



CommunityWise Resource Centre Board of Directors Terms of Reference

What is CommunityWise?

CommunityWise Resource Centre is more than the sum of its parts. The organization is defined not only by the building as a physical centre, but by the non-profit groups, the communities and the individuals who occupy it. At this time the centre is comprised of over 70 member organizations, including immigrant community associations, youth-serving agencies, LGBTQ community resources, arts and culture, environmental and social justice advocacy. As the original grassroots groups formed a tenants association and saved the building from demolition in 1979, the history of the centre is a story of collective achievement, of community resilience and of hope for the future. Member organizations' incredible diversity is what gives this organization its strength. CommunityWise is a centre; a meeting place; a physical space where initiatives, agendas and dreams converge with the groups of people who bring them.

Leadership

CWRC employs a small staff collective of four with a horizontal leadership structure to manage building operations, member support, programming and community development. Its Board of Directors is made up of representatives from both member organizations and the broader community.

History

When the YWCA moved out of the building in the early 70s, the City of Calgary took possession and began renting rooms to grass-roots organizations and various community groups. In 1979 the City of Calgary decided the building was more trouble than it was worth so they scheduled it for demolition. The non-profit groups renting offices formed a tenants association to rescue the building and negotiated with the City to let them continue using the space, in exchange for fundraising to maintain the building. The same agreement is still in effect now.

Vision

Achieve equitable social change achieved through collaborative work.

Mission

To provide inclusive, affordable space and community development programs to support and strengthen diverse grassroots and non-profit members.

Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (TOC) is a tool for developing solutions to complex social problems. A basic TOC explains how immediate and intermediate accomplishments set the stage for producing long-term results. Our vision and mission articulate the long-term results. Based on

this vision and mission, the CommunityWise TOC defines 8 objectives by which to measure success.

- 1) CWRC has a strong members community
- 2) CWRC is a place people want to be
- 3) CWRC is a safe and inclusive space that fosters a sense of belonging
- 4) CWRS's building operations are rooted in the practice of stewardship
- 5) CWRC and Member organizations have adequate resources to support their missions
- 6) CWRC uses evaluation and measurement to learn, adapt and improve operations
- 7) CWRC has presence, influence, credibility, and accountability
- 8) CWRC's Member organization's are better able to reach their goals

CommunityWise Board of Directors

The role of the CommunityWise Board of Directors is to represent the needs, interests and vision of the communities and organizations involved in the space. The Board is accountable to the Theory of Change and Strategic Plan created and updated by board and staff in an ongoing process each year.

Board Terms

A new term begins at the Annual General Meeting in May each year when some board members leave and new members join. This ensures continuity in knowledge and new perspectives for succession.

When a person joins the board they commit to serving a 3 year term. If a board member is not able to complete the 3 year term for any reason they may resign at any time.

Decision making

The Board and Staff use Consensus Process to foster leadership and participation in decision-making. CommunityWise Resource Centre has a flat structure with a Staff Collective who share leadership and coordination responsibilities. The Board has an executive committee made up of three or four board members who share the facilitation role at meetings. Each year the board receives training in Consensus Decision Making and facilitation skills.

Meetings

The CommunityWise Board of Directors meets once every other month on the same day of the month for a total of six meetings per year, and additionally two longer strategic planning meetings per year. Board members are expected to attend each of these meetings, including the Annual General Meeting held in the third week of May.

Meetings are open to staff, practicum students, member and community representatives. The schedule for time and day of regular meetings are set by the board collectively at the first regular meeting of the board following the AGM.

Participation

Beyond attending regular board meetings, CommunityWise board members are invited to participate in one or more committees according to their skills and interests, and/or to contribute to the organization by volunteering their time at major community events such as a Community Forum, Open House, the Winter Party and the AGM.

New ideas for ways Board members can participate and contribute to the organization are welcome! CW understands that board members may have busy lives and circumstances that prevent extra participation and there is no obligation to contribute this way.

Committees

Committees are open to anyone who is interested (members, community, public) and for all committees except Finance Committee, attendance is fluid and open so participants can drop in whenever they are able.

Committees that involve one or more board representative(s) are empowered to make consensus based decisions without full board approval. Any decisions made by committees are included in the committee report to the board, reviewed in the “updates” section of each Board Meeting.

Programming Committee – the purpose of the programming committee is to build community and promote skill sharing by providing relevant programs, workshops and events for CommunityWise members and the general public. Anyone is welcome to participate in this committee, not limited to board members. The committee meets monthly.

Finance Committee – the purpose of the finance committee is to review and approve the CommunityWise financial statements and to make recommendations to the Board about other financial decisions. The committee meets every other month, prior to the Board Meeting or more frequently as needed. Board executive committee members who are also signing authorities on bank accounts are required to participate in these meetings on a rotating basis.

Membership Committee – the purpose of the membership committee is to review and approve new member applications and to ensure CommunityWise members are represented in organizational decisions. The committee is open to any member and requires at least one board member. Most of the decisions are made through email and the committee meets infrequently as needed.

Facilities Committee – the purpose of the facilities committee is to engage members and the community in contributing ideas and time to the building. The committee hosts volunteer work parties to do work in the back yard garden, cleaning common spaces, and assisting with moving furniture or materials in and out of offices and other projects as needed.

Human Resources Committee – this committee supports members of the CommunityWise Staff Collective in annual and ongoing staff evaluation processes and in hiring new temporary and permanent positions as needed.

Policy Committee – this is an ad hoc committee of the CommunityWise Board of Directors, forming periodically to draft and revise CommunityWise policy and procedure, including but not limited to Society Bylaws and Policy Manual. The Policy Committee is comprised of Board Members and Staff Collective Members and may occasionally have input from lawyers, community members, people with knowledge in the field and/or professional consultants. The purpose of the committee is to draft and update bylaws and policy to be approved by the Board of Directors according to the mission, vision and values of CommunityWise Resource Centre, to best serve all community members and general community.

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Application Process

Application deadline:

The deadline for submitting an application to join the CommunityWise Board of Directors or a committee is the second Wednesday of April, more than one month prior to the Annual General Meeting held on the 3rd Thursday of May. (Applications are also accepted year round in the event that positions on the board become available.)

Board Eligibility:

Representatives of CommunityWise tenant groups and member groups, as well as representatives of wider community are eligible to serve on the CommunityWise Board.

The Board aims to represent the diversity of organizations, communities and individuals who share space at CommunityWise. CW values equity and recognizes barriers to joining a board, such as time commitment, child care, scheduling, language barriers and intimidating application processes. If you are interested in joining the board, we will do our best to work with you to overcome barriers.

Application Procedure:

Prospective board members are asked to provide written responses to the following questions:

- 1) What is your interest in joining the board?
- 2) What are your perspectives, skills, experience that you will bring to the board?
- 3) What group(s), organization(s) or community(ies) do you represent, participate in or identify with?

Email to contact@communitywise.net or deliver to CommunityWise admin office.