

# Advocacy Policy

## **Definition:**

Advocacy is at the heart of our organization and aims to create and support positive social change for people and their environments. Community Links defines advocacy as the act of promoting awareness and understanding of community needs and influencing a shift in people's perceptions. *Use of Social media for Advocacy; All employees, volunteers and Board Members are required to at all times appropriately communicate and/or represent the Society Objectives of Community Links.*

## **Policy:**

Community Links will address advocacy through a consultative process to determine appropriate strategies, actions and solutions. This represents the Board of Directors, employees and volunteers as well as for the people the agency serves.

***Community Links will ensure the Advocacy Policy remains consistent with the Mission, Vision, Mandate, Values and Society Objectives as defined in the Bylaws (see attached).***

## **Procedure:**

Responding to an opportunity for advocacy on a social issue that affects the agency or community, Community Links Board of Directors, employees or volunteers will present the Advocacy Assessment to authorized personnel (as defined below) in a positive way and timely manner. Consideration of the capacity and commitment from the agency and community as a whole will be assessed before action is taken. Community Links will follow lines of communication as outlined by the organizational structure, by funders and other stakeholders where applicable. It is considered essential that Community Links works with all stakeholders to reach a desired goal with regard to advocacy.

All advocacy requests and decisions are made in the following manner;

- Manager or Management team in consultation with the Executive Director or
- The Executive Director in consultation with the Board of Directors.

### **a) Board:**

A Board Member who wishes to present an advocacy request will do so by presenting a completed advocacy assessment to the Board Chair. The Chair will present this request at a Board of Directors meeting when the Executive Director is in attendance. Discussions and consultations will occur and a decision rendered by majority vote at the Board meeting.

The Board of Directors and the Executive Director may designate a Director(s) to speak on behalf of the Board regarding advocacy requests or initiatives. If required and or requested a representative from the Board may also be designated to support the Executive Director through the advocacy process.

Where a Director of the Board advocates publically (including social media) on behalf of an issue, idea, or person and whereas such action has not been approved by the Agency, said Director may be subject to corrective action from the Chair of the Board. Corrective action will be in accordance with the Board's Corrective Policy

The Executive Director will regularly update the Board in regards to all advocacy requests, decision, initiatives and ongoing efforts and progress.

## **b) Employees and Volunteers:**

Employees and volunteers who wish to present an advocacy request are required to present a completed Assessment Form to their Department Manager.

The Manager will present the request to the Executive Director for consideration and consultation and for a decision.

In special circumstances the Management Team and/or the Board of Directors may also be consulted, as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director.

The Executive Director, in consultation with the Department Manager, will determine which staff or volunteers are designated to speak on behalf of the organization. Designates from the Board are determined as above.

Where an employee or volunteer advocates publically (including social media) on behalf of an issue, idea, or person and whereas such action has not been approved by the Agency, said employee or volunteer may be subject to corrective action from the Department Manager, Executive Director or the Chair of the Board. Corrective action will be in accordance with the Corrective Action and Progressive Discipline Policy.

All staff and volunteers will be regularly updated regarding advocacy requests, the status of the requests, initiatives taken and ongoing progress.

## **Appeal Process:**

Appeals will be considered only when new and pertinent information is provided along with a new "Advocacy Assessment Form". Appeals will follow the same procedure as an initial request.

## **Society Objectives**

- 3.1 To administer and maintain a non-profit, non-sectarian, and non-partisan charitable organization for the purpose of providing and promoting services of those in the community.
- 3.2 To foster provisions of comprehensive social services based on need and accessibility to the community. Where appropriate, services will be provided in cooperation with other organizations.
- 3.3 To solicit and receive funds by way of contributions, legacies, and grants or by other lawful means and to receive gifts of property of any description; all for attaining the objectives of the Society and ensuring its sustainability.
- 3.4 To acquire lands and buildings by purchase or otherwise to provide facilities for the Society; and therefore to serve as a centre for gathering and distribution of information and services that promote well-being of individuals, families, and the community.
- 3.5 To develop, enhance, and deliver services to the community which align with and move forward the objectives of the Society.
- 3.6 To ensure that people in the community have equal opportunities for self-sufficiency and access to resources and services.
- 3.7 To grow, maintain, and enhance relationships with organizations where such mutual cooperation is beneficial to the community and the individuals and families within and where the cooperative provision of services enhances the objectives of the Society and the well-being of the community.

**Advocacy Outcomes (see Appendix)**

**Advocacy Assessment (see Appendix)**

**Advocacy Plan (see Appendix)**

**Advocacy Overview (See Appendix)**

**Self-Advocacy Plan (see Appendix)**