

Elected Leadership Training



Agenda:

- Roles/responsibilities of elected leaders
- Code of conduct
- Democratic Decision-making
- Leaders working together with leaders, organizers and members
- Guidelines for representing ACORN
- Working with other organizations
- Growing the membership



What is ACORN Leadership?



Leaders direct and guide a group by being out in front. But equally important is creating space for new leaders to emerge! Shared leadership is functional leadership. While good leaders may be totally committed to building rank-and-file participation and ownership, their primary role is to:

- **help the group grow**
- **resolve conflict**
- **lead by example and**
- **achieve the groups' goals.**

ACORN Organizers. Support members to take the lead, continuously locating new blood to invigorate and democratize the organization.

A Leader can be an Organizer, but an Organizer cannot be a Leader

Elected Board Positions: Chapter Chair

- Chairs neighborhood meetings when needed but often lets other new leaders take a turn
- Helps develop new leaders' skills for chairing and running meeting
- Has co-chair to assist in running meetings
- Works with the Secretary, Co-Chair, and local organizer to develop a monthly chapter agenda.
- Sits on Local City Board and potentially on the Provincial Campaign Committee and National Board
- Acts as a media and public representative for the chapter
- Helps draw up agendas with staff, other leaders and new leaders
- Helps welcome new members of the chapter when needed with calls, visits and communication
- Voting member of the local board

Elected Board Positions: Co- Chair of Local Chapter

- Performs Chair's duties when they are not available
- Helps the Chair run meetings
- Works with the Secretary, Chair and staff to develop monthly chapter agenda
- Acts as a media and public representative for the chapter

Elected Board Positions: Secretary

- Helps run sign in table at meetings
- Helps ensure that the agenda is being followed at meetings
- Developing written minutes for each chapter meeting that are provided to the organizer and membership.
 - Responsible for taking written notes at every meeting
 - Recording votes at meetings (full members vote)
- Working with Chair, Co-Chair and staff to develop agenda for each chapter meeting

ALL LEADERS: Board & Other leaders

- Can chair meetings
- Assists the Chairperson / Co-chair / Secretary in their duties
- Help Fundraise
- Attend Fundraising Committees of the Neighborhood group
- Records the minutes of each meeting when needed
- Assists in correspondence of the Neighborhood group such as newsletters, emails
- Helps phone banking
- If possible, helps with translation of materials when communicating with members
- Help welcome new members to the organization
- And much more!

Block/Building Captains

- Notifies ACORN members on their block/building about meetings and actions
- Flyer block/building before activities
- Assist in phone banking members
- Help welcome new members to the organization

For all positions, members work with the city office or the local organizer coordinating activities.

Code of Conduct:

- ACORN Leaders encourage and support members to participate in the leadership process to the extent of each person's capacities.
- ACORN Leaders look for opportunities to enhance and expand natural leadership capabilities of members.
- ACORN Leaders respect and understand cultural, social and individual diversity.
- ACORN Leaders use respectful and non-labeling language in all leadership-related communications.
- ACORN Leaders take responsibility to maintain their skills and knowledge about leadership issues.



Code of Conduct & Anti- Harassment

ACORN Canada believes that by building power for low and moderate income people we are building an organization that is fighting for respect, rights and dignity for all! As a result, ACORN Canada staff, leaders, and members must take a stance against harassment and discrimination at ACORN meetings, events and online.

Types of harassment & discrimination:

- Sexual harassment
- Racial harassment
- Homophobia
- Transphobia
- Social or economic discrimination

For more information click here:

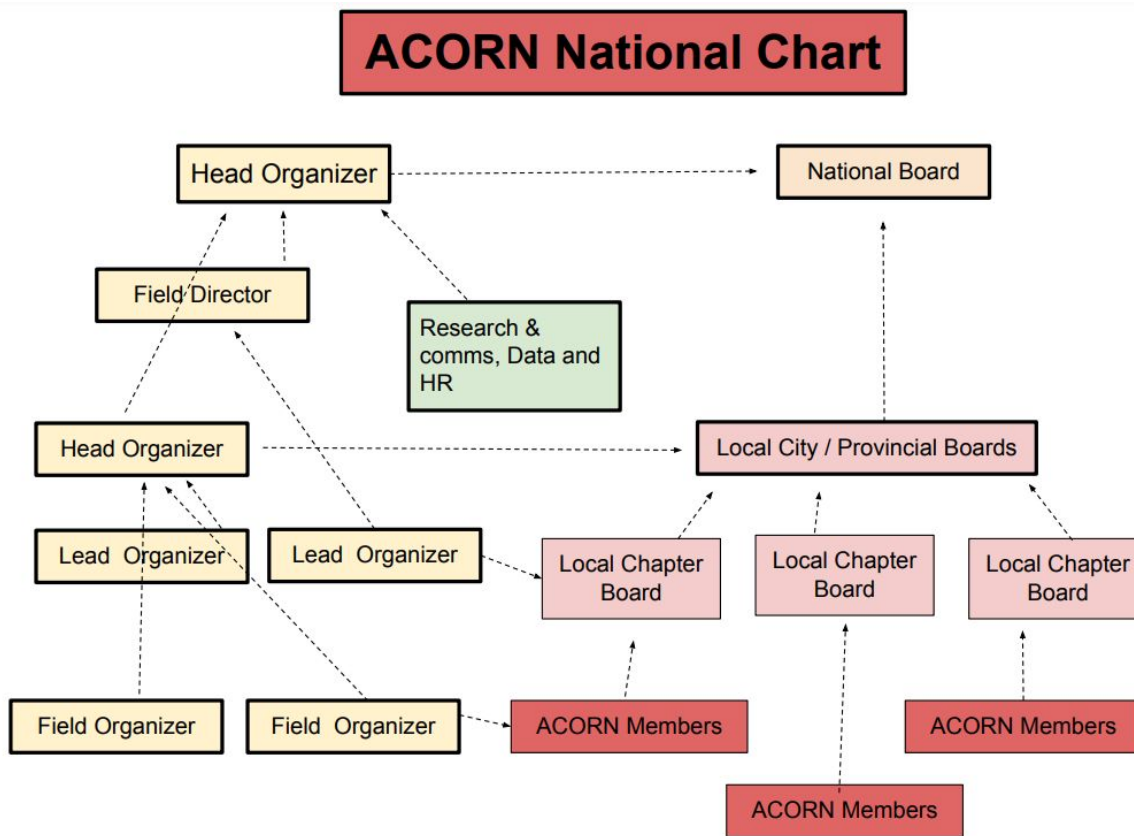
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A5xsTFr6cDEnMKS_crHCOvEQN2LZvXYW7yQUEFZrb18/edit?usp=sharing

The Role of ACORN Leaders on social media:

- If you are asking someone a question, providing advice, or making a counter-argument, we ask that you please carefully consider your choice of words before you post – in particular, sarcasm and other humour can easily be misinterpreted. Do not attack the other person; address the other person's argument.
- If you are an elected ACORN leader you are representing ACORN when you post on Facebook; please remember ACORN's anti-harassment policies.
- Be considerate, no swearing.
- Please do not post links to websites that have a commercial purpose. No spamming or advertising.

ACORN leaders or members who are in violation of ACORN Canada's anti-harassment and social media policies will be asked to stop. In the event of continual misrepresentation of ACORN Canada's commitment to anti-harassment policies, any ACORN leader or member will lose any elected titles and be blocked from ACORN Canada pages.

ACORN's Structure & Decision-Making



Democracy is KEY!

-Important decisions about what issues we fight on, the demands we campaign for and what tactics we use to make change happen should be decided on at meetings with the appropriate elected leadership board

Coordinated Autonomy

-We balance local autonomy with national coordination on campaigns

Examples of Democratic Decision-Making:

- Building Issues - ACORN Tenants Union in the building OR local chapter
- Neighbourhood Issues - local chapter
- Issues with City Hall (ex. Property standards, bylaws, development, transit, city services) - citywide board
- Issues with the Province (ex. ODSP/OW, rent increases, evictions, LTB, min wage) - provincial campaign committee
- Issues with the Feds (ex. Affordable housing, telecoms, banking) - National Board



Guidelines for Leaders Working with Members, Leaders, and Organizers

ACORN leaders and organizers work as a team. A leader represents the interests of the members who elected them and helps create space to develop new leaders. An organizer builds the membership and works hand in hand with leaders to advance the interests of the group.

ACORN's lifeblood is conflict with targets outside of the organization. Conflict is a natural occurrence in terms of people having a tendency to disagree on something. **If the leadership and organizers ensure that members are included in the decisions of the group, serious conflict can be avoided.** An attention to detail to ACORN's structure by leaders and organizers is absolutely necessary for preventing conflict.

Guidelines for Leaders Working with Members, Leaders, and Organizers

To avoid conflict within the group:

- Be respectful and considerate towards other leaders, members and organizers
- Understand each other's roles and capacities (none of us are superheroes, many have other family/work responsibilities)
- Communicate with each other effectively and appropriately
- Coordinate with the local board and organizer if you want to represent ACORN at an outside event or reach out to other groups

If there is disagreement:

- Address it with the leader/organizer directly. Be respectful, compassionate and open to hearing the other person's perspective. Try not to be defensive.
- If there's a disagreement related to a campaign or how to move it forward, discuss it as a group at the appropriate decision-making level. Call a vote if needed. Respect the vote outcome even if it didn't go your way.

Guidelines for Representing ACORN

- Remember when you are speaking as an ACORN representative you are representing the organization, not your individual opinions. This means sticking to what was decided on by members at the last meeting.
- Introduce yourself using your title. Ex. “Co-Chair of Carling-Stoneybrook ACORN” or “ACORN Outreach Captain for Old Oaks Properties.”
- It’s always good to have someone review materials, especially if it has the ACORN logo on it. Your local organizer is happy to help with this.
- Include the office contact information on materials
- CC your local organizer and local board (optional)



Growing the Membership

One of an ACORN Leaders' roles is helping grow the membership. This can look like:

1. Signing up new ACORN members at events, through doorknocking or asking people you know (your organizer can help with training!)
2. Petitioning your building/neighbourhood and starring people who were really interested in getting involved for your organizer to follow up with

Other ideas?

QUESTIONS?