



New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society (NWHCS)

Community Engagement Working Group

Terms of Reference

NWHCS Background:

The New Westminster Homeless Coalition was formed 2005; incorporated in January of 2012; and became the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society (Society) in May 2012 in order to better succeed in our long-term mission to help those in need in New Westminster.

Purpose of the Society is to:

- assist people who are affected by, or at risk of becoming homeless by connecting them to support services.
- promote client wellbeing, through outreach and support services.
- empower clients to become self-supporting and productive.
- provide similar and related services as determined by the membership.

Vision: A world where every Individual experiences a socially just quality of life.

Mission: To collaborate, educate, and act to ensure access to healthy safe housing and supportive services in New Westminster.

Strategic Priorities: New priorities TBD by the NWHCS Board in 2024

Current Work:

- Annual Homelessness Action Week (HAW)
- CONNECT Days (during HAW and in February)
- I's on the Street
- New Westminster Food Security Action Plan implementation and supporting neighbourhood-based Food and Resource Hubs
- New Westminster Homelessness Action Strategy coordination and implementation support

Membership and Voting:

Membership of the Society is open to any individual or organization interested in contributing to ending homelessness. Membership fees (currently \$5) are set annually prior to the AGM. Non-members may attend meetings of the Society, participate in Working Groups, and have a voice on issues being discussed but will not be eligible to vote. Individuals and member organizations in good standing will have voting privileges on the issues that come before the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society Board.

Governance:

The Board of the New Westminster Homeless Coalition Society is the primary decision-making body for the Society.

Working Groups:

At the discretion of the Board, Working Groups, with a Terms of Reference, will be established to support the work of the Society. They will be chaired by a Board member with the support of contracted staff. These working groups will be action oriented and follow a consensus decision making process with their recommendations sent to the Board for approval.

The Community Engagement Working Group (Working Group)

To streamline current sub-committee work, and attract more individuals, organizations and local businesses to support the work of the Society, the Community Engagement Working Group was established. It captures the work of the former: Services Sub-Committee, Business Advisory Group, and HAW Group.

The Purpose of the Working Group is to:

- Develop the Working Groups annual action plan each year for NWHCS board consideration
- Develop Homelessness Action Week Activities, including fundraising efforts
- Support the development and sustainability of Society initiatives i.e. I's on the Street, Laundry Love, etc.
- Engage the broader community in the work of the Society
- Support the development and implementation of pilot projects that could address community needs
- Advocacy

Membership: Working Group membership is open to Society members and the greater community.

Chair/Co-Chair: A Society Board member shall be the designated chair. Efforts will be made to attract a community co-chair for the working group.

Duties of the Chair/Co chair:

- a. Set meeting agendas;
- b. Annually review the Working Group Terms of Reference, Action Plan, and implementation strategies; and,
- c. Report all actions to the Board.

Duties of the Contracted Administrator (Coalition and Projects Coordinator):

- a. Support the Chair/Co-Chairs with agenda setting and meeting logistics;
- b. Prepare documentation for meetings;
- c. Serve as the recording secretary. Circulate minutes to working group members and the Society Board, and then share with the general membership upon their adoption; and,
- d. Provide other support as necessary.

Meetings: will be held monthly, and to attract more community members will rotate between working hours and early evening hours.

Meetings and the decision-making process: The Working Group shall operate on the principle of seeking consensus for any decisions made or recommendations put forward to the NWHCS Board.

Definition of Consensus:

Consensus is a process for multi-party decision-making that synthesizes the ideas of all participants into a decision that is acceptable to all. Consensus requires high levels of commitment, time and communication. Consensus is not a compromise or form of deal making. It involves exploring “interests” and ensuring that the decision fits with the group’s purpose and values.

Consensus Guidelines:

- A clear proposal is put forth in advance of the meeting (with background material when possible);
- A time is set aside for meaningful discussion;
- All parties are expected and encouraged to participate. If any party chooses not to participate, they give license to the group to make the decision for them and they commit to endorsing that decision;
- There may not be 100% agreement; rather, consensus means that all parties are able to “live with” the decision provided there is the opportunity to review it after the decision has been implemented; and,
- Where there is disagreement, there is a commitment to:
 - Discussing the underlying assumptions
 - Seeking differences of opinion to gain understanding
 - A willingness to consider different points of view
 - Clarifying the issues; for example, identifying the real issues from surface issues
 - Listening carefully to identify interests
 - Looking for “win-win” outcomes.