

Terms of Reference

Alberta Nonprofit Network Network Stewards

Overarching ABNN Purpose Statement

An Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN) seeks to advance the cohesive, pro-active and responsive nonprofit sector in Alberta. ABNN sees an opportunity to:

- Engage one another in defining and responding to systemic issues that impact the nonprofit sector in Alberta
- Enable opportunities for collective action in response to strategic issues
- Leverage learning and resources

Role of Network Stewards

The Network Stewards guides the development of ABNN to achieve its purpose.

Members of Network Stewards

The Network Stewards are currently made up of individuals representing their nonprofit organization, or individuals connected with the nonprofit sector. Those participating include 'founding members' of the Network Stewards (formerly: "Exploration Committee") per the original ABNN grant. Additional members self-selected to join based on a request for broader participation.

Guiding Principles

The Network Stewards are guided by the following principles, on behalf of their organizations (if applicable):

- **Inclusive engagement:**

I actively engage individuals and organizations to support their capacity to contribute to and benefit from ABNN. These individuals and organizations are intentionally engaged to represent diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices within the nonprofit/voluntary sector.

- **Continuous communication:**

I am committed to building and maintaining open, honest lines of communication within the Network Stewards and across ABNN.

- **Transparency:**

I engage in frank, open conversation with my Network Steward colleagues, across ABNN, and with external stakeholders.

- **Integrity:**

I think and act in a way that honestly reflects my full understanding of what needs to be done to move ABNN's purpose forward.

- **Relevancy and authenticity:**

I seek to respond to issues which are relevant to the sector through authentic engagement and open communication.

- **Encouraging reciprocity, solidarity and shared interests:**

When opportunities for collective action have been identified and agreed on by the Network Stewards through the Strategic Issue Identification Process (see *Decision Tree and Strategic Issue Action Form*), I privilege and advance ABNN's purpose over my individual interests. I work to advance ABNN's work in my own context, when purposes align. I demonstrate mutual respect for everyone's time and contributions, and I follow through with commitments.

- **Adaptive learning:**

I support ABNN's capacity to understand and respond to the most significant changes in ABNN's context.

When the Network Stewards experiences instances where these Guiding Principles are not being upheld, the Network Stewards are committed to using these same principles to guide inter-personal and inter-organizational interactions to find constructive paths forward which honour the spirit of ABNN's vision and purpose.

Network Stewards

- The Network Stewards will include individuals who are interested in guiding the strategic direction of ABNN and agree to adhere to ABNN's guiding principles.
- Network Stewards will be required to receive an orientation or onboarding session prior to participation.
- Network Stewards commit to participating in Network Steward meetings and to fulfill the role of an NS member, which includes supporting ABNN through:
 - Steering Committee Integration
 - Engagement
 - Strategic foresight
 - Developing reach and connectivity
 - Evaluation
 - Network leadership and weaving
 - Fund development
 - Championing the sector
 - Process management
- Network Stewards are authorized to make decisions on behalf of their organizations.
- Network Stewards commit to identifying and mobilizing their resources and capacities to support ABNN, to the best of their capacity.

Responsibilities and Allocating Capacity

Network Stewards work to engage with the sector to identify and address nonprofit/voluntary sector-wide strategic opportunities or challenges.

Network Stewards may identify additional strategic priorities through emerging opportunities or challenges that can benefit from a collaborative response. These responses may be advanced through Steering Committees or Task Teams (see Governance Overview in Appendix).



These Steering Committees may:

- Contribute to or leverage the sector's existing understanding of the issue
- Identify strategic priorities that are best addressed through a collaborative strategy
- Identify key stakeholders to contribute to this collaborative strategy
- Develop and execute an action plan based on this broader strategy
- Communicate the strategy and its outcomes to the broader network

Contributions

Network Stewards are expected to contribute to the quality functioning of ABNN.

Contributions are determined according to the discretion of the participating individual/organization; however, there is an expectation that, at minimum, Network Stewards are leveraging their time, expertise, and networks through their work with ABNN. A critical contribution of a Network Stewards is participation on bi-weekly group meetings (by phone); and in-person meetings (quarterly).

Contributions are expected to align with the existing strengths, capacities and resources of that individual/organization.

Network Stewards use ABNN as a lens for assessing progress, making contributions, and seeing opportunities for collaboration (e.g. sharing some organizational outcomes with ABNN outcomes and seeing opportunities to leverage ABNN's work or organizational goals and vice versa).

Additional contributions may include:

- Staff time and expertise
- Financial resources
- Technological support
- Sharing space or material

Communications & Engagement

- Each Network Steward is responsible for developing and maintaining healthy communication channels and relationships with their networks in line with ABNN's Guiding Principles.
- Network Stewards are responsible for maintaining communication channels within and between:
 - The Network Stewards
 - Steering Committees
 - Personal and professional networks within the nonprofit/voluntary sector
 - The broad nonprofit/voluntary sector
 - Key stakeholders outside of the sector (this includes government, funders, general public etc.)

Reporting and Accountability



Network Stewards commit to act in good faith to achieve agreed upon mutually beneficial outcomes as determined by the Network Stewards, in alignment with the Purpose of ABNN.

ABNN commits to tracking its learning, key decisions and outcomes in order to:

- Understand its own development and communicate it to others
- To support adaptability and flexibility to respond to changing contexts
- Communicate its impact to internal and external stakeholders
- Support accountability to outside stakeholders, including but not limited to, funders and participating organizations' boards and staff

Network Stewards have adopted a consent decision-making approach (see *Scoping Form and Decision Tree*) to support fit for purpose engagement and to maintain momentum. This process includes:

1. Scoping Form is completed by a Network Steward
2. Request for approval/decision goes out to the Network Stewards.
3. A reasonable deadline for approval & feedback is clearly set.
4. Approvals & disapprovals recorded by due date.
5. Any non-responses prior to deadline are recorded approval. (similar to a 'consent' agenda process).

Network Stewards have decision making authority on behalf of their organization.

Remuneration

Dependent upon funding and with full disclosure ABNN will reimburse reasonable travel expenses.

With the following exceptions, no honourarium or compensation payments will be made to contributing members/organizations of the ABNN.

Exceptions include:

- Work assigned and identified within funder agreements, i.e. expense reimbursement
- Contracted work
- Convening, coordination and administration as approved by ABNN

Network Steward Membership:

- Network Steward membership will be a maximum of twelve (12) and a minimum of (7) members comprised of representatives from the nonprofit voluntary sector of Alberta.
- Members are considered based on their willingness and ability to participate fully in the responsibilities outlined in this Terms of Reference.
- New members are considered as openings on the Network Stewards are made available.
- As a position on the Network Stewards becomes vacant, the current Network Stewards will be responsible to determine a process to select a new member.
- The length of term of representatives will be determined by the organization that the individual represents. To allow for continuity, it is recommended the representatives discuss and agree to staggering the members terms. This process must consider organizational continuity and maintenance of ABNN's history, especially in the early stages of ABNN development.
- Members may be requested to exit the ABNN Network Stewards if they are deemed in conflict and/or violation of the Terms of Reference. Network Stewards will review and investigate any

potential conflicts and/or violations, determine if a breach of the Terms of Reference has been made, and determine the appropriate remedies to be taken based on the nature of the particular situation. The preference is always to resolve conflict or potential violations in a fashion in alignment with ABNN's Guiding Principles.

- Those existing Network Stewards must provide sufficient and appropriate notice.

Review and renewal

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually at minimum, or when a new member joins the Network Stewards, whichever occurs first.

APPENDIX



ABNN Governance Processes, Documents, and Structure

Vision

ABNN aspires to enhance the vibrancy and resiliency of our society, contributing to the quality of life and well-being of all Albertans by advancing the cohesive, pro-active, and responsive nonprofit sector in Alberta.

Purpose Statement

An Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN) seeks to advance the cohesive, pro-active and responsive nonprofit sector in Alberta. ABNN sees an opportunity to:

- Engage one another in defining and responding to systemic issues that impact the nonprofit sector in Alberta
- Enable opportunities for collective action in response to strategic issues
- Leverage learning and resources

Guiding Principles

Inclusive engagement; Continuous communication; transparency; integrity; relevancy and authenticity; encouraging reciprocity, solidarity and shared interests; adaptive learning

Theory of Change

If ABNN catalyzes inclusive engagement, collective action, and communication to define and respond to systemic issues that impact the nonprofit sector in Alberta, the sector will have greater success at leveraging resources, responding collectively to strategic issues, and ultimately enhancing the quality of life and well being of all Albertans.

