

# Community Child Welfare Boards



## RESOURCE GUIDE

leadership enlighten  
awareness empower  
community helpful  
vision grow  
vibrant family  
understanding caring  
nurturing  
smile

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# Purpose and Objectives of the Resource Guide

## Purpose

The purpose of this publication is to help Community Child Welfare Board (CCWB) members establish, develop, and maintain a vibrant, effective Community Child Welfare Board in Nova Scotia. To this end, board members need a clear understanding of the role and functions of a CCWB, community leadership, strategic planning, and board development.

The intention of this resource guide is to provide members with the tools and resources needed to make their CCWB an effective voice for children and families in their respective communities.

## Objectives

By using this guide, members will

- understand the history and current role of the Community Child Welfare Board (CCWB)
- understand the roles and responsibilities of the CCWBs
- understand the legal obligations of a board member
- understand basic board functions
- have the tools to undergo a strategic planning process
- be able to leverage community capacity to help with the vision and mission of the boards



# Community Child Welfare Boards

The child welfare sector in Nova Scotia has a rich and varied history. Rooted in community engagement, social activism, and concern for children in need, today's child welfare system is a testament to the care, dedication, and commitment of regular Nova Scotians who, for close to a century, have cared for the well-being of children in their communities by establishing and governing children's aid societies.

As the field of social work has evolved to become more sophisticated, and as legal and social implications become more complex, the private children's aid societies and family and children's services have become integrated into the provincial child welfare governance system. The boards that once governed these agencies have been offered a special, but different, role within the child welfare landscape.

The boards that had governed the integrated agencies were given an option to form Community Child Welfare Boards that individually would serve as a link between the community and the local child welfare services and collectively serve as a link between citizens and the Minister.

The Community Child Welfare Boards are a valued part of the Department of Community Services strategy as they

- foster community awareness and understanding of the needs of children and families served by child welfare
- provide feedback to the department on the changing social factors within the community that influence the healthy development and well-being of the families and children at risk and suggest ways they may be made better

- encourage meaningful community involvement in activities that support and promote healthy family development, and prevent child maltreatment and family violence

The Department of Community Services supports the boards by providing administrative assistance, budgets, workshops, board development retreats, and one-on-one planning and coaching sessions. The terms of reference are listed following the Core Vision and Values statements.

#### **CORE VISION**

The Nova Scotia Community Child Welfare Boards envision Nova Scotia to be a place where all families provide a safe, loving, and healthy environment for children and parents to thrive in.

#### **VALUES**

The Nova Scotia Community Child Welfare Boards believe in the potential of all families to offer a loving and nurturing environment for children to grow, learn, and play.

The Nova Scotia Community Child Welfare Boards believe that all members of a community have a responsibility to be a voice for children at risk of abuse and neglect.

The Nova Scotia Community Child Welfare Boards encourage representation of all sectors of the community on each board to capture the diverse and rich culture of the geographical area in which they serve.

Members of the Nova Scotia Community Child Welfare Boards foster a creative, caring, and engaging environment at all meetings through mutual respect and willingness to act together.

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## COMMUNITY CHILD WELFARE BOARDS

### 1. DESCRIPTION

- a. Individually, Community Child Welfare Boards serve as links between the community and the local child welfare services, and collectively, between citizens and the Minister of Community Services, have a commitment to
  - i. advance the prevention of child abuse and neglect
  - ii. assure the best interests of children
  - iii. promote the integrity of the family
  - iv. recognize and promote the preservation of children's cultural racial, and linguistic heritage
  - v. work with other community and social services to prevent, alleviate, and remedy the personal, social, and economic conditions that might place children and families at risk

### 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF BOARDS

- a. The geographic boundaries of the community boards will normally be the Nova Scotia county lines; however, a Community Child Welfare Board may alter its boundaries to include a geographical area that does not have a Community Child Welfare Board at the request of the Department of Community Services regional administrator in which the Community Child Welfare Board is located.
- b. The membership selection process shall, to the extent possible, ensure that the selection of members is broadly representative of the community served by the local child welfare services, taking into account geographic, cultural, ethnic, and demographic factors.

### 3. TERMS

- a. Members of a Community Child Welfare Board shall serve terms of three years and shall be selected under an open and

transparent selection process determined by the Community Child Welfare Boards.

- b. No Community Child Welfare Board member who has served two consecutive terms of three years or more may be re-elected, re-appointed, or selected again until at least two years after the expiry of the second term, except under exceptional circumstances.
- c. The Community Child Welfare Board shall select its membership at the annual meeting of its board.
- d. A Community Child Welfare Board may establish, raise funds, or establish a foundation to support their aims and objectives.

### 4. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Each member of a Community Child Welfare Board shall ordinarily be resident within its geographic boundaries.
- b. A Community Child Welfare Board shall select its chair from among its members.
- c. Persons employed within the child welfare system are not eligible for membership.
- d. A Community Child Welfare Board may establish advisory and ad hoc committees that include persons employed within the child welfare system.

### 5. SUPPORT TO THE BOARDS

- a. The Department of Community Services shall provide administrative and financial support to the local Community Child Welfare Board as determined by the Department of Community Service regional administrator for the region in which the Community Child Welfare Board is established.
- b. Members of the Community Child Welfare Board shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties, in accordance with government travel policy.

**6. DUTIES**

- a. Collect information on local conditions and needs of the children and families at risk within the community.
- b. Identify social factors within the community that influence the healthy development and well-being of the families and children at risk, and suggest ways they may be ameliorated.
- c. Encourage meaningful community involvement in activities that support and promote healthy family development and prevent child maltreatment and family violence.
- d. Help educate the community on effects and prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- e. Encourage meaningful input in child welfare service delivery, and other community activities and services.
- f. Aid in identifying strengths and weaknesses in child welfare service delivery.
- g. Prepare an annual child welfare community report that reflects the preceding factors. The report shall serve as
  - i. advice to the Minister with regard to the needs of the community as a whole, and steps the community is taking and can take to ameliorate them
  - ii. advice to the regional administrator with regard to the region's annual planning for child welfare services
  - iii. advice to the local child welfare district office with regard to program planning and service delivery

- h. Provide such other advice and assistance as requested by local child welfare offices, regional administrators, or family and community supports.

**7. COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

- a. Community Child Welfare Boards may meet with their local child welfare service office and other community groups to identify needs and strengths of the community with respect to factors that affect the welfare of children and their families.
- b. The regional administrators shall ensure that the Community Child Welfare Board reports are considered during the preparation of the department's annual business plan.
- c. As a group, the chairs of each Child Welfare Community Board shall meet with the Minister and or Deputy Minister (at a minimum of a twice yearly basis to)
  - i. report on the activities and outcomes of the community boards
  - ii. recommend community-based strategies to foster public participation in the prevention of child abuse and neglect
  - iii. provide observations on child welfare service delivery
  - iv. provide other community advice requested by the Minister
  - v. to discuss annual retreat

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Understanding the role of the board in relation to the Department of Community Services will assist the board to be more effective in fulfilling its mandate.

As stated in the terms of reference, board chairs can expect to meet with the Minister or Deputy Minister twice annually. These meetings can be used to attain feedback, provide updates, promote new ideas, and voice concerns. This is a great opportunity for boards to raise the concerns of the community directly to the Minister and to provide key input into policy that affects children in each area.

The regional administrators and the district managers are the primary department contact for the Community Child Welfare Boards. It is important to foster this relationship through regular communications, meetings, or updates. There are four regional administrators in the province and each is responsible for the district offices and agencies in their region. As noted in the terms of reference, regional administrators are expected to provide administrative support, budget approvals, and guidance for all Community Child Welfare Boards within their region.

The district manager also plays a key role in aiding the community boards through consultation, guidance, and providing suggestions as to how the skills of the board could be best utilized to enhance community participation in the child welfare continuum of programs.

The Department of Community Services Corporate Office (Head Office), specifically through the Child Welfare Division of Family and Community Supports, assists boards with board development, training, retreats, coordination of board activity at the provincial level, and helps facilitate regular meetings between the board chairs and the Minister.

### BOARD MEMBERS

The Community Child Welfare Boards are comprised of a variety of people representing all walks of life from the geographical area that the board represents. Each board should develop its own recruitment plan and criteria for membership. Resources are available in appendix A of the resource guide.

### WHY GET INVOLVED?

On their own, children have no voice; they are considered to be one of the most vulnerable populations in our society and are easily overlooked by the vast majority of the public. Unfortunately, it often takes a tragedy to bring their issues to the forefront. Community Child Welfare Boards have a unique opportunity to give voice to children by advocating and educating at the community level, examining policy, and providing feedback, to the Minister and other department staff at the provincial level.

Being able to give direct feedback to the Minister of Community Services allows board members to speak on behalf of children and families in their community in a concrete manner. As community volunteers are a valued part of the overall departmental strategy, board members should feel satisfied that their contribution and efforts are being appreciated and heard.

It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child. What better way to help create a positive environment for a child to live, play, and grow in your community than volunteering on a board that supports child-focused values!





# Legal Responsibilities of a Board and Risk Management

## GENERAL

In a non-profit society, accountability or the obligation to answer for the results of authorized decisions and action rests with the board of directors. This governing body is the legal entity that exists through its charter and bylaws. The board of directors, with the approval of the membership, has the authority to develop its governance model, structure, and practices within the parameters of any legal and/or regulatory provisions that apply to the organization.

Child welfare boards are guided by the terms of reference as set out by the Department of Community Services, and are encouraged to register as a not-for-profit society under the Nova Scotia

Registry of Joint Stocks. As societies, boards are governed by their objects, bylaws, policies, and procedures that set out provisions for legal status, roles, and decision-making processes that guide the society.

## CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

The constitution and bylaws of a not for profit society outline how decisions are to be made. Bylaws are a set of rules by which an organization governs itself. Amendments to the bylaws must be passed by the board of directors and ratified by a resolution of the membership at an annual or special meeting. Bylaws can vary in their level of comprehensiveness but at the very least may contain items such as membership in the corporation, composition of the

governing body, nominating and election procedures, terms of office, and meeting protocols. If the board incorporates under the *Societies Act*, their bylaws must be registered with the Nova Scotia Joint Stocks. Visit the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks website at [www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/rjsc](http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/rjsc) for detailed information about registering or changing your bylaws.

For your reference, a sample set of bylaws is located at the end of this section.

#### **DUTIES OF BOARD MEMBERS**

It is important to be aware that volunteers serving as board members have a fiduciary duty toward the membership they serve. This means that they have a special relationship of trust with the society and its assets on behalf of the organization's stakeholders. Because of this relationship, certain important legal duties apply and can be grouped into three categories. (The following descriptions are derived from the Volunteer Canada website at [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca).)

**Duty of diligence or duty of care:** the duty to act reasonably, prudently, in good faith, and with a view to the best interests of the society and its members

**Duty of loyalty:** the duty to place the interests of the society first, and to not use one's position as a director to further private interests

**Duty of obedience:** the duty to act within the scope of the governing policies of the society and within the scope of other laws, rules, and regulations that apply to it

The board of directors of an incorporated non-profit organization is legally responsible for the actions of the organization, including those of its employees (if any) and volunteers. The organization may be liable (subject to a penalty) if something goes wrong. The board members themselves may be liable if it can be shown that the board itself was negligent.

The Dalhousie College of Continuing Education Non-Profit Sector Leadership Program identifies the

following four areas that boards must demonstrate due diligence within.

#### **1. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The board must make sure that the organization operates in a financially responsible manner.

#### **2. STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY**

Child welfare boards have to take particular care in adhering to laws that govern fundraising practices and acquiring and maintaining non-profit incorporation and charitable status.

A great website outlining basic fundraising information and best practices in Canada can be found by visiting the CharityCentral website at [www.charitycentral.ca](http://www.charitycentral.ca) and clicking on the fundraising tab.

#### **3. CONTRACTS**

The board should have a full understanding of all of its contractual obligations, especially to funders, and monitor the organization's compliance with them.

#### **4. STANDARD OF CARE**

The board must make sure that practices are in place to reduce the risk of harm to its volunteers.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Community Child Welfare Boards could face a variety of risks in dealing with the public, including holding fundraising activities, hosting special events for children, etc., and therefore boards should plan and implement different measures to deal with these risks.

Identifying and planning for risk can be broken down into three steps.

1. Looking at a situation and asking what can go wrong and what harm could result.
2. Identifying practical measures that can be taken to keep such harm from occurring.
3. If harm does occur, identifying practical measures that can be taken to lessen the impacts of harm and pay for any resulting damage or losses.

The measures that are taken to manage risks come from common sense. The following list provides some examples of how boards can manage risk from developing good risk assessment habits.

- being prepared for and attending all board meetings
- taking an interest in the finances of the society
- recruiting capable board members
- providing an orientation program for all new board members
- putting on paper clear job descriptions and sound policies
- creating an organizational culture that emphasizes and rewards risk management thinking and behaviour
- training and educating volunteers
- inspecting facilities and equipment to be used during events
- screening and supervising volunteers at fundraising functions
- properly documenting meetings and decisions

If a board member suspects that something is not right, they should make their observations known to the board chair or to the board in general. Board members will be held responsible for circumstances and situations they ought to have known about, whether or not they actually did know about them.

The *Nova Scotia Volunteer Act* states that “no volunteer of a non-profit organization is liable for damage caused by an act or omission of the volunteer on behalf of the organization if

- (a) the volunteer was acting within the scope of the volunteer’s responsibilities in the non-profit organization at the time of the act or omission; and
- (b) the volunteer was properly licensed, certified, or authorized, if required by law, by the appropriate authorities for the activities or practice undertaken by the volunteer at the time the damage occurred.”



# Bylaws of the Cumberland Child Welfare Board/ Cumberland Child Advocacy Board as of May 2009

## 1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 In these bylaws unless there be something in the subject or context inconsistent therewith
- 1.1.1 “board” means CUMBERLAND CHILD WELFARE BOARD AND/OR CUMBERLAND CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD
- 1.1.2 “special resolution” means a resolution passed by not less than three-fourths of such members entitled to vote as are present in person at a general meeting of which notice specifying the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution has been duly given

## 2. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 Persons shall be admitted to membership in accordance to these bylaws and none others.
- 2.2 Every member of the board shall be entitled to attend any meeting of the board and to vote at any meeting of the board and to hold any office, but there shall be no proxy voting.
- 2.3 Membership in the board shall not be transferable.
- 2.4 The following shall be admitted to membership in the board: any individual who upholds the objects of the board, contributes to the work of the board, and is ordinarily resident within its geographic boundaries.

- 2.5 Membership in the board shall cease upon the death of a member, or if, by notice in writing to the board, they resign their membership, if they fail to attend three consecutive meetings without prior written approval of the board, or if they cease to qualify for membership in accordance with these bylaws.

### 3. FISCAL YEAR

- 3.1 The fiscal year of the board shall be the period from April 1 in any year to March 31 in the year next following.

### 4. MEETINGS

- 4.1 4.1.1 The annual general meeting of the board shall be held within three months after the end of each fiscal year of the board.
- 4.1.2 An extraordinary meeting of the board may be called by the chair or by the members at any time, and shall be called by the members if requisitioned in writing by at least 25 per cent in number of the members of the board.
- 4.2 A minimum of three days notice of a meeting, specifying the place, day, and hour of the meeting and, in the case of special business, the nature of such business, shall be given to the members. Notice shall be given to each member by e-mail, by telephone, or in writing. The non-receipt of any notice by any member shall not invalidate the proceedings at any general meeting.
- 4.3 Meetings of the board of members shall be held as often as the business of the board may require and shall be called by the chair.
- 4.4 At each ordinary meeting of the board, the following items of business shall be dealt with and shall be deemed to be ordinary business:
  - 4.4.1 minutes of preceding general meeting and extraordinary general meeting of the board, if any
  - 4.4.2 consideration of the financial statements, including balance sheet and operating statement and the report of the auditors thereon
  - 4.4.3 committee reports
- 4.5 At each annual general meeting of the board, the following items of business shall be dealt with and shall be deemed to be ordinary business:
  - 4.5.1 minutes of preceding annual general meeting of the board
  - 4.5.2 consideration of annual report of the members
  - 4.5.3 consideration of the financial statements, including balance sheet and operating statement and the report of the auditors thereon
  - 4.5.4 election of members for the ensuing year
  - 4.5.5 election of officers
  - 4.5.6 consideration of annual child welfare community report
  - 4.5.7 appointment of auditors

- 4.6 No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the board unless a quorum of members is present at the commencement of such business and such quorum shall consist of one-half of all voting members.
- 4.7 If within 15 minutes from the time appointed for the meeting, a quorum of members is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved.
- 4.8 Governance of meetings
- 4.8.1 The chair of the board shall preside as chair at every meeting of the board.
- 4.8.2 If there is not a chair, or if at any meeting they are not present at the time of holding the same, the vice-chair shall preside as chair.
- 4.8.3 If there is no chair or vice-chair, or if at any meeting neither the chair nor the vice-chair is present at the holding of the same, the second vice-chair shall preside as chair.
- 4.8.4 If none of the above are present, the members present shall choose someone of their number to be chair.
- 4.9 The chair shall not vote except in the case of an equality of votes. In the case of the equality of votes, he shall have a casting vote.
- 4.10 At any meeting, unless a poll is demanded by at least three members, a declaration by the chair that a resolution has been carried and any entry to that effect in the minutes shall be sufficient evidence of the fact, without proof of the number or proportion of the members recorded in favour of or against such resolution.

## 5. VOTES OF MEMBERS

- 5.1 Every member shall have one vote and no more.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS

- 6.1 Members shall normally serve terms of three years but may, where appropriate, serve terms of one or two years to ensure that retirement of members is staggered. Retiring members shall be eligible for re-election for a second term.
- 6.2 6.2.1 The membership shall consist of a minimum of 10 and not more than 14 persons at large from the Cumberland County Community.
- 6.2.2 Persons employed within the child welfare system are not eligible for membership but may be included in an advisory capacity or in ad hoc committees.
- 6.2.3 The past chair shall be an ex officio member of the board of members. The board of members may also appoint such ex officio persons to the board of members, from time to time and for such periods of time as the board sees fit, who shall have the right to attend meetings of the board and of the executive committee, but who do not have the right to vote.
- 6.3 At the first ordinary or annual general meeting of the board and at every succeeding ordinary or annual general meeting, all members who have reached the end of their term of office shall retire from office but shall hold office until the dissolution of the meeting at which their successors are elected and retiring members shall be eligible for re-election.

- 6.4 In the event that a member resigns their office or ceases to be a member in the board, whereupon their office as member shall ipso facto be vacated, the vacancy thereby created may be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by the board of members by appointing a new member from among the members of the board.
- 6.5 The board may, by special resolution, remove any member before the expiration of the period of office and appoint another person in their stead. The person so appointed shall hold office during such time only as the member in whose place they are appointed would have held office if they had not been removed.
- 6.6 Members who have, or could reasonably be perceived to have, a conflict of interest with respect to the affairs of the Cumberland Child Advocacy Board/Cumberland Child Welfare Board, have a duty to declare this interest. Such a declaration shall be made to the members upon nomination or, if serving as a member, to the board, when the possibility of a conflict is realized. A conflict of interest shall not preclude a member from serving provided that they withdraw from decision making on matters pertaining to that interest and that such withdrawal is duly recorded.

## 7. COMMITTEES

- 7.1 Standing committees of the board shall be
  - 7.1.1 Executive
  - 7.1.2 Governance
  - 7.1.3 Communications
- 7.2 Other board committees
  - 7.2.1 The members may form committees deemed useful in carrying out the objectives of the board.
  - 7.2.2 Committees of the board may be dissolved or transformed as deemed appropriate to best continue objectives of the board.
- 7.3 All members must serve on a minimum of one committee.
- 7.4 A minimum of one executive member must serve on each committee.
- 7.5 Membership in a committee shall cease if the member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without prior written approval of the board, or if they cease to qualify for membership in accordance with these bylaws.

## 8. OFFICERS

- 8.1 The officers of the board shall be a chair, a vice-chair, a second vice-chair, a past chair, a treasurer, and a secretary. The offices of treasurer and secretary may be combined.
- 8.2 At the annual general meeting, the members shall elect one of their number to be the chair of the board. The chair shall have general supervision of the activities of the board and shall perform such duties as may be assigned to them by the board from time to time.

- 8.3 The members shall also elect from their number a vice-chair. The vice-chair shall, at the request of the board and subject to its discretion, perform the duties of the chair during the absence, illness, or incapacity of the chair, or during such period as the chair may request them to do so.
- 8.5 The members shall also elect from their number a second vice-chair. The second vice-chair shall, at the request of the board and subject to its discretion, perform the duties of the chair/vice-chair during the absence, illness, or incapacity of the chair/vice-chair, or during such period as the chair/vice-chair may request them to do so.
- 8.6 8.6.1 There shall be a secretary to the board who shall keep the minutes of the meetings and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to them by the board. The board shall elect the secretary and shall also elect a treasurer to the board to carry out such duties as the board may assign. If the members think fit, the same person may hold both offices of secretary and treasurer.
- 8.6.2 The members may appoint a temporary substitute for the secretary who shall, for the purposes of these bylaws, be deemed to be the secretary.

## 9. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS

- 9.1 The auditor of the board shall be appointed annually by the members of the board at the annual general meeting.
- 9.2 9.2.1 The treasurer shall make a written report to the members as to the financial position of the board and the report shall contain a balance sheet and operating account.
- 9.2.2 The auditors shall make a written report to the members stating the audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Canada and that in the auditors' opinion the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the board and the results of its operations for the year then ended, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in Canada. Such report shall be read at the annual general meeting. A copy of the balance sheet, showing the general particulars of its liabilities and assets and a statement of its income and expenditures in the preceding year, audited by the auditor, shall be filed with the Department of Community Services within a reasonable time after the annual meeting in each year.

## 10. REPEAL AND AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

- 10.1 The board has power to repeal or amend any of these bylaws by a special resolution passed in the manner prescribed by the bylaws.



## 11. MISCELLANEOUS

- 11.1 Preparation of minutes, custody of the books and records, and custody of the minutes of all the meetings of the board shall be the responsibility of the secretary.
- 11.2 The annual financial statements and minutes of board meetings may be inspected by any member with one week's notice. All other financial records of the board may be inspected by any member at any reasonable time within two days prior to the annual general meeting as long as information requested does not contravene provincial or federal privacy laws.
- 11.3 Where a contract, deed, bill of exchange, or other instrument or document is executed on behalf of the board without a resolution by the board, the value of such contract, deed, bill of exchange, or other instrument or document shall not exceed five hundred dollars (\$500) and shall not be executed unless two of the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer have indicated their consent in writing.
- 11.4 The borrowing powers of the board may be exercised by special resolution of the members.
- 11.5 The board shall insure that the board's assets are protected against damage and loss, and, if it is determined that considerable risk is involved in the operations of the board, the members themselves shall be adequately protected against liability resulting from a legal action, suit, or proceedings in respect to the pursuit of the board's mission.

## 12. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 12.1 The Executive Committee shall consist of the
  - 12.1.1 chair
  - 12.1.2 vice-chair
  - 12.1.3 second vice-chair
  - 12.1.4 past chair
  - 12.1.5 secretary
  - 12.1.6 treasurer
- 12.2 The chair shall be the chair of the Executive Committee.
- 12.3 The Executive Committee shall have power and authority to
  - 12.3.1 transact all business of the board between meetings of the board
  - 12.3.2 exercise the power of the board in matters of administrative emergency, reporting thereon to the next meeting of the board
  - 12.3.3 study and make recommendations on any matter as directed by the board
- 12.4 The Executive Committee shall meet at such times as determined by the chair
- 12.5 Minutes of all meetings of the Executive Committee shall be kept.



# Roles and Responsibilities

**Collectively**, the board of directors is accountable to the membership for the overall performance of the society and is responsible for

- setting overall direction (vision, mission, and values)
- establishing policies
- monitoring and reporting the organization's progress towards its goals
- board development and evaluation
- budget approval and review
- strategic direction and planning
- building community relations and stakeholder identification
- advocating for the needs of stakeholders/clients

**Individually**, board members bring to their organization a range of skills, expertise, backgrounds, attributes, and community relationships that benefit their communities in a number of significant

ways. Within the scope of their experience and commitment, individual directors have a responsibility to carry out their duties honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the organization. In addition, they are expected to exercise a degree of care, diligence, and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.

Generally individual board members should expect to be able to participate in the following ways:

- Develop an understanding of the bylaws, mission, and values of the society.
- Attend board meetings on a regular basis and actively participate.
- Review agendas and distributed material in advance of each meeting.
- Be courteous toward those in attendance at board meetings.

- Respect and listen to the opinions of other board members.
- Maintain confidentiality as warranted and as defined by the board.
- Give careful consideration in making a decision.
- Uphold the bylaws, policies, principles, goals, and objectives of the society.
- Participate in self- and external evaluation processes designed to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the board.
- Promote a positive image of the organization
- Declare all conflicts of interest.

- setting out expectations concerning confidentiality and conduct of members before, during, and after the meeting

Having a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities is key in establishing a board that runs smoothly, transparently, and dynamically.

Sample position descriptions for the board chair, board members, and secretary are outlined in the following pages.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Most directors have a number of affiliations, both personal and professional, that enrich the contribution they make to the society. The affiliations in themselves do not necessarily constitute conflicts. However, where there is potential for benefiting, either directly or indirectly, conflict of interest or the perception of conflict exists. Directors need to be aware that other conflicts of a non-recurring nature may affect their judgment and their capacity to act in the best interests of the society.

The obligation to declare conflicts of interest rests with the board member. If they are uncertain about whether a conflict exists, the best practice is to seek legal advice. Some professions, such as lawyers and accountants, have codes of professional conduct that may also apply.

The following few practices can help protect the board from losing the public's trust and save the board from potentially embarrassing or legal situations.

- circulating an agenda prior to the board meeting to enable each board member to identify potential conflicts before the meeting
- having a standing item on board agendas for conflict declarations
- establishing how declarations will be recorded in the minutes



# Position Descriptions

POSITION:

**BOARD CHAIR (PRESIDENT)**

***Time commitment***

Ten hours per month (meetings, consultation, special events)

***Term***

***Accountability***

The chair serves and is accountable to the board of directors of the society for their performance

***Authority***

The chair has no formal authority to direct the board or the affairs of the association, unless otherwise authorized.

The chair may not, on behalf of the association, enter into contracts without the knowledge and approval of the board and/or the Executive Committee of the board.

***Responsibility***

The chair is, first and foremost, responsible for the effective functioning of the board in its role of governing the society. All other duties are secondary.

***Primary duties***

In addition to the duties of every board member, the chair is responsible for

- helping clarify the role of the board
- preparing of the board’s meeting agendas
- facilitating regular meetings of the board of directors
- helping create a welcoming and appreciative environment conducive to real governance dialogue
- enforcing rules of conduct as they apply to the board and its individual members
- ensuring that that board operates in a manner consistent with the society’s bylaws
- serving as a public spokesperson, for the board
- ensuring full and timely communication with members of the board
- preparing for and chairing the annual general meeting (AGM)

- the preparation of the board’s annual report
- mentoring other directors to assume the chair’s role
- co-signing contracts on behalf of the society

***Secondary duties***

The chair may, with greater regularity than other members of the board,

- prepare recommendations for board consideration
- represent the board at meetings of stakeholders and funders

***Other duties***

Recognizing that the chair’s role is a voluntary one, the board may authorize the chair to take on additional duties only if they do not interfere with any of the above.

***Qualifications***

The chair must

- be committed to and interested in the mission of the organization
- have a firm understanding of the role of the board
- be knowledgeable of some effective meeting and facilitation practices
- have sufficient time to devote to their primary duties

***Evaluation***

The effectiveness of the chair should be evaluated as part of the evaluation of the board itself.

***Removal of chair***

Unless otherwise indicated in the bylaws, the chair may be removed by a special resolution of the board for which advance notification has been given to all directors, duly moved and seconded, and passed by a majority of directors present at a regular or special meeting of the board.

**POSITION:****BOARD MEMBER*****Time commitment***

Five hours per month (meetings, preparation, consultation)

***Term***

Three years, appointed or elected annually at the annual general meeting

***Accountability***

The directors are collectively accountable to the community, funders, and other stakeholders. They are accountable for the society's performance in relation to its mission and strategic objectives and for the effective stewardship of financial and human resources.

***Authority***

Individual board members have no authority to approve actions by the association, to direct staff, or to speak on behalf for the association, unless given such authority by the board.

***Responsibility***

Board members are responsible for acting in the best long-term interests of the organization and its community and will bring to the task of informed decision-making, a broad knowledge and an inclusive perspective.

***General duties***

Every member of the board of directors is expected to do the following:

- prepare for and attend board meetings
- work as a team member and support board decisions
- participate in the review of the society's mission and objectives and the development of a strategic plan
- monitor the performance of the organization in relation to objectives and core values
- approve the budget and monitor financial performance in relation to it

- abide by the bylaws, code of conduct, and other policies that apply to the board
- participate in the recruitment of new board members
- participate in the evaluation of the board itself
- participate in committee work
- attend and participate in the annual general meeting
- keep informed about community issues relevant to the mission and objectives of the society

***Qualifications***

The following are considered key job qualifications:

- knowledge of the community
- commitment to organization's mission and strategic directions
- a commitment of time
- openness to learning

***Evaluation***

The performance of directors is evaluated annually in the context of the evaluation of the board and is based on the carrying out of duties and responsibilities as outlined above.

***Removal of a board member***

A director may be removed from the board, by majority vote, or if absent from three meetings without reasonable cause.

**POSITION:**

**BOARD SECRETARY**

***Time commitment***

Ten hours per month (board meetings, secretarial duties as described below)

***Term***

The board secretary is to be appointed in a manner consistent with the bylaws. The secretary is an executive officer of the association. They are accountable to the board of directors and have no authority to act beyond that required to fulfill the duties outlined below.

The secretary will work closely with the chair of the board in the planning of board of directors and association meetings. The secretary of the board shall be responsible for ensuring

- that external correspondence to, and requests made of, the board of directors, or relevant to the governance of the association, is reported and responded to in a timely manner
- the accurate recording and distribution of the minutes of the association’s annual general meeting; in the event of a change of secretary at an AGM, the incoming secretary will assume the responsibilities of the office at the first directors’ meeting following their election or appointment
- the creation and timely distribution of agenda for board of directors and association membership meetings (e.g., annual general meeting)
- the accurate recording and distribution of the minutes of board of directors meetings (note: where a volunteer serves as recording secretary, the board secretary will be responsible for ensuring that the format and level of detail of the minutes recorded reflects the wishes of the board)
- the updating, maintaining, and safe storage of the association’s minute book and other legal documents
- that the society’s incorporation and charitable registration status is maintained through the annual filing of required reports and information
- that the board’s policy manual contains all board directives and that such policies are systematically subject to board review
- the maintenance of an up-to-date list of members of the association

## RESOURCES

# Board Development and Evaluation

## BEST PRACTICES

In order to ensure the board is functioning at its best, the members must play an active role in its own development. An ongoing commitment to board orientation, training, and evaluation enhances the capacity of the board to reach informed and appropriate decisions.

A few ways in which the board can maintain best practices are outlined below.

### ***Identify Board Membership Composition***

- Create an inventory of the strengths of the board membership and identify areas where the board needs to be enhanced.
- Develop an ideal profile of the board composition.
- Use the profile to identify gaps in the skills and knowledge base.

### ***Recruitment and Succession Planning of New Board Members***

- Nurture community relationships through networking and inviting other group members to be part of special events or the AGM.
- Have a board binder prepared to give to potential board members for review and ensure that it contains the board's mission, vision, values, strategic goals, and bylaws.

### ***Orientation and Ongoing Training Board Members***

- Ensure new board members understand the history and mandate of the board along with the mission, vision, values, and terms of reference.
- Dedicate part of a regular meeting to address orienting a new member to the board and present them with a board information binder/package.



- Encourage new board members to attend retreats or special events offered through the Department of Community Services or other local board development learning activities.
- The Board Chair is responsible to ensure that proper board information is received and understood by the new members.

***Using Governance Process  
and Parliamentary Procedure***

- Running meetings using parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order or Bournot's Rules of Order will ensure that meetings run smoothly and allow the group to come to decisions fairly and in a timely manner.
- Having governance processes frees up the board to discuss issues and proceed with decisions without confusion.

***Regular Board Evaluation Process***

- Annually the board chair should send out questionnaires to the directors and ask how members feel the board is functioning based on the following:
  - preparation for meetings
  - conduct of meetings
  - board mandate and composition
  - individual directors' involvement/engagement
  - ability to monitor, set direction, communicate, and evaluate executive director

Please see Appendix for Board Composition, Board Recruitment, and Board Evaluation templates along with an outline for using parliamentary procedures.

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Procedures and guidelines that bring consistency, order, and focus to meetings enable the board and committees to accomplish tasks, move forward with agendas, and make decisions. A good process makes participation more enjoyable for members and leads to a sense of accomplishment at the end of meetings. Following are some helpful guidelines in establishing effective meetings.

### GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

COMPONENT	GUIDELINES	
Meeting Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a standard format for meeting agenda.</li> <li>• Circulate agenda and meeting information in advance.</li> <li>• Itemize all items to be included in the agenda.</li> <li>• Matters of extreme importance should be highlighted on the agenda and addressed as soon as possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify who is responsible for the agenda item and the amount of time allocated to address the issue.</li> <li>• Consider including on each meeting agenda a brief educational presentation/session.</li> </ul>
Meeting Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify chairs and those in attendance and state the status of a quorum.</li> <li>• Acknowledge approval of minutes of last meeting.</li> <li>• Record any potential conflict of interest identified by board members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge acceptance of any reports and cite highlights.</li> <li>• Record any motions and other points of order.</li> <li>• Acknowledge time of adjournment.</li> </ul>
Meeting Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare an agenda in advance of meeting.</li> <li>• Arrive in advance of meeting and be on time.</li> <li>• Keep the meeting discussions focused on the agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State motions in terms of action to be implemented and by whom with a prescribed timeframe.</li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of meetings.</li> </ul>

SAMPLE BOARD MEETING EVALUATION FORM

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS: BOARD AGENDA EVALUATION**

DATE:

PLACE:

	STRONGLY AGREE			DISAGREE	
Board package arrived in a timely manner. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Board package information was complete. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Board members are adequately prepared. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Agenda was well-structured. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Committee reports were thorough. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Information on generative discussion items was thorough. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Consent agenda items contained sufficient information. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Items in consent agenda were appropriate/belonged. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The meeting was well-facilitated. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Sufficient time was allotted for full participation. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The meeting accomplished its goals. <i>If 4 or 5 could you explain?</i>	1	2	3	4	5

What areas of the agenda did you find most useful?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What areas of the Agenda could be improved, and how?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

General comments  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## BOARD SELF-EVALUATION FORM

DATE ISSUED:

DATE RETURNED:

RETREAT DATE:

	CONSIDERATIONS	5 VERY GOOD	4 GOOD	3 AVERAGE	2 FAIR	1 POOR
1	Board has full and common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the board.					
2	Board members understand the organization's mission and goals.					
3	Board structure (board, officers, committees) is clear.					
4	Board has clear goals and actions resulting from relevant and realistic strategic planning.					
5	Board makes decisions fairly.					
6	Board receives regular reports on committee activities.					
7	Board helps set fundraising goals and is actively involved in fundraising.					
8	Board effectively represents the organization to the community.					
9	Board meetings facilitate focus and progress on important activities.					
10	Board regularly monitors and evaluates progress towards strategic goals.					
11	Board regularly evaluates and develops its members and volunteers.					
12	Each member of the board feels involved and interested in the board's work.					
13	All necessary skills, stakeholders, and diversity are represented on the board.					

Please list the three to five points on which you believe the board should focus its attention in the next year. Be as specific as possible identifying these points.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## RESOURCES

# Strategic Planning and Goal Setting

Each board is encouraged to undergo strategic planning processes regularly to outline priorities and to set goals that reflect the needs and diversity of their respective area. From the strategic planning process, each board should craft their own mission statement and set goals and objectives to support their mission statement.

Although at their very basic, strategic planning processes vary in size and scope, building a strategic plan will include the steps listed below using as many people from the board and community as possible.

### STEP ONE

Start the planning process.

- Brainstorm for mission, vision, and values statements.
- Undergo a stakeholders analysis.

- Complete a SWOT Analysis by examining your strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats.
- Set long-term goals (three to five years).
- Set short-term goals (one to three years).
- Assign deadlines and responsibilities to tasks.

### STEP TWO

Follow the plan by referring regularly to the goals and outcomes.

- Develop a timeframe for completion of tasks.
- Develop a committee structure to support the goals.
- Report updates regularly and identify issues or concerns.

Evaluate and make adjustments.

- As the plan unfolds, take time to reassess goals and make adjustments to accommodate any issues or concerns.

### MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES STATEMENTS

Strategic planning processes begin with the creation of mission, vision, and values statements. In taking the time upfront to define a shared purpose and long-term objectives, boards are better prepared for the planning process and ultimately better prepared to implement the board's strategy.

A mission statement defines the fundamental purpose of an organization: the people it serves, the processes used in delivering programs, and how the board will know it is succeeding. The focus is on the present. A vision statement, on the other hand, describes what the organization wants to become. It concentrates on the future. It is a source of inspiration and a guide for decision making.

#### 1. MISSION STATEMENTS

- Describe the overall purpose of an organization: "What we do, who we do it for, and how and why we do it."
- Set the boundaries of the board's current activities.
- Regularly review mission statements to keep boards on track and focused, and continually ensure that core services and activities support the goals of the mission.

#### 2. VISION STATEMENTS

- Describe an ideal future.
- Answer the question "What impact do we want to have on our community and society?"
- Give the board a common, coherent strategic direction.
- Convey a larger picture to work toward.

#### 3. VALUES STATEMENTS

- Reflect the core ideology of the board.
- These are deeply held values that do not change over time.

### DEVELOPING A MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Where possible, plan a session that focuses on the development or review of these statements only. Send out information to the board members ahead of time indicating the special nature of this meeting and encourage all members to attend.

Before you begin it is important to discuss the meaning of each of these statements with your board members to ensure that everyone understands and is focused on the same topic.

The following process provides a framework for you to use through the development stages of your mission and vision statements.

1. Pick only one type of statement to work on at a time.
2. Review the current statement and brainstorm on its meaning, relevance, and wording.
3. Discuss the ideas that came out of the brainstorming session and identify key themes and ideas.
4. Determine which theme most clearly describes the vision/mission of the board.
5. Write a draft statement. Review and change wording where necessary.

Please note that mission and vision statements should be concise and to the point. Try to stay away from catch phrases or clichés.

### SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENTS

Following is a list of mission statements developed at the first annual board retreat in February 2009.

- To strengthen family and community by empowering and supporting our children and youth so that they may thrive in a safe and healthy environment.
- Improving the lives of children, youth, and families of Yarmouth Co.
- We are a diverse group of individuals reflective of our community whose mandate is to inspire community engagement and support in order to improve the lives of our children, youth, and families!

- We are a voluntary community board dedicated to improving the well-being of children, youth, and families in our communities. We achieve this by influencing practices, and community and government planning and policies through public education, advocacy partnerships, research with the involvement of children, youth, families, and communities.

3. Incorporate these statements into the strategic plan by creating actions that reflect the preferred behaviours.

Ideally, the board's mission, vision and values statements should be highlighted prominently in the board's orientation manual. These statements can be used as a board recruitment tool.

#### **SAMPLE VISION STATEMENT**

\* Please note that as a Community Child Welfare Board, you may use or modify the following Provincial Vision Statement (also found on page two).

“The Nova Scotia Community Child Welfare Boards envision Nova Scotia to be a place where all families provide a safe and healthy environment for children and parents to thrive in.”

#### **DEVELOPING VALUE STATEMENTS**

Value statements relay to people how your board will operate while carrying out your mission. These statements convey to the public the kind of board you are. Value statements are rooted ethical principles and should guide the way your board will make decisions, develop programs, and carry out activities.

The following steps in developing a set of value statements have been adapted from the Charity Village website:

1. Identify four to six core values from which the board would like to operate. Consider values of the stakeholders, members, and the community. (Use brainstorming or other discussion generating techniques to inspire discussions.)
2. Record each value on a flipchart. Have each member “rank” the values by having the group go to the flipcharts and place a numeric value from one to three by each value (one being the least and three being the most desired). Choose the top three or four statements.

## RESOURCES

# Board Recruitment and Succession Planning



## ***Attracting New Board Members and Volunteers***

There are many reasons why someone decides to make time to volunteer. The reasons can be personal, professional, or community- or society-driven.

Before you plan for board recruitment, it is beneficial to understand what motivates people to volunteer on a board. Understanding a potential candidate's motivation will help board members select the ideal volunteer. A positive volunteer experience will lead to the success of board activities.

Individuals (and groups) volunteer to

- experience personal growth, learning, and satisfaction
- pursue professional growth and development
- create employment skills

- expand their professional network
- enjoy social interaction/meet new people
- master a new language
- learn about a new society, country, or community
- fulfill a sense of empathy/connection with a "cause"
- be a part of positive change in their community
- have fun
- build personal empowerment and self-esteem
- instill a value of giving and caring
- complete education or work experience requirements

The following templates can be used to help guide the recruitment process.



**SAMPLE BOARD POSITION DESCRIPTION**

A Community Child Welfare Board member works to support the mission of the board on which they sit. (Insert your mission statement here.) Board members are child-focused, community-minded individuals, who reside within the geographical area of (name your area here).

On their own, children have no voice; they are considered to be one of the most vulnerable populations in our society and are easily overlooked by the vast majority of the public. Unfortunately, it often takes a tragedy to bring their issues to the forefront.

Board members have a unique opportunity to give voice to children by advocating and educating at the community level and examining policy and providing feedback at the provincial level. Being able to give direct feedback to the Minister of Community Services allows board members to speak on behalf of children and families in their community in a concrete manner.

Under the terms of reference, the Community Child Welfare Boards are responsible to

- foster community awareness and understanding of the needs of children and families served by child welfare
- provide feedback to the Department of Community Services on the changing social factors within the community that influence the healthy development and well-being of the families and children at risk and suggest ways they may be made better
- encourage meaningful community involvement in activities that support and promote healthy family development, and prevent child maltreatment and family violence

Board members are accountable to

- the community that they serve
- other members of the Community Child Welfare Board
- the committees on which they serve

***Evaluation***

- Board members should individually and collectively evaluate their performance at least once a year prior to the annual general meeting.

**DUTIES:**

- Actively participate in the meetings and affairs of the board.
- Maintain a positive and collaborative working relationship within the board and with other organizations and groups.
- Work with groups, organizations, and individuals in the community to promote the mission of the board.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Must be a resident of the area the CCWB serves.
- Must commit to time necessary for the three-year CCWB term.
- Must represent the demographic diversity of the area, e.g., geography, gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

**DEMONSTRATE:**

- Effective interpersonal and communication skills
- Leadership potential and an active interest in the community
- Knowledge of child welfare issues and/or a willingness to learn
- A willingness to accept the responsibility and accountability of being a member of the board
- The ability to work collaboratively as a member of a team
- Capacity to look at all sides of an issue and render wise decisions; able to focus on the big pictures

**BENEFITS:**

- CCWB members play an active role in building healthier communities.
- CCWB member’s volunteer work will provide them with an opportunity to develop good job references.
- Members will have the chance to develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the community and the organizations within it.
- Members will have the chance to develop new skills.
- Members will have the chance to learn more about current child welfare issues that affect our families, and our communities.
- Members will have the chance to make friends.

## MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

Date.....

Name.....

Address .....

.....

City..... Province..... Postal Code.....

Phone: Home (902)..... Work (902).....

Fax (902)..... E-mail.....

### 1. SKILLS AND INTEREST

a. Background.....

.....

.....

.....

b. Skills, interests, and talents to contribute.....

.....

.....

.....

c. Volunteer experience to date.....

.....

.....

.....

**2. PLEASE LIST TWO NON-FAMILY REFERENCES WHOM WE MIGHT CONTACT.**

a. .... Phone.....

E-mail .....

b. .... Phone.....

E-mail .....

**3. HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?**

- Advertisement
- A member of the CCWB
- Referred by friend
- Other .....

**RETURN TO:**

CCWB Coordinator (name) .....

Address .....

.....

Phone ..... Fax .....

E-mail .....

## MEMBER SKILLS AND INTEREST SURVEY

(To be completed by new CCWB members, after becoming a member of the Community Child Welfare Board.)

Name.....

SKILLS/INTEREST	HAVE SKILLS	HAVE INTEREST
Public Relations Skills Writing stories /articles Public speaking Creative writing Staffing displays		
Financial Skills Treasurer Grant administration		
Technical Skills Computer Organizing data Interpreting data		
Secretarial Skills Minute taking Letter writing Writing reports		
Planning/Organizational Skills Setting goals and objectives Setting priorities Developing and implementing action plans Organizing activities Organizing information Developing surveys and questionnaires Conducting focus groups		
Leadership Skills Community development Developing good team atmosphere Leading groups Developing agendas		
Other		

## REFERENCE CHECK FORM

Date .....

Name of Volunteer Applicant. ....

Name of Reference .....

Name of Interviewer. ....

Phone: Home (902) ..... Work (902) .....

### 1. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Briefly cover the following in requesting that the references consent to a discussion of the applicant:

- Your name
- Name of organization/CCWB role
- Applicant requested that we call you to verify some information about possible volunteer positions
- Applicant has given permission for the provision of full and honest information
- Conversation will take approximately 10 minutes and can be conducted at their convenience
- Information given will be kept confidential

### 2. REFERENCE CHECK QUESTIONS

a. How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b. How would you describe the applicant? What three words would you use if you were giving a thumbnail sketch?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

c. Describe how the applicant gets along with people in general (selection criteria, e.g., interpersonal, communication skills).

.....  
.....  
.....

d. How would you describe the applicant’s ability to work collaboratively as part of a team? (Demonstrates ability to look at all sides of an issue and render wise decisions; focused on the big picture.)

.....  
.....  
.....

e. What would you describe as primary positive skills or traits of the applicant?

.....  
.....  
.....

f. Would you have any concerns about recommending this individual as a CCWB member?

.....  
.....  
.....

g. How comfortable would you be in having the applicant work for you on an important project (selection criteria, e.g., responsible, reliable, level of long-term commitment, organized)?

.....  
.....  
.....

h. Is there anything else you can tell us that might help us reach a good decision?

.....  
.....  
.....



## RESOURCES

# Community Relations

### ENSURING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The following was adapted from the United Way website:

#### ***Board's Role***

Boards need to ensure that they are responding effectively to the changing needs of their community. Developing marketing and public relations strategies to promote awareness of the organization in the community is essential. Even if community relations are well-established, it is important that boards remain up to date on new challenges and opportunities in their community and that board members regularly investigate opportunities to collaborate with other organizations.

The board should ensure that

- the community is aware that the organization exists
- the community is aware of the mission/purpose of the organization
- the organization is well-represented in the community, within government, and among other funding agencies
- the membership receives information on programs and services
- there are clear principles and objectives to guide collaborations with other agencies

## BASIC CONCEPTS IN COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public and community relations are about image.

Consider:

- What image do you want to convey?
- What is your current image?
- What changes (if any) must be made?

Public and community relations can help your organization to define, announce, and maintain its image in the eyes of those you serve in your community and the community at large.

Public relations can

- inform the general community about services
- include the promotion of your organization through a variety of media

Community relations can

- provide an opportunity for the organization to interact with its environment
- include relationships with other organizations
- offer an opportunity for your organization to respond to turf issues

## PLANNING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

### ***Why Communicate?***

To inform, you may need to let interested parties know who you are, what you can do for them, what they can do to help you, or even just how to get in touch with you. You can ensure good communication by putting yourself in your audience's position, paying attention to their needs, and getting to know them. Communication can also be designed to persuade, prevent misunderstanding, present a point of view, or reduce barriers. Decide which of these will be the goal of promoting your organization.

- Research, analyze, and take stock of your current situation so that you are ready to answer questions that will be posed by various audiences after you have initiated your communications campaign.
- Set goals and objectives of what you are trying to achieve.
- Determine your target audience(s).

- Make sure everyone involved in the strategy understands the key message you are trying to convey.
- Determine how you will evaluate how successful the communications strategy has been (e.g., follow up with other community organizations to see if your message has reached them, and how it has been interpreted by them).
- Develop a public and community relations plan.

Once the board has determined what kind of communications plan it will work on, the following questions should be addressed in order to create an action plan.

## DETERMINING RESOURCES

- What public and community relations resources do our board members have?
- Do we have volunteers to support these activities? Who? How much time can they devote? Which activities can that person stop doing in order to take these on?
- How much money can we allocate to these activities?
- Should we do the work ourselves or hire an outside consultant?

## SCOPE

What activities are really needed? (Newsletter only?

Public Relations committee?

Board Committee? Other local media?

What resources are available?

What resources do we lack?

## MEDIA RELATIONS

What are the strengths and weaknesses of our current media relations?

## TIMING

Based on the requirements of our communications strategy, other commitments and resources available, what is the appropriate timing? (Create a tentative calendar.)

## ISSUES

- What is board policy on "taking stands"?
- On what issues will a stand be taken?



**ADVOCACY: WHAT TO CONSIDER**

The board has a major responsibility to advocate on its behalf and on behalf of the underlying values and beliefs of the organization. A board is always an advocate for the organization but sometimes organizations go beyond this role to become advocates for issues and sometimes for individual clients or members.

Advocacy is a complex matter. The following four steps will help clarify the role of an organization when it comes to matters of advocacy.

- Redefine a problem as an issue. A problem, once seen as personal but shared by others, can be redefined as an issue.
- Research the issue. Gather the facts together and state them in a coherent manner. Conclusions must only be drawn after this step has been completed.
- Set goals. Match short-term goals with specific solutions to problems that have been identified. Devise a strategy for reaching each solution.
- Work with others. Join others who are working on the issue and actively looking for allies.

Boards must make sure that the issues for which they choose to advocate are consistent with their mission and values.

Here are some helpful links regarding advocacy regulations for Canadian charities and non-profits.

*Advocacy On the Agenda: Preparing Voluntary Boards for Public Policy Participation*  
 Volunteer Canada (2003) **[www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)**

*The Art of Advocacy: A Handbook for Non-Profit Organizations*  
 Canadian Community Economic Development Network (2004) **[www.ccednet-rcdec.ca](http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca)**

Policy Statement: Political Activities (CPS-022)  
 CRA Charities Directorate (2003) **[www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/policy/cps/cps-022-e.html#P263\\_26553](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/charities/policy/cps/cps-022-e.html#P263_26553)**

Not for Profit and Charity Law FAQs LawNow (2007)  
**[www.law-nonprofit.org](http://www.law-nonprofit.org)**

## GLOSSARY OF PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS TERMS

**MARKET** – Any person and/or organization that has an actual or a potential interest in exchanging resources for the services offered by the organization.

**MARKET SEGMENT** – A distinct group of people and/or organizations that wants to, or might want to, exchange resources for distinct benefits.

**MARKETING** – A process by which an organization manages the exchange relationships with its market and market segments in an effort to attain the organization's objectives.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS** – Organized means of communicating effectively with the market. Public relations must take place within the context of a greater marketing plan if they are to be effective.

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS** – The interaction of the organization with its environment. This involves relationships with other organizations such as basic coordination, joint ventures, and networking.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND PARTICIPATION

Why is community participation important?

- Ensures local awareness of child welfare issues
- Provides mechanism to incorporate local values, attitudes, and meaning into strategic planning;
- Gains broad community support and volunteer commitment
- Encourages coordination between organizations involved in children's services/activities

***How Do We Get the Community to Participate?***

Community participation strategies vary. In developing your ideas, a variety of consultation mechanisms may be useful as the method you use will influence the group of citizens you reach. When deciding which community participation strategy to use, ask

- Do we need the insights and co-operation of specific groups (e.g., focus group)?
- Is information relevant from community leasers or individuals, who possess inside information on the issues (e.g., interviews and surveys)?
- Is there a need to obtain broad-based community input and support (e.g., town hall meetings)?
- Should there be an opportunity for organizations with overlapping mandates or interest in the plan to meet and identify areas of concern (e.g., community forum)?
- Are there sensitive aspects to our initiatives that may prevent sharing of opinions in a group setting (e.g., interviews)?
- What are the demographics of the community and how do you ensure gender, age, economic, geographic, ethnic, and educational balance?
- What resources are available to you?

## SAMPLE SURVEY OF INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN THE COMMUNITY

What do you think are the main issues facing children and families in our community?

What do you think are the causes of these issues?

How do you think these issues are being addressed now in our community?

Which of these issues do you consider to be the most important in our community?

Would you please suggest three other people I might talk with about the child welfare issues in our community?

Thank you for your help. At the moment I do not have any more questions, but may I contact you in the future if other issues come up?

Yes

No

## DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

These seven questions could form the backbone of your dialogue. Several sub-questions are offered as prompts to assist you in deepening the dialogue. You decide which questions to spend more time on. It is not necessary to get consensus, but do seek focus.

You may find that these questions do not meet with the needs of the group. They are suggestions only and the organizing team should feel free to develop their own set of questions to better address their situation.

### COMMUNITY

1. From a child's perspective, what do you believe are the two to three most important characteristics of a healthy community?
  - When you picture a healthy community, what stands out?
2. What makes you most proud of your community?

### WHAT'S WORKING

3. What are some specific examples of people or groups working together to improve the quality of life for children in your community? (Listen for and record compelling statements and stories.)
  - How did these come about? Who was involved? How did they access needed resources? What was accomplished?
  - How do you think some of these efforts could be expanded?
  - What are the most important lessons you have learned from both successful and unsuccessful community efforts?

### ISSUES

4. What do you believe are the two to three most important issues that must be addressed to improve the quality of life for children in your community?
  - If you could improve one thing in your community right now, what would it be?
  - What are the two to three most important challenges your community will face in the next 5 to 10 years?

### CAUSES AND BARRIERS

5. What do you believe is keeping your community from doing what needs to be done to improve the quality of life for children? (Refer to issues identified in question #4.)
  - What do you believe are the underlying causes or reasons for these barriers?
  - What is your community currently doing to address these issues?
  - What makes leadership difficult on these issues?

### POLICY AND PRACTICE

6. What actions and solutions would you support to build a better community?
  - What changes in how your community spends its time and resources would make your community better (at work, school, recreation, in community life, etc.)?
  - What responsibility do community members have in building a better community?

### COMMUNITY ACTION

7. What would excite you enough to become involved (or more involved) in improving your community?
  - What is the best way to engage other community members?
  - What is the best way to get youth, parents, organizations, businesses, schools, media, etc. involved?
  - How can you best build upon the assets and strengths of your community?
  - How could learning from this conversation apply to your current activities?
  - Are there any obvious next steps?

## SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

What does child welfare mean to you?

What factors contribute most to good health and wellness of children in our community?

What are the major children and family issues and concerns, now and in the future?

What issues are not being addressed as well as they should be?

What resources and strengths does our community have in place already for promoting wellness and addressing children's issues?

What strategies could be considered for promoting wellness and addressing children's issues?

What is the history in the community of people getting together to address problems? What were the issues, what was done, and who was involved?

What are the barriers/challenges to child welfare faced by the community (e.g., social financial, geographical, educational, etc.)

What are your recommendations to improve child welfare in our community?

SOURCE:

Community Health Planning Guidebook Series II - Your Community, NS Department of Health, Spring, 1997

## RESOURCES

### ONLINE

In today's ever-changing field of information technology, community boards have access to a multitude of websites and articles on the World Wide Web. Many sites are dedicated to offering not-for-profits free tools, articles, and advice for building board's capacity. Topics cover the whole spectrum of community and board development, from recruitment and strategic planning to engaging communities and strategies for achieving social action.

As internet sites can change without notice, we are not including a list of web-based resources in this resource guide. For a current listing of online resources, you are encouraged to visit the Community Child Welfare Board website at [www.gov.ns.ca/coms/welfareboards](http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/welfareboards).

### PRINT RESOURCES

*Community Leadership Handbook: Framing Ideas, Building Relationships, and Mobilizing Resources*, 2006

James F Krile

*Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*

John P. Kretzmann

John L. McKnight

*Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*

Second Edition, 2005

Michael Allison and Jude Kaye

*Board Recruitment and Orientation: A Step-by-Step, Common Sense Guide*

3rd EDITION, 2008

Hildy Gottlieb

*Field Guide to Developing, Operating and Restoring Your Nonprofit Board*

Carter McNamara

*The Best of the Board Café:*

*Hands-on Solutions for Nonprofit Boards*

Jan Masaoka

*The High Performance Board*, 2002

Dennis Pointer and James Orlikoff

*The Imperfect Board Member*, 2006

Jim Brown