

Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness Terms of Reference

MISSION

The Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (the Coalition) works as a collective to plan, coordinate, recommend and implement community responses to homelessness.

VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Coalition members and advisors wholeheartedly commit to endorsing and collaborating on the priorities identified by the Coalition for the people in the Comox Valley who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Coalition will:

- Speak with one voice to address the priority needs of individuals who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley
- Apply principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in our work, and will operate from an inclusive, participatory, transparent, and respectful basis in evaluating, planning, and implementing actions to address homelessness.
- Use a consensus decision-making process (*see Appendix C for details*)
- Be action oriented and focused on results, outcomes and impacts that prevent or eliminate homelessness.
- Use collaborative strategies in all efforts to end or prevent homelessness
- Liaise with community stakeholders and people with lived/living experience of homelessness and encourage their active participation in meeting the goals of the Coalition.
- Incorporate the principles of housing first and harm reduction in our action planning
- Identify and advocate for projects that address gaps within the housing and supports wheelhouse that also target the demographics of people most in need
- Incorporate supports and strategies to ensure people remain successfully housed with emphasis on outreach, relationship building, and individualized services.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- To work with all levels of government, including First Nations, Metis and their respective agencies, housing providers, faith groups, the private sector, individuals, and non-governmental organizations to develop ongoing actions to end homelessness in the Comox Valley.
- To create an annual Housing Plan based on the Coalition's Strategic Priority #1: Create Additional Housing & Supports. (*see Appendix E for details*)
- To create a Coalition Action Plan based on the Coalition's Strategic Priorities #2-4 (*see Appendix E for details*)

- To use a collaborative systems and client-based approach to action planning to provide the most effective support strategies with housing, while securing adequate resources.
- To educate and increase public awareness and build community understanding of homelessness.
- To monitor progress, evaluate initiatives, and prepare [annual progress reports](#) to the Comox Valley community and their elected representatives.
- To make funding recommendations for the Comox Valley Regional District Homelessness Supports Service Fund

MEMBERSHIP, ADVISORY, AND TEAMS

Members of the Coalition will be comprised of diverse community stakeholders. Advisory organizations can attend meetings and participate in discussions but may not participate in decision making processes. *(See Appendix A for details)*

The Coalition is comprised of teams including Leadership Team, Homelessness Response Team, Public Awareness Team, People with Lived/Living Experience Team and ad hoc teams, as necessary. *(See Appendix B for details)*

DECISION MAKING

The Coalition makes decisions by consensus of members present at a meeting. *(See Appendix C for details)*

CONFIDENTIALITY

Where any Member or Advisory wishes to raise and/or discuss confidential information, it is the responsibility of that Member to advise other Members that the information is to be treated as confidential and Members and Advisory agree not to divulge confidential information.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members and Advisory must declare interest or conflict of interest prior to meetings or as the situation arises.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Coalition to End Homelessness is committed to creating and maintaining a collaborative environment congruent to our Values and Operating Principles. *(See Appendix D for details)*

HOMELESSNESS SUPPORTS SERVICE FUND EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The Coalition makes annual recommendations for projects to be funded by the CVRD Homelessness Supports Service Fund. To be considered for this funding, member agencies must submit an Expression of Interest Application that will be used to determine the Coalition's recommendations to the CVRD for each funding cycle. The Expression of Interest Application Form and requirements can be found at www.cvhousing.ca/documents/

APPENDIX A

MEMBERS & ADVISORY

Members

Members of the Coalition will be comprised of representatives of diverse community stakeholders such as:

- Non-profit organizations
- Indigenous service providers
- Faith groups
- Community groups
- Not for profit housing providers
- Community service clubs

Organizations will be asked to appoint one representative. Member organizations may send an alternate to a meeting in the absence of the appointed representative. Member organizations may be added at any time by submitting a signed membership letter to the Coalition Coordinator. If the Coordinator has any questions about the appropriateness of the proposed member it will be brought to the Leadership team, who will make a recommendation for the Coalition to decide upon by consensus.

Advisory Participants

Advisory organizations and individuals may attend meetings and contribute to discussions but may not participate in decision making processes.

Examples of advisory participants may include, but are not limited to:

- Government agencies and services (ie: BC Housing, Provincial Ministries, Correctional services etc)
- Island Health
- RCMP
- Elected Municipal, Provincial, First Nation and Federal representatives
- Government staff

APPENDIX B

COALITION TEAMS

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team (LT) is an appointed team of six members, with no less than four members at any time. Leadership Team members are representatives of member agencies.

In May of every year the Coalition Coordinator will ask for expressions of interest from Coalition members to take on a Leadership Team role. At the June Coalition meeting the new Leadership Team will be determined by consensus for the following year beginning their term in September. If a Leadership Team member leaves their role before the term is over it is up to the discretion of the remaining members to make a replacement. The role of the Leadership Team will be to coordinate the activities of the Coalition and bring items for discussion and decision forward to the members.

Public Awareness Team

The Public Awareness Team (PAT) undertakes the public education, stigma-breaking, and awareness-raising necessary to build community support, understanding, and to advance the Coalition’s goals to end homelessness.

Homelessness Response Team

The Homelessness Response Team (HRT) consists of frontline outreach workers from a wide range of nonprofit agencies, as well as partnerships with City of Courtenay, RCMP, Island Health and the Ministry of Poverty and Social Development.

The HRT meets weekly to identify gaps in the system of care to support homeless individuals, provide updates, ideas and shares knowledge, resources, referrals, and support. During outreach, HRT members engage with and support homeless persons on the street, parks, and at encampments, motels etc. Through the Coalition the HRT also brings forward concerns and advocates for the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

People with Lived/Living Experience Team

The People with Lived/Living Experience Team consists of individuals who have lived or living experience of homelessness to work together to bring forward recommendations, advocate for the needs of those experiencing homelessness, and engage with Coalition teams such as the HRT to fulfill the Guiding Principles of the Coalition from their perspective and expertise.

Ad hoc Teams

The Coalition will appoint teams on an as-needed basis to work on specific projects that support our mission and goals.

An example of an ad hoc team includes the time-limited Homelessness Supports Service Fund Expressions of Interest Review Committee comprised of Coalition members who review annual applications and bring forward funding recommendations to the Coalition for decision making.

APPENDIX C

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Consensus decision making is defined as, when the Coalition member “can live with” the decision of the group. A clear and common understanding of the issues is achieved by each member having the opportunity to express their opinion and for hearing the rationale and concerns of all the other members.

GRADIENTS OF AGREEMENT FOR MODIFIED CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Source: Comox Valley Community Health Network

Gradients of Agreement:

- A. Whole-hearted Agreement - 5
- B. Agree with minor concern - 4
- C. Don’t like but will support - 3
- D. More discussion needed - 2
- E. Serious disagreement - 1

This process can be used by showing fingers or numbered cards in smaller groups.

The gradient of agreement scale is explained to participants. After discussion on a topic for a decision and airing of any concerns, the facilitator takes a “pulse check” on a proposal for decision using the gradients of agreement. If everyone is a 3-5, the decision is made by full consensus and the group moves on.

If any participant expresses a 1 or a 2 on the scale, they are given the opportunity to explain their concerns and suggest alternatives. Once those have been heard, the facilitator works with group to re-phrase a revised proposal for decision that attempts to address concerns. Making the revised proposal, the facilitator calls for a decision. Participants at the meeting are asked to communicate their level of agreement again with the strengthened proposal.

If all participants fall within #3-5 full consensus is reached.

If fewer than 10% of participants express a 1-2, the group will proceed based on a modified consensus.

If more than 10% of the participants at the meeting fall within # 1-2, the decision requires more discussion (and may be further discussed or delayed). At any point in the decision-making process, people who express a #1-2 must be willing to work with the group to develop a compromise proposal.

APPENDIX D

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Coalition members are open to different points of view but also recognize that human interactions can be complex. When disagreements arise between members greater understanding, and patience by all is needed. The presence of conflict, if dealt with effectively, can be an opportunity for members to learn from one another and identify Coalition values and guiding principles which may need to be improved upon.

Members agree to, and understand that, a breach of any of the values and guiding principles may result in a process of transparent and respectful conflict resolution. The conflict is to be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity, and participants in the conflict resolution process will be prepared to listen to the other parties' positions with an open mind. Discussions will focus on resolving the essence of the dispute, rather than any unrelated personal disagreements between the parties. If members of the Coalition need support to resolve a conflict the Leadership Team can assist in finding a neutral third party with the goal of resolving the conflict to everyone's satisfaction.

APPENDIX E

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PLANS

The Coalition to End Homelessness has 4 strategic directions which guide the work we do.

- ✚ Strategic Priority #1: Create Additional Housing & Supports**
- ✚ Strategic Priority #2: Community Collaboration, Prevention & Education**
- ✚ Strategic Priority #3: Coalition Capacity Building**
- ✚ Strategic Priority #4: Funding & Fundraising**

Our annual update of our Strategic Priority #1 accomplishments can be found in our [Housing Plan](#). This includes the CVRD Housing Needs Assessment key findings, housing built since 2016, Homeless Count results, housing funded through the CVRD Homelessness Supports Service as well as other affordable housing projects initiated.

Strategic Priorities 2-4 are related specifically to the work of the Coalition and can be found within the Coalition's [Action Plan](#). Annual updates on other activities and progress can be found within this [Annual Report](#).

Archived versions of the plan can be found on our website www.cvhousing.ca