



April 2026

7 Principles of Belonging and Community Leagues

The content of this resource and the accompanying workshop is based on the book “The Art of Community: 7 Principles for Belonging, 2nd edition” by Charles H. Vogl. You can view a recording of the EFCL workshop based on this book here: [Volunteering & Belonging Workshop](#)

How can we think about these principles for belonging in the context of Community Leagues? This resource will help you think about how your League is showing up in each area. Where are you nailing it? Where could you spend a bit more time and energy? Feel free to use this as a sort of checklist to guide you in creating more belonging in your community.

1. Boundaries

Who is in and who is out?

- ☐ Does your League have clear boundaries stated on your website?
- ☐ Do people in your community know that membership is open to everyone who lives within those boundaries?
- ☐ If your community includes multiple neighbourhoods, do people in each part of your community know they belong?
- ☐ What else can you do to make sure everyone within your boundaries knows they belong?

2. Initiation

How do we welcome a new member?

- ☐ Are there many opportunities for people to get a membership face-to-face (e.g., door-to-door membership drive, block parties, at events & programs)? (handy resource: [Start a Block Connector Program](#))
- ☐ Are you getting to know your members via the questions on the back of the membership card?
- ☐ Are you tapping into the data from the back of the cards & Communal about what members' interests & skills are? (handy resource: [Using Data from Communal](#))
- ☐ What else can you do to make sure everyone feels welcomed in your community?

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3. Rituals

What do we do that has meaning?

- ☐ Do your events and programs appeal to lots of different people in your community? Do they match the demographics of the neighbourhood(s)? (Tip: these are good websites for looking up the demographic information for your community - [This is Edmonton](#) and [Public Tableau](#))
- ☐ Are you using your events and programs as opportunities to connect and build relationships with members?
- ☐ Are you using signage and decorations to ensure people know events, programs and amenities are open to everyone?
- ☐ Is your Community League Day celebration welcoming and inviting for everyone? (handy resource: [Community League Day: Event Tips & Ideas](#))
- ☐ What else can you do to make your events and programs are opportunities to create a sense of belonging in your community?

4. Temple

What places define our community?

- ☐ What are the spaces in your community where people gather? This may include: rinks, gardens, playgrounds, halls, sledding hills, sports courts, green spaces, and anywhere else people come together
- ☐ How much are the amenities in your community being used by community members? (handy resource: [Amenity Use Assessment](#))
- ☐ Can you make your spaces more welcoming using signage, murals, and other ways to draw people in?
- ☐ What else can you do to make your shared spaces a place for belonging?

5. Stories

What do we share about ourselves?

- ☐ What does your website say about you to people who are new to the neighbourhood? (handy resource: [Community League Website Best Practice Tips](#))
- ☐ Do you use your communications channels to share about your events and programs after they happen? (This resource includes some great examples of social media posts from Community Leagues: [Communication Directors Cafe Tips](#))



- ☐ Are you sharing stories about the history of your community and the people who are in it?
- ☐ What else can you do to share who you are and what is important to you to help people feel connected with the Community League?

6. Symbols

How do we represent what is important to us?

- ☐ Do you have a brand & logo for your League and if you do, does it represent your values and who your community is today?
- ☐ What makes your Community League special and is this represented in your communications with your community (website, social media, newsletter, signage)?
- ☐ What special knowledge is held in your community that only people within the community know (e.g., quirky landmarks, special names for elements of the neighbourhood, historical facts). How can you celebrate this?
- ☐ How else can you give people in your community a sense of a unique and special connection to the neighbourhood?

7. Inner Ring

What opportunities are there to increase participation?

- ☐ Are there ways people can volunteer with various levels of engagement & commitment (micro-volunteering, ongoing volunteering, ad hoc committees, ongoing committees, board positions, etc.)?
- ☐ Do you have committees that people can join based on their interests and availability? (handy resource: [Guide to Forming Community Committees](#))
- ☐ Do you have named roles that are not board positions, but honour experience and knowledge (i.e., “elder”, “knowledge keeper”, “advisor”) for people who hold a special role in the community?
- ☐ Do people feel as though they can move between levels of commitment depending on capacity (e.g., board member to volunteer, volunteer to committee member, etc.)?
- ☐ What else can you do to ensure that community members are able to contribute in a way that honours their interests, skills, and capacity?

If you have questions about how to do this in your community, don't hesitate to reach out: leaguesupport@efcl.org. We're happy to help!