

Terms of Reference: Community Action Committee (CAC)

Approved by CAC, February 23, 2010

CAC Vision

Ending Homelessness in Calgary through Community Empowerment.

Mission

To provide a collective, community voice which recommends strategy and direction to the Calgary Homeless Foundation in support of Calgary's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Key Activities of the CAC

1. Provide a participatory site for dialogue, debate, community voice and information sharing.
2. Advocate for people experiencing homelessness.
3. Provide input into the Calgary Homeless Foundation's (CHF) annual strategic review and business plan.
4. Provide input into funding priorities of CHF.
5. Assist the CHF in identifying service gaps and homeless-serving sector priorities.
6. Assist the CHF in assessing proposals for projects funded in part by Service Canada.
7. Provide the CHF with real time strategic and tactical information from the sectors and other member groups and agencies to assist in the implementation of the 10 Year Plan.
8. Provide the CHF a means of communicating with key stakeholders in the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.
9. Participate in the research and development of public policy initiatives and participate in public policy advocacy efforts to support desired changes.

Governance

The CAC is an independent body representing multi-sector homeless-serving organizations and the homeless population in Calgary, Alberta, which operates as described in the following pages.

CAC Leadership

The CAC will elect an executive committee consisting of a Chair and four Executive Members, one of whom will be designated as Deputy Chair. The Chair and Executive will be elected for two year terms. The Executive would be responsible for:

- The leadership and direction of the CAC including the development of an annual work plan.
- The supervision of the CAC Community Planner
- The CAC input into the Calgary Homeless Foundation's (CHF) annual strategic review and business plan.
- Communication of identified service gaps to the CHF.
- Representing the CAC to the CHF and other external stakeholders.

It is intended that the CAC Chair will be a member of the CHF Board of Directors. Once nominated as Chair by the CAC, the candidate will be subject to the normal election / appointment process for directors of the CHF. Part of the selection process for the CAC Chair will be consultation with the CHF Chair to ensure candidates' suitability as a board member of the CHF.

CAC Membership

The CAC is an inclusive community forum which encourages participation from a broad range of stakeholders. These include:

- Homeless-serving agencies
- Sector chairs and/or Co-chairs
- Representatives from federal, provincial and municipal governments
- Representatives from public service providers who work with the homeless (CPS, Alberta Health Services, etc.)
- Community members
- Funders
- Homeless or formerly homeless individuals
- Advocacy organizations

Voting membership in CAC is determined by a majority vote of existing members, after review and discussion of individual membership requests by the Chair and Executive.

CAC Budget

The CHF and the CAC will agree to an annual CAC operating budget drawn primarily from Service Canada funds administered by the CHF. The CAC may raise funds on its own which the CHF will administer on its behalf.

CAC Community Planner

The CHF, on behalf of the CAC, will employ a full time Community Planner to assist the CAC.

The CAC Chair and Executive will provide leadership and guidance to the Community Planner, in discussion with the Community Planner and the CHF President & CEO including:

- An Accountability Agreement for the Community Planner (collaborative agreement between Community Planner, CAC Executive and CHF)
- Yearly objectives
- Timely performance feedback, including mid-year and annual performance appraisal.
- Guidance on priorities in the role.
- The Community Planner will be a regular full-time employee of the CHF and standard CHF benefits package, vacation entitlement and pay scale will apply. Salary and incentive compensation will be tied to deliverables in the Accountability Agreement.

Other Professional Resources

Operations and work of the CAC may be supported by other professional resources, on an as-needed basis. Contracted professional resources will be contracted by the CHF and report to the Community Planner.

Roles of Sectors and Sector Chairs

The CAC Sectors are a very important way for agencies serving similar demographics to network, collaborate and work together strategically. The Sectors' strategic work is facilitated by their Sector strategic plans and other Sector planning processes.

The CAC Sectors are also the primary means of communication between service providers and the CHF. Through involvement in the Sectors, agencies serving homeless people are kept informed of CHF and 10 Year Plan activities. Sector members also provide input to the CAC and CHF regarding the 10 Year Plan implementation and are consulted on issues relevant to their Sector, so that CAC and the CHF are aware of developments in the homeless service system. Sector members are invited to attend CAC meetings as observers at any time.

To facilitate communication and consultation between the Sectors and the CAC and CHF, the Sector Chairs will:

- distribute information from the CAC and the CHF to Sector members. For Sectors to be fully engaged in the implementation of the 10 Year Plan, they need to be kept updated on CHF initiatives and plans. Sector chairs will be responsible for reporting to their Sectors on presentations and discussions occurring at CAC meetings. To assist with this, the Community Planner will prepare a monthly CHF and CAC update, including an update from the Implementation teams and working groups. Sector Chairs will distribute the monthly update to Sector members.
- ask Sector members for input on CHF activities and developments in the homeless service system and ensure that this input is delivered to the CAC and the CHF. On a biannual basis Sector chairs will report to CAC on Sector activities and progress, system gaps, and obstacles identified by Sector members.
- enhance membership in their Sectors to ensure the participation of key agencies involved in the homeless service system.
- Sector Chairs are to represent their entire sector, not just the views of their agency.

CAC Sectors

- Aboriginal Committee on Housing and Homelessness
- Addictions Sector
- Family Sector
- Women Fleeing Violence Sector
- Mental Health Sector
- Seniors and Special Needs Housing Sector
- Calgary Interagency Council on Homelessness
- Youth Sector
- Immigrant Housing Sector

Limitations to the CAC Mandate

The CAC provides vital input in the establishment of the CHF's annual strategy review, business plan, priorities and funding choices but the responsibility for decision in these matters remains with the CHF Board and Management. The CHF Board and Management will always attempt to work in collaboration with the CAC and other key stakeholder groups in establishing direction and key decisions in the best interests of people experiencing homelessness while implementing the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

CHF Commitment to the CAC

The CHF recognizes that the success of the CAC in meeting its Vision and Mission is essential to the success of 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. To help ensure the CAC is able to fully contribute to our work the CHF will:

- Engage the CAC in the annual strategy review and CHF business plan processes early enough so that the CAC voice can be fully heard as priorities and direction are established.
- Clarify CHF's needs for specific information and its timing so that CAC can be effective in influencing key CHF decisions.
- Recognize that CAC executive and members are volunteers by striving to use their time and resources as efficiently as possible and using their input effectively to influence the CHF direction and priorities.
- Ensure the CHF processes for decisions on operational and capital funding are transparent.
- The CHF will work with the CAC on setting annual objectives and a review process for the relationship between the CHF and CAC so that the effectiveness of the CAC can be strengthened within our dynamic environment. The CHF and the CAC will develop a joint annual work plan for the CAC which may include (but not be limited to) CAC & Sector meeting dates, communications deadlines (e.g. CHF CAC updates), funding cycles/deadlines, and, key planning dates.
- Employ a full time Community Planner on behalf of the CAC to assist the CAC in meeting its Vision and Mission.

CAC Decision Making Philosophy and Practice

CAC serves as a voice for the community. In this role, the CAC strives to engage in decision-making that is premised on collaboration, good faith, respect and consensus. While consensus does not require unanimous endorsement, every effort will be made to achieve collective agreement. In the event of an impasse, decisions will be made by simple majority vote (50% +1). Dissenting voices will be heard, considered and documented in meeting records before proceeding to a vote. Conflict that cannot be resolved within the normal processes of the CAC will be referred to the CAC Chair and Executive for further action.