

# Elected Official Peer Network – Terms of Reference

## January 2026

### Background

The Elected Official Peer Network (EPN) is facilitated by the Municipal Climate Change Action (MCCAC) and the Community Energy Association (CEA), as part of the Alberta Climate Leaders (ACL) Program. Alberta Climate Leaders is a comprehensive suite of initiatives developed for locally elected officials and staff in Alberta, with the common goal of accelerating the implementation of climate solutions in Albertan communities.

The Community Energy Association accelerates bold action by local governments and Indigenous communities related to climate and energy. CEA grew from a committee established by the Government of BC and the Union of BC Municipalities in the 1990s and was incorporated as a non-profit in 2003. Today, CEA's members and staff live in communities large and small and bring their collective expertise, experiences, commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, and passion to help lower local emissions and build healthy, resilient communities.

The Municipal Climate Change Action Centre was founded in 2009 as a collaborative initiative of Alberta Municipalities, Rural Municipalities of Alberta and the Government of Alberta. The Municipal Climate Change Action Centre delivers funding, technical assistance, and education to help Alberta municipalities and community related organizations advance actions that lower energy costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve climate resilience.

Alberta Climate Leaders project is funded in part by Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, the Trottier Family Foundation, and the Government of Alberta. Additional in-kind financial support from the Community Energy Association.

## Introduction

Formally known as the Alberta Municipal Climate Leadership Council, the Alberta Climate Leaders Elected Officials Peer Network (EPN) exists to strengthen the leadership capacity, confidence, and alignment of elected municipal officials who are advancing climate action in their communities. The network provides a supportive, politically safe, and collaborative space where elected officials can learn from peers, explore governance and decision-making strategies, access contextual education, and engage in dialogue about the opportunities and challenges of climate leadership in Alberta.

The EPN recognizes that elected officials play a critical role in setting municipal direction, enabling climate investment, and championing long-term, community-wide resilience. Through curated learning, peer exchange, and leadership development opportunities, the network equips elected officials with the relationships, skills, and knowledge needed to navigate political complexity, build consensus, and strengthen municipal readiness for climate action. The EPN aims to develop knowledgeable, confident climate leaders who can speed up implementation and improve cooperation between political and administrative leaders in Alberta municipalities.

The core inputs that guide the EPN will include:

- Networking - Development and maintenance of an accessible and compelling forum for a geographically diverse network of elected leaders invested in supporting accelerated local climate action.
- Capacity building and leadership development - Evidence based educational programming and skills development, peer learning, and access to curated tools.
- Climate Policy Updates - Ongoing policy and funding updates to expand shared knowledge of the climate policy landscape, focusing on relevant local, provincial and federal plans, policies, and funding programs.

The EPN meets virtually for two-hour quarterly meetings. Members can expect a balance of practical tools for applying climate action in Alberta, and interpersonal tools around communication, relationship building, and leadership that are necessary to advance the work.

Other programming may emerge based on member feedback and ongoing collaborations with government and non-profit partners providing aligned and/or complimentary services in the climate action sector in Alberta. The Alberta Climate Leaders project also provides the Staff Peer Network (SPN). Program facilitators manage the themes, speakers, and coordination between the two networks.

### *Outcomes:*

- Increased knowledge about specific climate challenges and opportunities in local context
- Increased understanding of high impact climate actions that can be taken in local context
- Increased understanding of the role of locally elected officials in accelerating and leading local climate action (e.g., influence, regulation, responsibility).
- Build professional connections and relationships while providing a supportive and positive climate community.

- Increased ability to explain the business case of climate action in the community and educate the public. The EPN does not engage directly in climate action advocacy. However, connections can be facilitated to existing advocacy services at Alberta Municipalities and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta.

## **Terms of Reference**

This Terms of Reference document has been developed to provide clear direction on the purpose and scope of the EPN, to both help manage expectations and to provide members with vital information about membership expectations.

These Terms of Reference are intended to be a living document and will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and effective in achieving the Network's purpose and objectives.

## ***Membership Guidelines***

### *Eligibility*

To participate in the EPN, a member must be a locally elected official of a designated Municipality within the province of Alberta.

As per Section 1(s) of the Municipal Government Act, a "Municipality" is defined as:

- a. a city, town, village, summer village, municipal district or specialized Municipality;
- b. repealed 1995 c24 s2;
- c. a town under the Parks Towns Act; or
- d. a Municipality formed by a special Act; or, if the context requires, the geographical area within the boundaries of a Municipality described in sub-clauses (i) to (iii).

### *Representation*

More than one elected official from a community may join the EPN at any given time. Individuals interested in joining are advised to discuss the opportunity with their council colleagues and relevant administrative staff, and work with them to decide on the appropriate amount of participation from their community.

EPN focuses on increasing the personal capacity of elected officials for advancing community action and impact on climate change. Municipalities may benefit exponentially if the personal capacity of several elected officials are increased through the EPN.

EPN does not require members to receive municipal council approvals for participation. We do encourage each member to follow the rules or best practices for their councils.

EPN members are not considered official representatives of their municipalities, and opinions expressed by members of EPN are to be considered personal views only and not those of their municipality unless expressly stated otherwise.

### *Network Participation*

Eligible elected officials are asked to submit their applications to the EPN through an open and ongoing online process. All applications are reviewed by the Secretariat, which confirms eligibility prior to approval. Participation is confirmed upon meeting basic eligibility requirements.

The network is structured to support elected leaders throughout their tenure, allowing members to participate as long as they find value in advancing their climate leadership. The EPN welcomes engagement from leaders, learners, and listeners alike.

Participation in the EPN is voluntary and unpaid. Members may use their best judgement to determine their level of involvement. There are several types of participation:

- **Co-Chairs:** Four appointed co-chairs will advise on the Network's direction, help plan sessions, and chair quarterly meetings. Members interested in a co-chair role should contact network facilitators. The estimated annual time commitment is 15 hours.
- **Alberta Municipalities representative**
  - This is a member from the Alberta Municipalities (ABMunis) board or a committee who is responsible for conveying advocacy needs from the EPN to ABMunis.
- **Rural Municipalities of Alberta representative**
  - This is a member from the Rural Alberta Municipalities (RMA) board who is responsible for conveying advocacy needs from the EPN to the RMA.
- **Members** – Network participants.

### *Role and Responsibilities*

#### *Network facilitators*

MCCAC and CEA serve as network facilitators for the EPN. The facilitators will provide strategic direction, administrative and facilitation support, and act as the secretariat. The role of the network facilitator includes:

- Member recruitment, orientation, and management.
- Working with the co-chairs to schedule meetings, set agendas, and confirm speakers.
- Distributing communications about network meetings.
- Distributing Network meeting materials, including presentation slides and relevant resources.
- Distributing evaluation tools (surveys, polls) to support ongoing assessment of the Network.
- Providing support to network members by connecting them with other network contacts.
- Reporting annually to funders and the network.

### *Network Co-Chairs*

The Network has up to 5 co-chairs, who voluntarily commit to the terms and responsibilities of this position. Co-chairs commit to a minimum one-year term, with a preferred term of approximately two years. The exact term of each co-chair is determined on a case-by-case basis. Members may complete several terms as co-chairs. The exact term of each co-chair is determined by the Network Facilitators on a case-by-case basis.

Co-chairs can be any eligible network member. Any interested members should reach out to the network facilitators. The expectation is that co-chairs will fulfill the responsibilities best aligned with their strengths. Co-chair responsibilities include:

- Providing strategic support to ensure that the network aligns with municipal objectives
- Working with the network facilitators to develop an session plan.
- Acting as a liaison between network members and facilitators.
- Attending co-chair planning meetings with the network facilitators to set meeting agenda.
- Support outreach to potential speakers and identify potential meeting topics.
- Chairing quarterly meetings with support from network facilitators.

### *EPN Members*

Members of the EPN are willing participants and are interested in connecting and collaborating with peers across the province to invest time and energy into climate leadership. The EPN members commit to:

- Recognizing that local climate solutions are needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Attending and actively participating in Network activities, including engaging in learning, collaborating, and communicating with other members.
- Openly sharing experiences and knowledge, so others may learn from and replicate actions.
- Contributing to setting priorities for the Network through timely participation in surveys and polls and bringing forward recommendations for guest speakers and topics.
- Championing the Network outside of Network meetings.
- Where appropriate, sharing resources and learnings from the Network with colleagues and administration involved in local climate action.
- Fostering a safe and inclusive environment for exploring challenges and advancing leading edge and collaborative solutions.
- Notifying the network facilitators as soon as practical, if any matter arises which may be deemed to affect the positive progression of the Network.

### *Conduct and Community Guidelines*

The EPN is a respectful environment for mutual learning and information sharing around shared goals of local government action on climate change. EPN meetings will adhere to the following community guidelines:

- Be as present as possible: turn on video for interactive portions, put away phone, set other work aside, close/mute tabs.
- Lead with kindness: challenge ideas, not people.
- Step up and step back: practice active listening and participation, make space for everyone to contribute to the conversation.
- Maintain confidentiality: outside of this space, you may share the message but not the identity of the messenger.
- Maintain trust and respect: We encourage and celebrate participation from everyone in the Network, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. There will be zero tolerance for abuse or discrimination and anyone who incites harm or harassment towards other members (through chat, video, audio or otherwise) will be removed at the discretion of our team.

### *Evaluation*

The impact and success of the EPN will be determined with ongoing evaluation through:

- Direct input from members through surveys and feedback polls at the end of each meeting
- Recording the total number of meeting participants
- Recording the number of meeting participants into categories, as needed (for sample: small, large, urban, rural)
- Annual feedback surveys

Member feedback will be incorporated into the ongoing impact measurement of the EPN and inform the design of new supports and services.

### *Review*

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and effective in achieving the EPN's purpose.

### **Agreement**

All EPN members are asked to review this Terms of Reference document.

By continued participation in the activities of the EPN it is automatically assumed that members agree with the Terms of Reference. Members that do not agree to the Terms of Reference are selecting to opt-out of the Elected Official Peer Network.

Questions and concerns about the Terms of Reference can be discussed with the Secretariat, to help inform the review process.