



Question and Answers: How Self-Advocate Voices Shape CLBC's Work

Introduction

At CLBC, the term *self-advocate* refers to people who are labelled with a developmental or intellectual disability and who take on leadership roles to share their lived experience. Self-advocates work with CLBC to help shape our services and decisions by bringing forward their perspectives and the barriers they face in everyday life.

The term *self-advocate* is also part of a broader movement led by people with developmental disabilities. This movement is guided by the principle: **“Nothing about us without us.”**

The following questions and answers explain how we embed the voices of those we serve into our work on an ongoing basis.

Q: How are self-advocates involved in CLBC's work?

Self-advocates are involved in many parts of CLBC. Their voices help guide decisions, improve services, and shape priorities across the organization.

Q: How does CLBC connect with and invite people we support to take part in our work?

BC has a strong network of self-advocacy groups, both formal and informal. CLBC builds relationships with these groups over time and stays connected to share information and opportunities to get involved.

We work with provincial organizations like [BC People First](#), the [BC Self Advocacy Network](#), and [Self Advocate Net](#) to help spread the word. We also reach people by sharing opportunities on social media, in [CLBC newsletters](#), and through service providers and community partners.

We know not everyone identifies as a self-advocate or is part of a group. Some people speak up with support from family members or staff. We try to meet people where they are and use different ways to connect with the diverse people we serve.

Q: Do self-advocates help lead CLBC?

Yes. Self-advocates are part of [CLBC's Board of Directors](#). At least two individuals who are eligible for CLBC support must be on the Board by law. This means self-advocates help make high-level decisions for CLBC.

Q: Are self-advocates part of advisory groups?

Yes. CLBC is required by law to have self-advocates and family members on [CLBC's Provincial Advisory Committee](#).

Self-advocates also sit on the CLBC:

- [Indigenous Advisory Committee](#)
- [Accessibility Advisory Committee](#) (external) and an internal accessibility working group

These groups provide advice and guidance to the CLBC Board and Executive team.

Q: How does CLBC work with self advocates to strengthen inclusion in the community?

Self-advocates are members, chairs, and co-chairs of [CLBC's 12 Community Councils](#).

These councils work with CLBC regional offices to:

- Promote inclusion and accessibility in the broader community
 - Support people to be part of their communities in meaningful ways
 - Share local ideas and concerns with CLBC staff
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Q: Are self-advocates employed at CLBC?

Yes. People with developmental disabilities work at CLBC in different roles, contributing their skills and lived experience to the organization.

Q: How do self-advocates give feedback on policies?

CLBC and [BC People First](#) have a shared policy working group. Through this network, self-advocates:

- Review policies
- Share feedback
- Help shape new or updated policies

BC People First is a provincial organization that is part of the international PEOPLE FIRST movement.

BCPF has been the independent voice of self-advocates in BC for over 40 years.

Q: Do self-advocates shape CLBC communications?

Yes. Self-advocates help guide CLBC's communication, including:

- Providing editorial direction for the [Diverse Abilities magazine](#)
 - Sharing stories and ideas for broader communication
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Q: How are self-advocates involved in planning for the future?

Self-advocates recently led feedback sessions with about 350 people from around the province to help shape [CLBC's 2026–2029 Strategic Plan](#). Their input helps set priorities for the future.

Q: Are there other ways self-advocates are involved?

Yes. Self-advocates are invited to join informal working groups and advisory roles. These groups provide input on specific CLBC projects or topics as needed.

Q: Is engagement ongoing or just at certain times?

Engagement is ongoing. Self-advocates are continuously involved through:

- Committees, councils and the Board
- Working groups
- Events and consultations
- Partnerships like BC People First

This ensures their voices are always part of CLBC’s work—not just at one point in time.

Q: Why is this important?

At CLBC, we are committed to strengthening our relationships and deepening our understanding of the lived experiences of the people we serve.

Including self-advocates makes CLBC stronger. It ensures decisions are informed by real experiences, builds trust, and supports more inclusive communities.