



Vibrant COMMUNITIES

National Funders Network Terms of Reference

Vibrant Communities

Members

Calgary
Cape Breton
Edmonton
Halifax
Montreal
Niagara Region
Saint John
Saskatoon
Surrey
Toronto
Trois-Rivières
Victoria
Waterloo Region
Winnipeg

Honorary Chair

Senator Landon Pearson

Steering Committee

Tim Brodhead
Katharine Pearson
The J.W. McConnell Family
Foundation

Sherri Torjman
Eric Leviten-Reid
The Caledon Institute of Social
Policy

Paul Born
Mark Cabaj
Tamarack – An Institute for
Community Engagement

Why a Funders Network?

A Funders Network allows funders and contributors to come together to learn how to fund programs that are locally controlled and that have national impact. The Network also allows Vibrant Communities funders and contributors to learn with and from each other's best practices in order to grow the impact of poverty reduction work in local communities and in Canada.

Vibrant Communities is a dynamic process that brings together community leaders from people living in poverty, business, government and the voluntary sector in communities to collectively create a vision and deliver the actions necessary to significantly reduce poverty. Vibrant Communities has formed a pan-Canadian learning community to help communities to share best practices and brainstorm new solutions for poverty reduction. In addition, a policy forum has been established by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy to help develop specific policies that will help to promote community-based poverty reduction in Canada. Members of the Funders Network can participate in both the Pan-Canadian Learning Community and the policy forum. The funders network will also provide an opportunity to talk specifically about funding related issues.

Founding Chair

Tim Brodhead, CEO of the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the past chair of Philanthropic Foundations Canada has consented to chair the network. Tim and the McConnell Foundation have provided significant leadership in the founding of Vibrant Communities in Canada.

Members

The Vibrant Communities Funders Network is open to all national and local funders and contributors of Vibrant Communities. This includes those who support the overall work of Vibrant Communities and those who partner with and provide supports to the Vibrant Communities work in a partner community.

Funders and contributors who are interested in Vibrant Communities or a specific learning forum of the network but have not made a contribution can attend functions as guests rather than members.

Benefits of Membership

Funders will experience the following benefits as members of the Network:

- Involvement in a national network of funders interested in community building, citizen engagement and poverty reduction.
- Access to a place where new ideas can be exchanged.
- An opportunity to learn together about best practices in forming new, high-impact relationships between funders and community groups.
- An opportunity for local and national funders to talk with each other, learn together and form new funding partnerships.
- Extensive opportunity for professional development around community building and poverty reduction as a result of the link to the policy forum and the Pan – Canadian Learning Community.
- Increased learning and financial resources are a possible outcome for Vibrant Communities partners by working together.
- New and improved relationships between local leaders and funders.

Points of Discussion

- How to engage members and guests to think strategically about improving the economic and social fabric of low-income urban and rural communities.
- Positive engagement between funders and non-profit organizations must be built on respect. The inequality of power and resources between funders and community-based organizations often makes it difficult to create respectful relationships in which grant makers are able to learn from those they fund. The Network will discuss how to support efforts to establish respectful working relationships across issues and constituencies with both community organizations and funders.
- The Network will learn together to understand the characteristics of those living in the communities we serve and how we can recognize and illuminate their authentic voices.
- Rethinking the traditional roles of funders and to help community leaders to respond to funders needs.
- Learning how funders can best contribute to reducing poverty in Canada.

Meetings

The funders network will meet three times per year. The first three of these meetings will be tele-learning forums to receive updates and to discuss ideas (see points of discussion above).

