

This document contains the strategic priorities that have been adopted by the Community Living Ontario Board of Directors to guide the work of the Association over the next five (5) years and an outline of the planned areas of action related to each priority. In carrying out this work, we will continue to be guided by our long-standing goal

“That all persons live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community and have the opportunity to participate effectively”

We are further guided by our *Vision*, the *Call to Action* adopted by our members in 2009 and directions given over the years by our members through resolutions adopted at the Annual General Meeting.

The Board of Community Living Ontario has adopted the following statement:

Consistent with its Goal and Vision, Community Living Ontario is committed to ensuring that every person who has an intellectual disability has the support and resources needed to enjoy a life of their choosing within community. We recognize and value the important role that families play in realizing this goal. Through our local Associations and along with other allies and supporters, we stand in solidarity with individuals and families and are committed to providing the support they need to achieve their goals. To this end, Community Living Ontario:

- ◆ *Develops positions on progressive social policy and advocates for social change that addresses issues of poverty, powerlessness and exclusion;*
- ◆ *Stands with and supports our local Associations, families and people who have an intellectual disability in achieving our Goal;*
- ◆ *Provides ways for members of local Associations, their employees, and other allies and supporters to engage and work together in order to enhance our collective voice and share our collective knowledge and best practices.*

The Board has identified three strategic priorities that are described below. Some of the actions identified under these priorities are currently under way such as work on an income support strategy, respecting people’s homes, enhancing supports and services. Within sixty (60) days, the Board will develop and circulate to members a work plan providing details about how it intends to carry out each of the actions identified under these strategic priorities. The work plan will detail timing, expected outcomes and accountability measures for each activity.

September 30, 2011

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Lead a comprehensive advocacy initiative for reducing poverty, powerlessness and exclusion in the lives of people who have an intellectual disability, by pursuing:

- ◆ An equitable income security strategy;
- ◆ Increased resources and supports that facilitate improved healthy living and inclusion, with an immediate focus on addressing the needs of aging families and others who are in crisis or facing crisis;
- ◆ Enhanced employment training and real work opportunities;
- ◆ Increases to inclusive education and training resources to support personal choice, control, well-being and inclusion ;
- ◆ Mechanisms that respect people's homes and stop the picketing of homes during strikes;
- ◆ Policy, programs and other mechanisms that secure freedom from harm and abuse;
- ◆ A legislative framework for supported decision-making that will ensure people with disabilities have the support they need to enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life;
- ◆ Strategies to ensure that information related to the value and potential of people who have an intellectual disability, and the importance of their inclusion as equal citizens, are in the public eye.

Strengthen the Community Living Ontario Federation, by:

- ◆ Implementing a financial stability and sustainability plan;
- ◆ Undertaking a comprehensive review of the definition, role and engagement of members and the membership;
- ◆ Completing an in-depth review of the Association's governance model and processes;
- ◆ Continuing to provide training that deepens the understanding of the Association's values, Goal and Vision and informing members of related training that is being offered by others;
- ◆ Implementing a comprehensive, relevant and accessible communications strategy with members that promotes participation and accountability;

Increase the voice of people who have an intellectual disability by:

- ◆ Structuring Community Living Ontario in a way that will ensure that self-advocates are provided with the necessary support and authority to engage in decision making within the federation;
- ◆ Providing resources and support to self-advocates to assist in building and exercising advocacy skills and sharing these resources with local associations in order to increase self-advocacy across the province;
- ◆ Seek clarity and agreement about the kind of support families need to be engaged in the work of the provincial and local associations and adjust the communication and community development initiatives within the provincial association accordingly.

Following is a brief description of each of the actions under our three Strategic Priorities.

Advocacy Initiatives to Reduce Poverty, Powerlessness and Exclusion

Many people who have an intellectual disability are not able to participate effectively in community because they are too poor to take part in community activities, are not allowed or able to conduct their lives as they wish and face many barriers that keep them excluded from society. The first strategic priority focuses on actions that will work to reduce the poverty, powerlessness and exclusion that many face. Our efforts we will use the recently introduced UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a lever for change.

Income security

We will advocate for policy reform and funding to ensure an adequate disability income support system in Ontario. The strategy will also focus on enhancing other taxation and investment mechanisms that can increase the income security of people with disabilities.

Supports

We will work to ensure that people have the things they need to live 'in community' including a home of their own, adequate transportation, appropriate medical/dental supports, child care supports and so on. We will demand that government address the appalling levels of unmet need in the province and that it respond immediately to those individuals and families who are in crisis or facing crisis. Such advocacy will include a focus on the growing desperation of many aging families and ensure that they have timely and appropriate responses to their needs. The strategy will also work to ensure that local associations receive adequate and stable funding provided through an appropriate policy framework so that they can effectively provide supports and services to people. We will work to ensure that emerging elements of the *Social Inclusion Act* such as Developmental Services Ontario access centres and individualized funding are introduced in ways consistent with our values, Goal and Vision. Consistent with the "Call to Action" adopted by members in 2009, we will work to ensure that no new institutional services are created and that institutional practices that may exist today are eliminated.

Access to Employment

We will advocate for the reform of employment services in Ontario with the aim of ensuring that people have access to effective and appropriately funded employment supports. The strategy will also work to encourage employers throughout the province to hire people with disabilities.

Access to Inclusive Education

We will work to ensure that people have access to an education within regular classes in their neighbourhood school, access to post secondary and continuing education and support with transition through their school experience. We will advocate for reform of education policy and practices and cooperate with advocates throughout the province in ensuring these policies and practices are implemented effectively in all schools.

Stopping Picketing at People's Homes

We will work to ensure reform and implementation of government policy, labour practices, human rights protections or other mechanisms that will respect people's homes and permanently end picketing at homes during labour disputes in the developmental services sector.

Freedom from Harm and Abuse

We will continue efforts to have effective policy and practice introduced that ensure that people with disabilities are at no greater risk of harm and abuse than any other citizen. Consistent with the Call to Action adopted by members in 2009, we will continue our work to eliminate harmful practices in the supports people receive and will stand with people seeking restitution for harm that has been done to them.

Supported Decision Making

We will build on the work that Community Living has done at the international level to have the recognition of legal capacity embedded in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We will continue our advocacy for implementation of supported decision making legislation in Ontario.

Public Awareness

We will work to ensure that there is, within Ontario society, an understanding of the contribution that people who have an intellectual disability can make to the community, and we will work to reduce the incidence of derogatory and labeling terms and perspectives, such as the "R" word. Our efforts will highlight and draw on for examples our community engagement initiatives such as Rotary at Work and the Community Inclusion Project.

Strengthening the Community Living Ontario Federation

Despite challenges in recent years, Community Living Ontario has continued to respond to and be effective in social policy development, advocacy and other areas. For Community Living Ontario to be able to both sustain and

increase its effectiveness and deliverables on behalf of people who have an intellectual disability, their families and local associations, it needs to address a number of key organizational challenges.

Financial Stability

We will continue to build on concrete steps that have been taken to control our financial tracking and accountability processes and to stabilize expenditures and income from key sources of revenue, especially Recycling Matters. We will work in conjunction with local associations to develop new revenue sources and implement a financial stability and sustainability strategy designed to ensure the ongoing financial strength and capacity of the organization.

Membership

We will undertake a comprehensive review and the possible reconfiguration of the membership model for the Association. We will seek to clarify any confusion that may exist with respect to who is a member and ensure that our approach to membership will contribute to a vibrant association. And we will work to ensure that youth and others who share our vision and values are welcomed and engaged as members.

Governance Model

We will reassess the governance model for Community Living Ontario. We will work to ensure that our governance mechanisms allow for effective representation and engagement of members and take full advantage of emerging communication technologies.

Training on our Values and Vision

In partnership with our local associations, we will continue to develop content and tools that will broaden the understanding of our values and vision throughout our federation. We will work to ensure that the fundamental values and perspectives of the Community Living Movement are maintained and strengthened over time. We will work in partnership with local associations to sustain and enhance our cohesion, focus, and passion for our shared Goal and Vision;

Communications

We will undertake a broad-based and in-depth analysis and redevelopment of our communications strategies and introduce an approach that is comprehensive, relevant and accessible and that promotes participation and accountability with members. We will work to effectively integrate emerging social media tools into our communications strategies and to ensure that we are effectively communicating with all of our various stakeholders in a manner that is accessible to them.

Increasing the voice of people who have an intellectual disability

Understanding the important role that people who have an intellectual disability can play in advocating for social change, Community Living Ontario is committed to ensuring that people who have an intellectual disability speak for themselves. This strategic priority will focus on actions that reform Community Living Ontario in ways that ensure that self-advocates have a presence and authority in all aspects of the Association's work and play an effective role in decision making. Strategies will also work to ensure that people who have an intellectual disability have an effective voice in all areas of community life. Recognizing the important role that family's play in supporting the voice of people who have an intellectual disability, this priority includes strategies for building the voice of family members.

Self-Advocacy within Community Living Ontario

We will work to restructure Community Living Ontario's governance and advocacy processes to ensure that people who have an intellectual disability are provided support and authority to participate in all activities that the Association undertakes and to play an effective role in decision making;

Self-Advocacy in the Community

We will work to increase support and training for self-advocacy to ensure that people have the tools, strategies and experience they need to be effective advocates for themselves and others in all areas of society. Strategies and tools that we develop will be shared with local associations and others in order to ensure effective self-advocacy in all parts of the province. In addition to internal self-advocacy efforts, we will continue to partner with People First;

Family Capacity Building

Working with local associations, we will seek advice from families regarding what is needed to better support families and to engage them in our Associations at the provincial and local levels and will adjust our current communications and community development initiatives accordingly.