

Community Benefits Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose and Mandate

The purpose of the Community Benefits Advisory Group is to bring together the knowledge and experiences of strategic partners to collaboratively problem solve key issues and challenges related to the implementation of the City of Toronto's Community Benefits Framework. The Community Benefits Framework will only achieve the necessary systems changes with the collaboration of a diverse range of strategic partners.

The mandate of the Community Benefits Advisory Group is to provide advice to the City of Toronto's Social Development, Finance and Administration division with respect to the City's Community Benefits Framework.

Background on Community Benefits Framework

The development and implementation of the City's Community Benefits Framework is led by the Community Benefits Unit in the City's Social Development, Finance and Administration division (SDFA).

Adopted by Toronto City Council in 2019, the [Community Benefits Framework](#) aims to maximize the use of City of Toronto levers (such as procurement, real estate transactions, and financial incentives for specific sectors and uses) to create inclusive social and economic development opportunities. The Community Benefits Framework is intended to provide guidance, support and coordination across different City Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations to develop and implement community benefits in their respective programs.

As of 2021, the Community Benefits Framework has four established and active community benefits initiatives: Social Procurement Policy and Program, Rexdale - Casino Woodbine Community Benefits Agreement, Housing Now Initiative, and Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology (IMIT) Program.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the Community Benefits Advisory Group are:

- Social and economic inclusion should be achieved for Black, Indigenous and equity-seeking communities by using City levers to create community benefits opportunities.
- Engagement with strategic partners is vital in addressing the implementation issues and challenges related to the Community Benefits Framework.

- A systems approach to collaboration and joint problem solving is required amongst a diverse range of inter-related and interdependent strategic partners, in order to identify and test innovative and feasible solutions.

Priority Areas

The Community Benefits Advisory Group will provide advice on the key challenges for community benefits implementation identified in the Advancing the Community Benefits Framework report (2021)¹. The priority areas will include: outreach and recruitment; community benefits hiring in coordination with skilled trade union dispatch processes; tracking and monitoring compliance; processes for project assessment and target setting; community engagement; and system coordination.

Composition and Term

The Community Benefits Advisory Group is comprised of strategic partners representing colleges, community-labour coalitions, community organizations, contractors, contractor associations, developers, employment service providers, Government of Ontario, grant makers, social enterprises, labour unions, and universities. Representative organizations from the range of stakeholder groups will be invited to participate on the Advisory Group.

- Strategic partners are invited by SDFA staff. The membership of the Community Benefits Advisory Group will be reviewed as required. Strategic partners are invited for a one-year renewable term starting in 2021.
- Strategic partners possess experience and knowledge in different components of the community benefits system and are committed to collaborating with other system actors to advance the Community Benefits Framework.
- Strategic partners who are community-based and volunteer-run organizations may be eligible to receive an honorarium in accordance with the City of Toronto honorarium protocols.

Meetings

The Community Benefits Advisory Group will meet 2-3 times per year, with meetings arranged by SDFA. Smaller Ad Hoc Working Groups meet more frequently, approximately 3-4 times per year.

One representative from each strategic partner organization will attend Community Benefits Advisory Group meetings. Up to two representatives from each strategic partner organization may attend smaller Ad Hoc Working Group meetings, as needed.

Governance and structure

The Community Benefits Framework is led by Social Development, Finance and Administration division (SDFA). Reports related to the Community Benefits Framework will be brought forward by SDFA to City Council, as required.

¹ City of Toronto. (2021) [Advancing the Community Benefits Framework report](#).

- The Community Benefits Advisory Group is chaired by the Director of Social Policy, Analysis and Research in SDFA or by a City staff, designated by the Executive Director of SDFA.
- The Community Benefits Unit in SDFA will provide administrative support and overall coordination of the Community Benefits Advisory Group.
- To achieve transparency, Community Benefits Advisory Group meeting minutes will be made available to the public through the City of Toronto Community Benefits Framework webpage.
- The Terms of Reference may be revised and reviewed by the Chair on an as-needed basis and not more frequently than annually.

Roles and Responsibilities of Strategic Partners

- Strategic partners will demonstrate understanding of the purpose and objectives of the Community Benefits Advisory Group and act in accordance to them.
- Strategic partners will contribute knowledge and experience to help problem solve key issues and challenges related to Community Benefits Framework implementation.
- At all times, strategic partners and City staff will be courteous towards others, be respectful of differing opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Strategic partners will attend Community Benefits Advisory Group meetings. If a strategic partner misses two consecutive meetings without sending regrets or providing a reasonable explanation, the Chair may remove the strategic partner from the Advisory Group.
- Strategic partners who wish to end membership on the Community Benefits Advisory Group must inform the Chair in writing and provide the date on which membership will end.
- Other activities may be identified and brought forward by the Chair to the Community Benefits Advisory Group.