greater victoria coalition to end homelessness

hope has found a home

Talking With Each Other

Internal Communications Framework

Approved August 9, 2017

The solutions to homelessness are as diverse as the people who experience it, and we all have a role to play in ending it. The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness Society (the Coalition) was formed in 2008 with a mission to end homelessness in the capital region. The Coalition consists of service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, businesses, post-secondary institutions, the faith community, people with a lived experience of homelessness, and members of the general community. This diverse membership is referred to as Coalition Stakeholders.

Our Vision:

A Region Without Homelessness

Our Mission:

1. To ensure appropriate solutions are in place to serve those individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in the capital region.

2. To ensure all people facing homelessness in the capital region have access to safe, affordable, appropriate, long-term housing.

Purpose

The purpose of this framework is to provide guidance for effective communication between coalition member stakeholders.

Outcomes

1. A **strong and unified voice** of coalition member stakeholders, including people experiencing homelessness and those with lived experience (PWLE)

2. A **shared identity** that recognizes the various supportive and complementary roles member stakeholders play

3. A **coordinated and unique voice** in response to public issues of homelessness, affordable housing and support services

4. Stronger **collective voice** in attracting funding

5. **Trusting relationships** among member stakeholders, including PWLE

6. Excellence in communication

Table of Contents

Audience

Our audience is member stakeholder organizations within the coalition, including service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, businesses, post-secondary institutions, the faith community, people with a lived experience of homelessness, and members of the general community. These Stakeholders play different and mutually supportive roles within the Coalition. Generally, these include funding, provision and management of housing, support services, policy, and advocacy.

Spectrum of Engagement[1]

The role and interest of the respective stakeholder organizations informs the extent of engagement within the coalition. We have adapted the IAP2 public participation spectrum as our framework to identify degrees engagement. Our stakeholders may aspire to a place along the spectrum beyond where they currently reside.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Participation goal	To provide balanced and objective information	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner in each aspect of decision-making, including development of alternatives and identification of preferred solutions	To place decision making in hands of stakeholders
Coalition role	Member	Participation through surveys and general meetings	Participation in coalition events	Working Group membership	Steering Committee or Board membership
Example techniques	Fact sheets Web sites Facebook Twitter E-mail	Focus groups Surveys Meetings	Workshops Special events	Meetings Workshops	Meetings

1. This spectrum of engagement is adapted from the Internatonal Association for Public Participation's "Spectrum of Public Participation," which can be accessed on their website at http://iap2canada.ca/page-1020549.

Principles

When talking with each other we will

- use clear and plain language;
- be transparent and share relevant and meaningful data and strategies;
- be inclusive by ensuring that all of our activities are accessible, appropriate, respectful, accommodating of differing levels of ability, and provide safe spaces[2]; and
- be responsive in following up on inquiries and concerns.

Messaging

1. When we talk with each other we will use a shared toolkit and protocol.

2. In our messaging we will consistently

- define homelessness as published by the Canadian Obeservatory on Homelessness[3], which includes those who are unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated, and insecurely housed;
- discuss the role, importance and successes of people experiencing homelessness;
- discuss the role and importance of prevention;
- address the stigma of homelessness;
- recognize the unique barriers and successes in addressing Indigenous homelessness; and
- emphasize collaboration.

   These points are derived from the GVCEH's Messaging Toolkit: 2015 Edition.[4] All Coalition Stakeholders are encouraged to be familiar with and actively use this toolkit which is available on the coalition's website.

3. In our messaging, particularly when engaging and speaking with those experiencing homelessness and people with lived experience (PWLE), we will use our Engagement and Language Protocol, which was developed by the Social Inclusion Advisory Committee. The protocol for social inclusion provides specific guidelines on the following topics:

• Advertising	• Literacy and technology
• Appropriate supports	• Relationship dynamics
• Format	• Safer spaces
• Location	• Time

2. Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, "Engagement and Language Protocol." http://victoriahomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Engagement-and-Language-Protocol-July312017-1.pdf

3. Canadian Obersvatory on Homelessness, "Canadian Definition of Homelessness." http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf?_ga=2.75259610.953174379.1501529331-2032914563.1497985393.

4. Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, "Messaging Toolkit, 2015 Edition." http://victoriahomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/MessagingToolkit2015_FINAL.pdf

4.	We are encouraged to adopt the Coalition's Engagement and Language Protocol guidelines for our own internal communication with each other as a way to fully embrace inclusionary practices.

5.	We will create and use a unique Twitter hashtag in our internal communication that may also be used for external tweets.

6.	All coalition stakeholders identify themselves as part of the coalition (small letter 'c') to end homelessness in Greater Victoria.

Content

In talking with each other we will focus on

- announcing GVCEH sponsored activities;
- sharing announcements of stakeholder activities;
- creating message content useful for front-line staff that can serve to 'rally the troops';
- sharing Facebook posts & shares and tweets about GVCEH and stakeholder success stories featuring people with lived experience, volunteers, and staff;
- topics related to homelessness.

Channels & Platforms

The channels and platform we use to talk with each other serve to strengthen relationships and will aid us in achieving our desired outcomes. Talking with each other face-to-face is viewed as a powerful and essential platform which can be augmented with other channels and platforms. The GVCEH website is critical in serving as a central hub of communication and resources.

Face-to-face

- Board meetings
- Steering Committee
- Work Groups
- Mixed Table Dinners
- Social Inclusion Advisory Committee (SIAC) Lunch
- Combined Program Meetings *(newly proposed)* for front line workers, organization team leads and work group leads as required
- Community Recognition *(newly proposed)* for general public, partner stakeholder organizations staff & volunteers, PWLE
- "State of the Union" *(newly proposed)* for board, team leads, organization heads, and front line workers –include breakfast and keynote speech
- Informal coffee and lunch get-togethers

GVCEH Website

- Coalition and its stakeholders in the news
- Resources
- Agendas and minutes of board, committees, and working groups
- Calendar of events
- Blog

E-mail

- Calendar coordination for events and announcements

Social media

- Facebook
- Twitter

Print resources

- Street Survival Guide
- Partner packages
- Outreach materials such as handbills and posters

Objectives

These are specific actions comprising tools, tactics, and measurable outcomes. Each objective is tied to each level of the engagement spectrum. The term "member"references a GVCEH member stakeholder organization of which there are 41 at the time of this plan's preparation.

1.	**Inform**
	Every member will be informed about member special events, news stories, new research, and success stories weekly using the GVCEH website, Facebook, and Twitter (retweets and original tweets), handbills, and posters.

2.	**Consult**
	Every member has an opportunity to be consulted on policy or planning at least once per quarter via face to face meetings of the GVCEH board, committees, work groups and/or special online surveys, summits and focus groups.

3.	**Involve**
	Every member has an opportunity to be involved on a GVCEH initiative or special event at least once a year throughout its process via a committee or work group, and/or through direct participation in a workshop or an event.

4. Collaborate

At least half of our members collaborate face-to-face in committees and working groups at least once per quarter on a variety of GVCEH initiatives.

5. Empower

A representative selection of members is actively engaged at least monthly in decision making on the GVCEH Board or Steering Committee.

Implementation Plan

Objective	Tactic	Responsibility	Measurement Frequency
Inform	Compile a single page themed message or newsletter to be used for a website blog, Facebook post and tweet.	Coalition staff or contractor to compile and distribute; members contribute content	Monthly
	Community Recognition event	Coalition staff or contractor	Annually
	"State of the Union" breakfast	Coalition staff or contractor	Annually
Consult	Online survey of all members on relevant coalition topics	Coalition staff	Annually
	Committee and work group agendas include space for consultation with members	Working group chairs	Annually
Involve	Issue open invitation for participation to all members at the beginning of every special project or regular planning initiative	Coalition staff	Annually and as needed
Collaborate	Solicit additional committee and work group membership from members	Coalition staff and working group chairs	Annually
	Committees and work group agendas include space for collaboration	Working group chairs	As scheduled
	Combined program meetings	Stakeholder team leads, working groups, or consultant	Monthly
Empower	Solicit additional board and steering committee membership as needed to ensure adequate partner representation	Coalition staff	Annually and as needed
	Board and steering committee agendas include substantive decision making		As scheduled

Linkage Between Outcomes and Objectives

The table below illustrates the linkages between the measurable objectives and desired outcomes. A check (✓) represents an objective contributing to an outcome.

Objectives	Outcomes					
	Unified voice	*Shared identity*	*Coordinated and unique voice*	*Collectively attract funding*	*Trusting relationships*	*Excellence in communication*
Inform	✓	✓			✓	✓
Consult		✓			✓	
Involve		✓			✓	
Collaborate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Empower	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Measureable Outcome Targets

Measureable targets are identified for each of the desired outcomes. These targets represent, in most cases, a higher level composite result that encompasses all of the objectives and their collective impact on achieving outcomes.

Outcomes	Target measurement
Unified voice	• Monthly Coalition communication (newsletter, blog or Facebook post) is read by 100% of members • 50% of members contribute to communication content • Membership increase of 20% annually until all service providers are in the coalition membership tent
Shared identity	• 50% of members are engaged at the collaborative level or above on a quarterly basis • 75% of members acknowledge their affiliation with the Coalition on their website and promotional material
Coordinated and unique voice	• We are recognized by all media outlets and community leaders as the authoritative voice on ending homelessness • No competing or conflicting messages appear in the media from any member
Collectively attract funding	• 100% of funding is secured to meet Community Plan objectives
Trusting relationships	• 75% of members have sufficient social connections within the coalition to agree in our annual survey that they trust a majority of stakeholder members with whom they are regularly in contact
Excellence in communication	• Annual evaluation survey reveals that at least 90% of members believe communications are very good or better

Resources

This plan does not identify financial and staff resources of GVCEH and its member stakeholders that may be necessary to implement the plan. A number of the tactics do not require additional resources because they represent a style of undertaking an ongoing activity, such as item # 2 of Objective 4 Collaborate, 'Committees and work group agendas include space for collaboration.' Other tactics, such as the breakfast to support Objective 1 ' Inform,' will require both financial and human resources.

Monitoring & Feedback

1.   Annual review of the implementation plan to determine how well we are undertaking our tactics.

2.   Annual survey of all coalition stakeholders—stakeholder heads & team leads; coalition board, steering committee and work groups; coalition staff.

greater victoria
coalition to end
homelessness

hope has found a home

victoriahomelessness.ca

1125 Pembroke Street
Victoria, British Columbia
V8T 1J3