

CACL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

Background and Rationale

Families are at the heart of the community living movement. For over 60 years families have gathered to support one another, and to develop initiatives, organizations, and networks to advance services, supports and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. Their voices and vision, the values they have forged for inclusion in collaboration with people with intellectual disabilities and advocates are the bedrock on which effective social change can be pursued and achieved.

As the community living vision for inclusion has expanded to encompass virtually every aspect of social, economic, cultural and political life, the leadership challenges for the community living movement are growing. Issues are complex and inter-connected requiring multi-level leadership across an array of sectors. Leadership is needed at all levels – local development for inclusive communities, provincial-territorial leadership with provincial partners and governments, national and international leadership to promote inclusion with federal public and private sector partners, international agencies, and the international disability community.

A main driver for advancing the 10-Year Agenda will be families coming together in their communities to create social networks and partnerships to advance the change process. Capacity is also needed for local networks to link up and partner in broader-scale change with other family networks and stakeholders at regional, provincial/territorial, national and even global scales. However, CACL's structures of leadership are organized primarily through local, PT and national CACL Boards of Directors. For the most part, these structures have not effectively tapped or nourished the scale of local-to-global networking and family leadership now needed to advance our Agenda. A new process of leadership development is needed that seeds local-to-global networks, and provides the information resources, online networking capabilities, and opportunities for families to gather, learn about the values and agenda of community inclusion and organize together to bring about change.

CACL has undertaken a number of consultations in recent years to develop a coherent strategy on family leadership development and grassroots engagement. Findings from those consultations inform this strategy.

Objectives of the Strategy

1. Enable family members in communities across Canada to learn about the values and vision of the community living movement.

2. Develop capacities among family members to acquire capacities for leading progressive social change from local-to-provincial/territorial-to national and global levels.
3. Increase access for family members to information, and opportunities to network and engage with others at local, provincial/territorial, national and global levels.

Key Elements of the Strategy

The strategy has three main elements:

- Workshop on “Orientation to Values and Vision of the Community Living Movement”
- Family Leadership Institute
- CACL Information Resources and Online Connections

1. Orientation to Values and Vision of the Community Living Movement

- 2 ½ day Workshop
- Participants:
 - Family members – 25-30 participants per workshop
- Objectives:
 - Family members will:
 - Develop a clear and consistent understanding of the core values and vision of CACL and the community living movement
 - Discover their own passion and commitment to these values and vision for the future
 - Appreciate how these values and vision can be realized in all aspects of community life
 - Gain access to tools and knowledge to assist in individual and systemic advocacy
 - Become inspired to take action and make change happen
- Covers key topics include:
 - History, values and vision of community living movement
 - Social and human rights model of disability
 - Putting the values and vision into practice - across the lifespan
 - Social change process and the role of families
 - Use of human rights instruments
 - Individual and systemic advocacy
 - Family networking
- Delivery:
 - Via CACL with National facilitator teams (with breadth of local-to-national experience)

2. Family Leadership Institute

- 2 ½ day Workshop
- Participants:
 - Family members who are or wish to be involved in leading social change
- Objectives and Key Topics:

To provide family members who are interested in social change to advance the inclusion agenda with opportunities to:

 - Deepen understanding and implications of core values and vision of the community living movement
 - Confront challenges in putting these values into action
 - Critically apply an inclusion lens to current systems and support arrangements
 - Identify strategic opportunities and methods for advancing social change
 - Develop local-to-global connections with other families
- Delivery:
 - CACL delivers National Family Institute 2x per year
 - PT ACLs can partner with CACL to deliver a Family Leadership Institute for families in their respective province/territory

3. CACL Information Resources and Online Connections

- Publish 'Coming Together' Newsletter 3x per year
- Provide online platform to enable families to connect, network and build online communities
- Family Series Webinars – to cover focused topic areas related to the 10-Year Agenda

Implementing the Strategy

- Informed by National Network of Family Leaders and National Action Committee on Family Leadership and Grassroots Engagement
- Development guided by CACL Senior Leadership – volunteers and staff
- Will require funding support – part of fundraising strategy
- Some support through CII – e.g. publication of Coming Together Newsletter, support of National Network of Family Leaders