

BC Disability Collaborative (BCDC)

Terms of Reference: February 9, 2024

Vision

The BC Disability Collaborative **envisions** a more inclusive British Columbia

- where disability is celebrated as part of human diversity and
- where individualized, equitable services are readily available for all children and youth with support needs and their families.

Purpose

The BC Disability Collaborative was formed as a response to specific government funding changes, as a collective voice in the moment to influence positive change.

- BCDC's **purpose** is to unify disparate voices in the disability community, in order to ensure that government policies honour and respect the protected rights of disabled citizens, and address systemic inequities and advocate for tailored support needs for disabled children and youth.

Values

BCDC members aim to show up united, respectful, and focused on our common purpose, while also being transparent and accountable. We aim to foster a culture where kind, clear communication is the norm. Our values are:

- **Compassion & Action:** With compassion for our community in mind, we seek meaningful action towards long-term change.
- **Respect & Humility:** We acknowledge each other's unique journeys, and seek to learn from each other's experiences.
- **Authentic Unity:** Even with diverse perspectives, we're united in our common purpose.
- **Transparency & Accountability:** We will be transparent in our own decisions, and accountable to a high standard of integrity.
- **Equity & Advocacy:** We push for a more equitable system, being conscious of privilege and bias.
- **Autonomy:** At all times, we advocate to government entities in the best interest of children and youth with support needs and their families, without constraint or obligation.

Scope

The BCDC aims to serve as an influential force advocating for change in BC Provincial government policies affecting children and youth with support needs. Through data-sharing and dialogue with each other, we will set goals, amplify voices, and influence BC policy to better serve children and youth with support needs.

Our scope is to:

- **Listen to and amplify our communities' voices:** Listen to the voice of lived experience and bring this directly to the government, on behalf of all children and youth with support needs and their families.
- **Share data and information:** Rely on this diverse group as a learning base to share relevant data among group members, for better collaboration and communication.
- **Set collective goals:** Learn from each other's perspectives, in order to set and pursue annual goals, strategies, and tactics.
- **Influence policy and legislation:** Advocate and activate legislative and policy changes related to the protected rights of disabled citizens at the Provincial level.

What we're not here to do:

- **Service provision:** The BCDC's focus is on advocacy, action, and accountability, not service provision/delivery.
- **Advocacy that applies only to a specific disability group,** rather than development of an equitable system of services for **all** children and youth with support needs.

Member Organizations

Member Organizations

- Any type of disability-related organization for children and youth with support needs that is registered under the Societies Act can be a member of the BCDC, regardless of whether they receive ongoing government funding.
- Professional groups and associations can also be members.

Membership Criteria

- **Committed:** Member organizations will be represented by individuals who can offer time, resources, and active participation.
- **Aligned:** Member organizations should be aligned with BCDC's purpose, vision, values and scope.
- **Representative:** Member organizations will provide diverse representation across the disability sector.

Membership Processes

- **Nomination and Voting Process:** Organizations that meet the criteria and that voting members believe will add value to the BCDC can be nominated by the existing membership. Decision-making will be in accordance with the voting procedures in this ToR document (see the sections that follow).
- **Application Process:** Organizations who wish to join can apply. Their application will be reviewed based on the membership criteria and decisions will be made in accordance with the voting procedures in this ToR document.

Voting Processes

All decisions are made by **voting**. A **two-thirds majority (66%)** is required for a vote to pass.

Voting Principles

- **Transparency:** The decision-making process, including discussions, declarations, and the voting outcome, shall be documented and made available to all members to ensure transparency.
- **Anonymous Voting – Not Allowed:** All votes shall be transparent, ensuring that members are accountable for their choices. No anonymous voting is allowed.

Conflict of Interest

- All member organizations are expected to follow the Conflict of Interest (COI) policy.
- A COI is a situation in which member organization is involved in multiple interests whereby serving one of those interests could involve working against another.
- In the BCDC, a COI exists when a set of circumstances creates a risk that a member organization's ability to adhere to the vision, mission, and/or values outlined in the BCDC Terms of Reference is unduly influenced by a secondary interest.
 - *Secondary interests* include a financial benefit, an organization's advancement, and/or the desire of the organization to gain favour or avoid potential retribution.
- Prior to each vote, member organizations are expected to assess whether they have a potential, perceived, or real competing interest in relation to the vote. The Chair/co-Chair will remind members of the COI policy and their obligation to declare a COI by reading the following statement:
 - *This is a reminder to declare any conflict of interest related to the meeting agenda item(s). BCDC member organizations must remain cognizant of the need to stay neutral and impartial and must be aware of and state any potential, perceived, or real competing interest. If a COI exists in relation to vote, that member organization is expected to abstain from the vote. Does anyone have a conflict of interest to declare?*

Voting Categories and Eligibility

- **Voting Members have decision-making power.** Member organizations have one vote, regardless of whether or not they receive *ongoing* government funding. All member organizations will, wherever possible, make every effort toward increasing representation on their Boards to reflect a minimum 25% representation of individuals with *lived experience*. Recognizing the importance of incorporating lived experience within BCDC's advocacy work, the lived experience representation of member organizations will be reviewed annually and reported out to the membership by the BCDC leadership committee.
 - "Ongoing" is defined as continuous funding provided by a government Ministry on an annual basis to support the activities of the organization. It does not include grants or types of funding that require submission of an application and are competitive and/or discretionary in nature.
 - "Lived experience" is defined as being (a) a person with a disability/support needs, (b) the parent/grandparent/caregiver of a person with a disability/support needs, or (c) the sibling of a person with a disability/support needs.
- **Non-Voting Members provide expertise, guidance, and support but do not have decision-making power.** Member organizations not meeting the above criteria have non-voting status.

Proxy Voting

- Voting organizations may vote by proxy. A proxy holder stands in the place of the voting organization and can do anything that a member organization can do, including but not limited to proposing and seconding resolutions, participating in discussions, and voting.
- A proxy holder must be a representative of another BCDC member organization or the Chair/co-Chair of the BCDC.
- The appointment of a proxy holder must occur prior to a vote and:
 - Must be presented in writing, which includes email, and must be communicated to the Chair/co-Chair of the BCDC.
 - Is valid only at the meeting for which the appointment is given, and
 - May be revoked at any time (e.g., if a CoI is declared)

Leadership Roles & Responsibilities

The BCDC values compassionate leadership rooted in lived experience, emphasizing strong communication, commitment, and organizational skills for all roles.

Leadership Criteria

- **Lived experience** is highly valued, as it provides authentic insight and understanding.
- **Strong oral and/or written communication skills** are required.
- **Organizational skills and time management skills** are necessary, especially for the Chair and co-Chair.
- **The ability to listen with respect** and foster relationships is important.
- Independence and no actual or appearance of **conflict of interest** is essential.
- A **commitment** to creating a better future is a shared vision.

At a minimum, the BCDC leadership team will consist of a:

- Chair/Lead Facilitator (sets and communicates meeting dates, creates agendas, leads a goal-setting process, keeps discussions on track, organizes documents/events)
- Co-Chair/Assistant Facilitator (assists the Chair or temporarily assumes the role of Chair, as necessary)
- Secretary (minutes, document management)
- Treasurer (fund management)

Additional roles and associated responsibilities may be added as needed.

Leadership Elections

Leadership roles will be filled by the following process:

- **Nominations** will be received for individuals who meet the criteria to fill the leadership roles. Self-nominations are acceptable.
- Voting members will hold a vote to decide on who fills the role

Budget & Funding

Funding exists until December 2024. The funding is currently allocated for the following:

- Development of the Terms of reference document, facilitated by Co.school
- Engagement with key stakeholders to inform advocacy efforts related to the CYSN framework currently under review by MCFD.
- Reimbursement of volunteer members and leaders at a rate of \$40/hour for meetings attended, to a maximum of two members per organizations. Reimbursement for work outside of meetings will be determined after February 2024 with a different process.

Additional conversations and plans will be needed after December, 2024

Accountability and Iteration

Accountability

- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.
- We aim to build a culture that functions according to the values defined in the Values section of this document. Members are expected to initiate individual conversations to resolve interpersonal issues of concern. If an issue cannot be resolved individually, members involved may call upon the leadership team to act as an intermediary.

Documentation

- Minutes and treasurer's reports shall be filed on Google Docs or a similar platform for easy access and transparency.