrative staff. The person who fulfills this role gets the agreement of the Council Chair and Community Planning and Development Manager before sending minutes to all Council members. To ensure that minutes help members follow through on work they have agreed to, it is best they are distributed to members within a week of the meeting.

Each Council has a webpage on CLBC’s website to share information with individuals, family members, community organizations and others. Councils can use the webpage to tell people about upcoming events and discussions, and to show pictures and tell stories about events they host or participate in. Council minutes are also posted on the Council’s webpage.

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Councils can use Committees to do some of their work. At a minimum, each Council should have a Membership Committee to support recruitment. This will keep recruitment on the Council agenda during the year.

A Council member can chair a Committee while also drawing membership from the broader community. Inviting non-Council members to sit on a Committee is a good strategy to increase community awareness about the work of the Council and issues relating to building more inclusive communities and to strengthen Council member recruitment efforts.

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET

CLBC gives Community Councils a budget each year. Each Council is informed of its budget by the Community Planning and Development Manager as close to the beginning of CLBC’s new fiscal year (April 1st) as possible. The Council prepares a budget that aligns with its work plan and can include such costs as activities that roll out from the year’s planning agenda, Council meetings, child care, respite, member travel including support for Councils members who must travel to meetings from out of town, and member registration at conferences and workshops that align with the Council work plan and mandate.

Each Council is responsible for managing its budget. The Manager will provide the Council with support to develop the budget and, if asked to, track Council expenses. If the Manager provides this support it is recommended that she or he presents a budget update at each Council meeting.

ORIENTATION OF NEW COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

New Council members receive an orientation from the Council Chair and Community Planning and Development Manager as soon as possible once she / he is confirmed. The Director of Individual, Family and Volunteer Engagement and Family Partnership Advisor are available to support this process. Information that is covered in an orientation can be found in **Appendix 20**.

Council Resources

The office of the Director of Individual, Family and Volunteer Engagement develops various resources to support Community Councils in their work. This includes videos, stories, articles and web links that are related to the Councils’ Terms of Reference. These resources are available on the Community Council website at <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/about-us/community-councils/>.

If you have a question, or you would like to provide any feedback related to content in the Community Council members’ Handbook, please send an email to Councils@communitylivingbc.ca.