

# The Seniors Advocate Council of Advisors

The Council of Advisors (COA) 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 comprises of 25-30 seniors, who collectively bring representation from:

- All five [Health Authority areas](#); and
- Diverse urban, suburban, rural and remote communities, diverse cultural backgrounds including First Nations, and views from a balance of genders, sexual orientation, and religious beliefs.

## Selection

- 65 years of age or greater (some representation from under 65 may be considered)
- Able to regularly access a computer and be proficient in email and internet use
- Ability to travel at least twice a year to meetings in Metro Vancouver. In an exceptional case, this requirement may 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 in the voice and diversity of perspectives among seniors
- Read materials and make best efforts to attend all meetings
- 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 and graphic design)
- Act as a focus group on specific issues
- Provide advice to the Office of the Seniors Advocate

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## Confidentiality

In providing the Seniors Advocate with advice and guidance, Advisors may receive information that is confidential. Advisors will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Under certain circumstances, they may 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 publicly acknowledged.

## Administrative 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 COA 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.

## 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 two-day long meetings at a central location, likely in Metro Vancouver, 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

- Communication about 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.
- 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

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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, recruitment efforts such as newspaper advertising or in MLA offices may be contained to that area.

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