

The Seniors Advocate Council of Advisers

The council of advisers will provide the Office of the Seniors Advocate with advice and feedback on the issues facing seniors living in British Columbia. The purpose of the volunteer council is to provide the perspective of seniors from diverse backgrounds, ages, geographical areas and cultures.

The authority for this council is found in the [Seniors Advocate Act](#) section 6 “Power to Establish Advisory Council”.

Composition

The council is to be comprised of 25-30 seniors, who collectively bring representation from:

- All five [Health Authority areas](#)
- Aboriginal peoples (not in receipt of [FNHA](#) services)
- Diverse urban, suburban, rural and remote communities, diverse cultural backgrounds balance of genders and sexual orientation
- Seniors along the health care continuum from completely independent and active to those requiring care
- Seniors unable to speak for themselves, who communicate through a proxy (family caregiver, spouse or child)

Selection

- 65 years of age or greater, except if they are a caregiver representing a senior
- Able to regularly access a computer
- Computer literate in email, internet use, basic writing and editing skills in [Office](#) programs
- Ability to travel, at least twice a year to a meeting in the lower mainland. If there was an exceptional case, this requirement could be waived in favour of teleconference access
- Not employed by, or having a financial interest in, any company or service provider with a focus on seniors

Individual Adviser Responsibilities

- Work collaboratively to provide guidance to the Seniors Advocate and are able to voice the diversity of wants and needs among seniors
- Read materials and make best efforts to attend at least three of the four meetings per year
- Advise the Seniors Advocate if they are experiencing challenges in the discharge of their duties
- Comply with government policies regarding transportation and travel claims.

Council Responsibilities

- Determine a committee structure
- Review, discuss, edit, and provide input into a variety of documents and ideas, which may include:
 - proposals
 - researched material
 - plans
 - reports
 - recommendations
 - communication material (web content, print material, emails, surveys, media releases or graphic designs)

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- Act as a focus group on specific issues
- Seek improvements at the root cause level, rather than surface-level change
- Articulate concerns, issues and opinions as a senior
- Provide advice to the Office of the Seniors Advocate as a senior

Confidentiality

To provide the Seniors Advocate with advice and guidance, advisers may receive information that is not yet available to the public. and advisers will be expected to maintain confidentiality. Advisers will be required to sign a [Non-Disclosure Agreement](#). Under certain circumstances they will be reviewing and discussing information of a particularly sensitive issue.

Notwithstanding specific issues and matters of personal confidentiality, the work of the council will be a matter of public record and members of the council will be publically acknowledged.

Staff Support to the Council

The Office of the Seniors Advocate will provide staff support to the council for administrative functions such as maintaining lists, booking meetings, or arranging travel if required.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate will assist with facilitation of the committee and meetings.

Remuneration

This is a voluntary position; however all out of pocket expense will be covered including travel costs to meetings. A schedule of eligible expenses will be provided.

Term of Office

The maximum term on the council will be three years. Initially, Advisers will indicate their choice for length of their term. If necessary, term length may be determined by lottery at the first meeting (in-person) to one-, two- or three-year terms to assure orderly turnover. Subsequent appointments will be for three years. Council members who wish to reapply for membership will be required to be off the council for one year.

Time Commitment

It is expected that the council will meet with the Seniors Advocate up to four times per year. Two of these meetings are anticipated to be day long meetings at a central location, likely in the lower mainland, and two are expected to be half-day teleconference meetings. Between meetings there may be email communications and requests to read materials and offer feedback and/or opinions. On average the time commitment is expected to be 10 hours per month.

Selection Process

- Initially, communication about the recruitment will be sent by email to interested parties, announced in local newspapers and circulated to all [MLA offices](#). Application documents will be available via the Seniors Advocate [website](#), email or regular mail.
- Responses will be submitted to the Office of the Seniors Advocate who will prepare materials for the selection committee.

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- Application and selection criteria are developed in collaboration with Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. ([COSCO](#)). COSCO will serve as the selection committee using the criteria set forth by the Office of the Seniors Advocate which will provide administrative support to the committee. Depending upon the number of applications received, the Office of the Seniors Advocate may short-list before requiring COSCO to make the selections. The short-listing would attempt to ensure a form of weighted representation of applicants from each health authority area.
- While representation from all health authorities is required, the selection committee has the discretion to weight that representation based on the population distribution in the province. For example, the selection committee may choose an equal number from each of the five health authorities or they may choose a few more from a more populated health authority than a less populated health authority. It is not expected that the full composition of seniors is replicated for each health authority but rather it is achieved within the overall membership of the council.

Ongoing:

As vacancies occur, the council will define what skills and attributes they are seeking, and based on that, the recruitment process will begin again. COSCO will be asked to continue to serve as the selection board. If it is deemed that representation is being sought from a specific geographic area then recruitment efforts such as newspaper advertising or in MLA offices may be contained to that area.