



Community Council Roles & Responsibilities Handbook

Introduction:

This handbook was developed to give newly elected Presidents, Chairs, Secretary-Treasurers, Senators, Women's Reps, Youth Reps and Councillors an overview of their positions and duties.

This handbook includes Tips for each position, skills and knowledge required to be effective in the position and sources of advice and assistance.

Role of a Community Council Executive:

The Community Council executive (President, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Senator) is responsible for the leadership and administration of the Council. The "job" of all Community Councils leaders is to advance the interests of the Community Council citizens. The best-run councils are those that successfully advance the interests of their citizenship within a culture of problem-solving.

Councils represent their citizens at the local level by working with the MNO to negotiate agreements, provide services, programs, and lobbying governments to improve laws that affect citizenship. Councils also represent their citizens by ensuring that governments do not violate their constitutional rights or laws (health, harvesting, and human rights, etc.) that affect the citizens.

Councils are organizations where the citizens work together to solve problems. The Executive's job is to coordinate these activities and ensure that the citizens have adequate information, advice, and funds to deal effectively with community problems and concerns.

The Community Council finds its terms of reference and mandate in the MNO Community Charter Agreements, the MNO Community Electoral Code Part B, the Community Council by-laws or Community Code (established by the Community Council), the MNO By-laws, and the Statement of Prime Purpose. All documents are available on the MNO's website.



President

Role of the President

The President is the Council's leader and spokesperson. The President is responsible for identifying problems affecting the citizens and proposing strategies for dealing with these problems.

To help the citizenship solve community problems, the President, **with the assistance of the Council**, develops and implements plans to build solidarity and innovation.

To build innovation and solidarity, the President must ensure that the citizenship is informed about the activities of the Community Council, the settlements, programs, services negotiated by other councils and the programs and campaigns of the MNO and other community councils.

The President is responsible for all of the activities undertaken by the Council. To ensure that the President is not doing all of the work, effective Presidents delegate as much work as possible. Presidents should encourage others to get involved, delegate tasks to those most likely to carry them out and see that each job is completed on time.

Thus, a significant role of the President is to motivate the Council and the citizenship.

Duties of the President:

The President shall attend all meetings of the Community Council; maybe one of the signing authorities on contracts, cheques, etc. as authorized and ordered by the Community Council, transact other business as may pertain to the office of President, and which may be necessary for the proper functioning of the Community Council.

General Meetings:

- ◆ Reports on his/her activities
- ◆ Sees that activities accepted by the citizenship have been carried out
- ◆ Promotes attendance at meetings

Executive Meetings:

- ◆ Leads discussions on future plans for council activities
- ◆ Leads discussions on executive recommendations for activities to be taken to the general meetings for ratification
- ◆ Helps prepare the report of executive board activities
- ◆ Sees that all committee and executive board reports are ready for the general meeting



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- ◆ Assigns people to carry out tasks voted on by the citizenship and sets deadlines for their completion

Committees:

- ◆ Sits as an ex-officio member of all committees
- ◆ Serves as spokesperson for the Council

General Administration:

- ◆ Exercises general supervision over the affairs of the Council
- ◆ Enforces the Council's by-laws
- ◆ Allocates work to other members of the Executive, to committees and citizens and sees that the assignments are carried out within the deadlines set by the Executive
- ◆ Sees that the Council carries out MNO policy and campaigns
- ◆ Acts as the Council's spokesperson at press conferences, newspaper interviews, etc.
- ◆ Assists council in recruiting interested citizens for vacant council positions.

At the end of his/her term of office, the President shall turn over to his/her successor all properties and assets, including funds, books and records, computers, phones and any other equipment belonging to the Community Council.



Chair

Role of the Chair:

The Chair is the President's Assistant. Chairs perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President. For example, the Chair chairs all council meetings and usually chairs all committee meetings. In addition, Chairs usually chair executive board meetings so that the President has more opportunities to take part in the meetings.

In addition to these standard duties, many councils have given Chairs responsibility for other essential tasks, for example, citizenship communications, council education, community outreach, equality issues, representing specific groups of citizens, etc.

Duties of the Chair:

The Chair shall perform the President's duties in the absence of that officer and, in case of the resignation or death of the President, shall perform the duties of the President until such vacancy is filled as provided in the Community Council By-laws and Community Electoral Code. The Chair shall also preside when called upon by the President and at times when the President may be temporarily unable to discharge the duties of that office.

Council Meetings:

- ◆ Sets Agenda and Chairs meetings
- ◆ Decides on questions of law and parliamentary procedure subject to appeal by the citizens
- ◆ Casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie
- ◆ Spokesperson in the absence of the President

Executive Meetings:

- ◆ Chairs the meeting

Committees:

- ◆ Act on assigned committees

Council Administration

- ◆ Completes duties delegated by the President
- ◆ Assumes President's duties when the President is absent



Tips for Presidents and Chairs

Chairing Meetings:

- ◆ If you have never chaired meetings before, or if you are uncertain about parliamentary procedure, a publication, "Tips for the Chairperson," is a good resource for those unfamiliar with the rules of order.
- ◆ Along with the Secretary, post or distribute an agenda before the meeting. Ensure that all committees are ready to report. Make sure that reports are short and to the point.
- ◆ Don't get too involved in what is being discussed. It's hard to chair and take part in the discussion at the same time. If you think that essential points are being missed, hand the gavel to the President and "leave the chair" before you speak. Remember, the Chair should not usually have an opinion or weigh in on a particular subject; the Chair simply "chairs" the meeting.

Council Administration:

- ◆ At each executive meeting, go through each item that was voted on during the regular council meeting and make sure that someone is assigned to carry out the motion and that a deadline is agreed to.
- ◆ Ensure that the Executive, citizens, and committee members reflect the diverse groups within the Community Council.

Communication:

- ◆ To lead effectively, the President and Chair must know what is going on in all parts of the community and what is happening with other councils in the province. This means ensuring regular meetings with regional reps and that the Council establishes a positive relationship with the MNO.
- ◆ Information must be passed on to the citizenship regularly at meetings and through notices. Regular communication with the citizenship and an open attitude encouraging citizens' involvement in council activities are the keys to a successful community council.



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Some skills and knowledge required being an effective President or Chair:

- ◆ Community Charter Agreement
- ◆ MNO policy, procedures and structures
- ◆ Council By-laws
- ◆ Labour Laws
- ◆ Parliamentary Procedure and Rules of Order
- ◆ Public Speaking Skills
- ◆ Negotiating Skills
- ◆ Leadership Skills (how to get citizens involved, how to motivate people, etc.)

Sources of advice and assistance:

- ◆ Former Presidents and Chairs
- ◆ Presidents in other councils (meet them at the AGA)
- ◆ Experienced members of your Executive
- ◆ Your MNO Regional Councilor
- ◆ Community Workshops
- ◆ Community Relations Branch Staff

At the end of his/her term of office, the Chair shall turn over to his/her successor all properties and assets, including funds, books and records, computers, phones and any other equipment belonging to the Community Council.



Secretary

Role of the Secretary

The Secretary's job is vital in promoting the Community Council's goals of innovation and solidarity.

The Secretary is responsible for record-keeping and written communications.

It is the Secretary's job to keep the citizens informed about what activities the Community Council is doing. Keeping the citizens informed is the key to building interest and involvement of citizens in council activities.

Keeping and maintaining records of decisions taken by the Community Council and information such as letters to and from the Council and with other organizations are vital to the smooth and efficient running of the Community Council.

Duties of the Secretary:

The Secretary shall keep a correct, complete, and impartial record of each Community Council meeting and all the Executive meetings. Each record of proceedings shall include a copy of the financial report presented by the Treasurer. In addition, the Secretary shall perform such other duties as the Community Council or by-laws may direct.

Record Keeping:

- ◆ Takes minutes at all Council and Community meetings
- ◆ Maintains the Council's files

Internal Communication:

- ◆ Prepares meeting notices & agendas for Executive, regular & community meetings
- ◆ Circulates minutes of Executive & regular council meetings
- ◆ Receives, logs & distributes all incoming mail
- ◆ Develops & distributes a list of all correspondence received
- ◆ Reports on all important correspondence & leads the discussion on business arising from correspondence at Executive & general meetings
- ◆ Maintains council communication directives
- ◆ Work with MNO Communications Branch on all platforms relating to communication.



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External Communication:

- ◆ Receive all communication from outside the Council
- ◆ Respond to all correspondence
- ◆ Order all office supplies & equipment

Note: Secretaries in community councils don't always perform all of these duties. In some councils, other members of the Executive are responsible for some of the tasks listed above

Tips for Secretaries

Taking Minutes:

- ◆ The purpose of Minutes is to record decisions. There is usually no need to take word for word notes on the debate that leads to a decision
- ◆ It is helpful to note who will be responsible for carrying out each motion passed and when the task will be carried out.

Secretary Reports:

- ◆ To save time, do not read each piece of correspondence but circulate a list of all correspondence and go over only those items that require a decision or those of interest to the citizens (such as details of an important settlement).

Meeting Notices and Agenda:

- ◆ Post Meeting Notices and Agenda on council or MNO website at least a week before the meeting date.

Bulletin Board Pamphlets:

- ◆ Many citizens do not attend council meetings regularly. To keep non-attending citizens informed, you might consider posting one-page summaries of important settlements, court decisions and council activities such as health, consultation committee meetings, etc., on council websites, through a newsletter or other social media platforms.

Letter Writing:

- ◆ Start by listing the reasons you are writing the letter, then list the points you want to make. Next, turn each point into one or two short sentences.



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Filing:

- ◆ Only file things that someone will need to refer to in the future and which will not be readily available somewhere else.
- ◆ Don't change an existing filing system unless people have trouble finding things.
- ◆ If you decide to change the system, consider filing things by subject by year. For example, some councils move the top file drawers down the cabinet at the end of each year and move the bottom drawer to the top after removing all but the most critical files (meeting minutes, important court decisions, settlements, invoices, etc.) are stored elsewhere.

Skills and knowledge required being an effective recording secretary:

- ◆ Knowledge of how councils operate and what makes councils effective
- ◆ Ability to compose letters, bulletins, etc.
- ◆ Ability to take minutes at meetings
- ◆ Ability to organize files
- ◆ Ability to make verbal reports to the citizenship and the Executive

Sources of Advice and Assistance:

- ◆ Former Secretaries
- ◆ Secretaries in other councils (meet them at the AGA)
- ◆ Your MNO Regional Councillor
- ◆ Community Council Development workshops (Secretaries, Communicating, etc.)
- ◆ Community Relations Branch Staff

At the end of his/her term of office, the Secretary shall turn over to his/her successor all properties and assets, including funds, books and records, computers, phones and any other equipment belonging to the Community Council.



Treasurer

Role of Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the Community Council's money. This means that they are responsible for maintaining and reporting on income and spending activities needed to advance the citizens' interests. They are also responsible for seeing that spending priorities reflect the Community Council's goals and that money is spent in accordance with the wishes of the citizenship.

Treasurers must also keep the citizens informed about the financial health of the Community Council and about how their money has been spent, remember it is their money. Unless the citizens have confidence that their money is being spent according to their wishes, interest and support for the Community Council will dwindle.

Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping all financial accounts of the Community Council and shall be responsible for maintaining correct and proper accounts of all its programs and services. Maintenance of the financial accounts of the Community Council shall require that the Treasurer, throughout his/her term, and on behalf of the Community Council Executive, be responsible for maintaining, organizing, safeguarding and keeping on file all supporting documents, authorizations, invoices, and/or vouchers for every disbursement made, as well as records and supporting documents for all income received by the Community Council.

The Treasurer shall regularly make financial reports to meetings of the Council's Executive and each regular Council Meeting and an Annual General Meeting of the community detailing all income and expenditures for the period.

Income and Deposits:

- ◆ Receives and deposits all monies.
- ◆ Write receipts for all cash received.
- ◆ Records all income transactions.

Expenses

- ◆ Makes all money disbursements.
- ◆ Receives a receipt or expense voucher for all disbursements.
- ◆ Ensures that two signing officers sign all cheques, that all cheque stubs are completed, and that cheques are pre-numbered.
- ◆ Records all transactions.



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Financial Records

- ◆ Records all transactions.
- ◆ Presents a monthly written Financial Report to the Council and to each executive meeting.
- ◆ Presents an annual Financial Report to the community Citizens at the AGM.
- ◆ Completes monthly bank reconciliation.
- ◆ Completes a statement of Income & Expenses Form annually.
- ◆ Maintains a receipt book for all cash transactions; record all payments on cheque stubs & keep copies of all vouchers received from Executive and citizens.
- ◆ Keeps a copy of all minutes of Executive and Regular Meetings where financial payments were authorized.
- ◆ Files all expense vouchers, invoices, and receipts.

Tips for Treasurers

Reports:

- ◆ Distribute a copy of the monthly Treasurers Report to the Council.
- ◆ Make a short verbal report on the financial health of the Council, noting significant expenditures and the bank balance at the beginning and the end of the month. Be prepared to answer questions on all expenditures.

Budgets:

- ◆ Treasurers should prepare a yearly budget. The discussion about the budget should center on what the Community Council will need to do to be more effective. These plans for new activities should then be costed along with estimates of the costs of ongoing activities. Finally, the resulting budget should be presented to the citizenship for approval. The budgeting process allows the Executive to assess the work they have been doing to start planning for the future rather than react to events and crises as they happen.

Skills and Knowledge Required to be an Effective Treasurer

- ◆ Community Council By-laws
- ◆ Bookkeeping skills
- ◆ Financial procedures
- ◆ Ability to make verbal and written reports to the citizenship



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Sources of Advice and Assistance

- ◆ Former Treasurers
- ◆ Treasurers in other councils (meet them at the AGA)
- ◆ Experienced citizens of your Executive
- ◆ Your MNO Regional Councillor
- ◆ MNO Finance Branch Staff
- ◆ Community Relations Branch Staff

At the end of his/her term of office, the Treasurer shall turn over to his/her successor all properties and assets, including funds, books and records, computers, phones and any other equipment belonging to the Community Council.





Senator

The Role of Senator

The Senator is the spiritual guide. A Senator passes along knowledge of traditional concepts and beliefs, spirituality, ceremonies and other practices. Conducts traditional spiritual traditions and provides advice and guidance. The following is a proposed role for a council Senator;

- ◆ Open and Close all meetings with a Prayer
- ◆ Provide counsel and personal support to all MNO members
- ◆ Peacemakers
- ◆ Unbiased and respectful
- ◆ Be a positive role model
- ◆ Be kind and honest
- ◆ Provide traditional teachings
- ◆ Maintain confidentiality
- ◆ Respect other cultures and traditions
- ◆ Contribute to the vision of our children and grandchildren
- ◆ Promote unity and nation-building
- ◆ Create a positive relationship with other MNO Senators
- ◆ Encourage people to be kind and respectful to one another
- ◆ Storyteller



Women's Representative (Rep)

Role of the Community Council Women's Representative (Rep)

The Women's Rep on Council is a role that enables women to play a significant role in the operation and function of the Council.

The women's rep will act as an ambassador for women and ensure that their voice is heard.

They will act as a liaison between the local women and the MNOWC (Metis Nation of Ontario Women's Council) of the Metis Nation of Ontario, providing information and assistance to council operations.

Duties of Women's Rep

- ◆ The Women's Rep will discuss and bring forward all issues pertaining to women.
- ◆ The Women's Rep will provide guidance and direction from a women's perspective. The involvement and participation of women in governing procedures on the local and provincial levels will be her main objective.
- ◆ The Women's Rep will act as a liaison between Provincial and local governing bodies and provides information and instruction to Council as required concerning women's issues.
- ◆ The Women's Rep will also act as and carry out the same duties and responsibilities as a councillor on Council.
- ◆ The women's rep is a voting member on Council.

To learn more about the Metis Nation of Ontario Women's Council please contact your MNOWC Regional Rep or visit their website: www.mnowc.com



Youth Representative (Rep)

Role of the Community Council Youth Representative (Rep)

Community Councils operating under the MNO's Charter Agreement system include a Youth Representative. The MNO is strongly committed to ensuring that Métis youth are meaningfully engaged in the MNO's self-government. This consists of the ongoing ability of MNO citizens who are at least 16 years of age to be recognized according to our Métis traditional ways and self-government, including participation in the MNO's self-government structures at the local, regional, and regional, provincial levels.

The Youth Rep on Council is a role that enables youth to play a significant role in the operation and function of the Council. The Youth Rep will act as an ambassador for youth and ensure that their voice is heard. They will also serve as a liaison between the local youth and the Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council, providing information and assistance to council operations.

A person who is elected to Council while under the age of 18, who the citizens elect to further the interests of young people for a specified term is not a councillor, does not hold any of the rights, powers, duties or liabilities of a councillor, and is not entitled to exercise a binding vote on any matter before the Council or any of its committees. This applies for the duration of the person's term, even if they reach the age of 18 years during the term.

Duties of Youth Rep

- ◆ The Youth Rep will discuss and bring forward all issues pertaining to youth.
- ◆ The Youth Rep will provide guidance and direction for local youth.
- ◆ Organization of and implementation of youth activities will be a priority for the Youth Rep.
- ◆ The Youth Rep will act as a liaison between Provincial and local governing bodies and provide information concerning youth-related activities and issues.



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- ◆ The Youth Rep will ensure that their Council is informed and updated on youth issues as required.

The Youth Rep will also act as and carry out the same duties and responsibilities as a councillor on Council.

Note* In Ontario minors, under 18, are protected to ensure that they are not entering into binding contracts. A contract with a minor (under 18) is not enforceable unless the contract concerns providing the necessities of life for the minor (food, clothing, shelter, etc.). For more information on MNO Youth Rep voting, please refer to **MNO Policy #2016-001: Youth and Post-Secondary Representatives**

Getting Involved:

For more information or to connect with the Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council, please contact one of the Regional Youth Reps or your Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) Youth Representative. For contact information, visit here:

<https://www.metisnation.org/governance/governing-structure/mno-youth/>



Councillor

Councillor

The Councillor is responsible for serving the Council as a voting member and regularly attends all Council meetings. A councillor should be aware and involved in developing policies, procedures, regulations and assist in managing the day-to-day activities for the Council. In addition, the Councillor needs to monitor finances, programs and the overall performance of the Council itself.

Duties:

- ◆ Attend all council meetings
- ◆ Participate in development and operation of Council
- ◆ Keep well informed on council issues and business
- ◆ Show commitment to Council through regular active participation in council events
- ◆ Contribute skills, knowledge and experience to the Council
- ◆ Participate in Council decision making during Council meetings
- ◆ Assume leadership roles in Council activities
- ◆ Educate themselves about the needs of the community

Citizens

A citizen is part of the ship's crew, without which the ship would not be able to sail on its own. The captain and the officers steer the ship in the direction that the crew wants to go. Likewise, citizens are an essential part of the community council! The Council exists to meet the needs of its' citizens.

Citizens are responsible for electing their local leadership. As well, the citizen attends meetings and provides general direction as well as volunteers for committees and fundraising activities. They also do ongoing recruitment, support the council, other citizens, and work towards the spirit of the Métis Nation of Ontario's "Statement of Prime Purpose"



Statement of Prime Purpose

The Statement of Prime Purpose articulates the goals and aspirations of the Métis Nation of Ontario. These values and principles are the fundamental building blocks that set out the core values of the Métis Nation. The MNO operates in accordance with a developing constitution, which includes the Statement of Prime Purpose, the MNO Secretariat by-laws, the MNO Electoral Code, the MNO Community Charter Agreements, and the Métis Nation Rules of Order. The Métis Nation of Ontario supports the development of institutions of self-government for the Métis and advocates their distinct interests.

WHERE WE GOT OUR NAME

Statement by Louis Riel, 1885

The paternal ancestors of the Métis were the former employees of the Hudson Bay and Northwest Fur Companies, and their maternal ancestors were Indian women of various tribes. The French word, "Métis" is derived from the Latin participle mixtus, which means "mixed"; in French "mele"; it expresses well the idea that is sought to be conveyed. However, appropriate the corresponding English expression "Half-breed" might have been for the first generation of the mixture of blood; now that European blood and Indian blood are mixed in every degree, it is no longer general enough. The French word "Métis" expresses the idea of this mixture in the most satisfactory manner possible and thus becomes a proper race name. Why should we care to what degree exactly of mixture we possess European blood and Indian blood? If we feel ever so little gratitude and filial love toward one or the other, do they not constrain us to say:



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"WE ARE MÉTIS!"

WE, THE MÉTIS, ARE A PEOPLE OF THE LANDS

We call these lands the Métis Homelands. These homelands stretch from the lakes and rivers of Ontario across the wide prairies, traversing the mountains into British Columbia and into the North West Territories. They include the hills and valleys of Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. These are our lands. They are Métis lands. They are the lands of our past, which nurture us today, and which we value as the precious foundation of our future.

As Métis who live in the homelands, we hold it to be a fundamental truth that we are one of the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas. As Métis people, we joined together long ago to form a new nation, a distinct nation, which Louis Riel called the "Métis Nation." The Métis Nation continues today to be the embodiment of our past, our present, and our hopes and aspirations for the future. We are a Nation born of independence and self-sufficiency whose teachings are founded on the values of honesty and truth. We are proud of our rich heritage. The values and traditions of our ancestors inspire us. The strength of our society is based on democracy, freedom, fairness, equality, consensus, generosity, justice, and the customary and written laws of our people. Above all, we cherish harmony and peace. As aboriginal people, we hold sacred the rights of the individual and of the collective. We have respect for each other, for the land and for the animal and plant life that surrounds us. We are people who honor and respect the family, our Elders who hold the key to the past and our children, who are our future. Guided by our spiritual values, we aspire to attain our highest potential.



WE DECLARE AS FOLLOWS

We, the Métis Nation, are a distinct Nation among the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. As such, our Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

We, the Métis Nation, have the inherent right to self-determination and self-government. We, the Métis who live within the Métis Homelands of Ontario, desiring to bind our people together to collectively promote our common cultural, social, political, and economic well-being, have founded the Métis Nation of Ontario, to be our representative body with the following aims and objectives:

- ✿ To research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis, and to publish and maintain a registry of the Métis citizens of Ontario;
- ✿ To establish democratic institutions based on the Métis inherent right to self-government;
- ✿ To encourage the full participation of all Métis in the Métis Nation;
- ✿ To promote and foster community development;
- ✿ To re-establish land and resource bases;
- ✿ To develop prosperity and economic self-sufficiency within the Métis Nation;
- ✿ To provide the care and support necessary to meet the fundamental needs of the citizens of the Métis Nation;



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- ✿ To promote the improved health and wellness of the individual, the family and the whole Métis Community.
- ✿ To establish effective means of communication for the Métis Nation;
- ✿ To encourage academic skills development and to enable citizens of the Métis Nation to attain their educational aspirations;
- ✿ To promote the history, values, culture, languages and traditions of the Métis Nation and to create awareness of our proud heritage;
- ✿ To promote Métis artistic and cultural achievement;
- ✿ To ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty rights and freedoms and in so doing, act in cooperation with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups;
- ✿ To establish good relations with all Aboriginal peoples for the pursuit of our common interests and goals;
- ✿ To continue our affiliation with the Métis National Council of Canada for the representation of the interests of the Métis Nation of Ontario at the National and International levels;
- ✿ To gain recognition and respect for the Métis as a nation and a people.