

The Council of Advisors provides 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 comprised of 25-30 seniors, who collectively bring representation from:

- All five Health Authority areas
- Diverse urban, suburban, rural and remote communities, diverse cultural backgrounds and balance of genders and sexual orientation
- Seniors along the health care continuum from those 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 Microsoft Office programs
- Ability to travel at least twice a year to council meeting in the lower mainland. Participate in teleconferences when applicable
- Not employed by, or having a financial interest in, any company or service provider with a focus on seniors

### Council Responsibilities

- Review, discuss, edit, and provide input on a variety of documents and initiatives, which may include:
  - OSA reports
  - Federal and Provincial submissions
  - communication material (web content and design, surveys)
- Act as a focus group on specific issues
- Articulate concerns, issues and opinions and provide advice to the Seniors Advocate
- Collect feedback from seniors in respective communities regarding issues of concern

### Confidentiality

To provide the Seniors Advocate with advice and guidance, advisors may receive information that is not yet available to the public and advisors are expected to maintain confidentiality. Advisors are required to sign a *Non-Disclosure Agreement*. Under certain circumstances they will be reviewing and discussing information of a particularly sensitive issue.

## **Staff Support to the Council**

The Office of the Seniors Advocate has an engagement director who supports all aspects of the Council.

## **Remuneration**

This is a voluntary position; however, all out of pocket expenses are covered including travel costs to meetings.

## **Term of Office**

Appointments are for three years.

## **Time Commitment**

It is expected that the Council will meet with the Seniors Advocate two times per year; once in the spring and once in the fall. These are day-long meetings at a central location, usually in the lower mainland. Advisors can also expect 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 are available via the Seniors Advocate website, email or regular mail.
- Application and selection criteria are developed in collaboration with the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. ([COSCO](#)). COSCO serves as the selection committee using criteria set forth by the Office of the Seniors Advocate, which provides administrative support to the committee. Depending upon the number of applications, 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.