

Policy Name: Framework for Member Groups

Policy Number: 004
Approval Date: August 2026
Next Review: September 2027 (1 year)

PURPOSE

Defines the requirements for groups of individuals to work on behalf of CFLA.

DEFINITIONS

CFLA: Canadian Federation of Library Associations / Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

Community of Interest: group of individuals who communicate on a regular basis to increase cross-sector understanding, develop the knowledge of newcomers, and discuss issues for consideration by the CFLA Board, on a topic approved by the CFLA Board and related to a core policy area, e.g. copyright, Indigenous matters, intellectual freedom challenges.

Expert advisor(s): individual(s) who represent CFLA and Canadian libraries on a national or international group and who CFLA may consult from time-to-time to provide advice related to their area of expertise.

Executive Committee: group of CFLA-FCAB board members responsible for governance oversight, composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Executive Director: CFLA employee or consultant appointed with the title of Executive Director or individual acting in this capacity.

Group: a community of interest, standing committee or task force that has been approved by the CFLA Board.

Task Force: group of up to 10 individuals appointed by the CFLA Board for a limited time to produce a specific deliverable on behalf of CFLA, such as a policy document or event.

PRINCIPLES

All groups and expert advisors who communicate or undertake work on behalf of CFLA or using CFLA in their group or publication name must be approved by the board of directors.

Membership in groups and appointment as an expert advisor is open to members of CFLA member associations and organizations. The Board may approve non-member participation where specialized expertise is required.

Groups must establish terms of reference as specified below for their group type, which must be approved by the Board.

CFLA is committed to a respectful organizational culture where its staff and volunteers have the right to work free from harassment and discrimination. Group members and expert advisors must follow the CFLA Code of conduct. Group members must report violations of the Code of Conduct to the CFLA Board. Violations may result in removal from CFLA groups or as an expert advisor.

Participation in groups or as an expert advisor is voluntary and is not eligible for compensation.

Groups and expert advisors are not permitted to incur expenses for their work on behalf of CFLA. The CFLA Board may agree to incur expenses recommended by a group or expert advisor to achieve a specific outcome, such as an event or product.

Groups and expert advisors may not enter into agreements or partnerships with other organizations, authorize contracts or incur financial or other liability on behalf of CFLA.

Groups may not collaborate with external organizations without permission of the Board. When CFLA agrees to collaborate with other organizations, the participating organizations will document agreement in a Memorandum of Understanding.

External communication, including any policy, press release, statement, toolkit or survey must be approved by the CFLA Executive prior to distribution. The Executive Committee will determine whether CFLA Board approval is required.

Media requests received by groups must be referred to the CFLA Chair and Executive Director. The Board may designate named individuals to speak on behalf of CFLA on specific Board-approved statements or issues.

GUIDELINES

Communities of Interest

The purpose of a community of interest is as a mechanism for current awareness for CFLA and its member organizations. Communities of interest provide understanding of how library policy and operations are changing or have the potential to change in relation to a specific CFLA priority area,

across Canada and across library sectors. Communities of interest provide a network of members who may be consulted to identify the need for CFLA action and for nominees to form task forces.

Initiation: a member association may identify the need for a community of interest and provide the name of a proposed coordinator or champion to support drafting the terms of reference and recruiting members. Proposals should include background on the issue and a draft scope statement, which may be submitted using the template for task forces. The request must be supported by two member associations.

Terms of reference for a community of interest must include a scope statement and identify the coordinator in addition to the requirements below.

- Coordination: Communities of interest must have a coordinator approved by the CFLA Board.
- Membership: eligible individuals may join a community of interest by contacting the coordinator or Executive Director. The size limit for communities of interest will be established within the terms of reference. The Executive Director or a board member is an ex-officio member of all communities of interest. Member emails are visible to CFLA authorized administrators.
- Internal communication: communities of interest communicate by email using CFLA-managed discussion groups and meet virtually using software licensed by CFLA or a member organization, at a frequency determined by the coordinator in consultation with the group, and the Executive Director if CFLA meeting support is required. Translation support is not available for communities of interest.
- External communication: communities of interest do not communicate externally on behalf of CFLA. Groups are encouraged to bring matters of interest for external communication to the Board.
- Reporting: communities of interest provide reports to the board at least annually and on request, providing the number of meetings and number of typical participants, an overview of issues and activity in the Canadian library community related to their policy area.

Task Forces

The purpose of a task force is to bring together subject matter experts for a limited time to produce a specific deliverable on behalf of CFLA, such as a policy document or event.

Initiation: proposals for task forces should be sent to the CFLA Board on behalf of a member association, identifying a named individual who will champion the effort, understand the need, and be a contact to support creating the terms of reference and recruiting members. Proposals should include background on the issue and a draft scope statement. Consultation with the Executive Director or Executive Committee is recommended prior to submitting a proposal to understand CFLA and member organization capacity.

Terms of reference for a task force must include a scope statement and identify the chair, the intended duration of the task force, and any requirements for geographical or member representation.

- Coordination: the CFLA Board appoints the chair of a task force.
- Membership: up to 10 members may be appointed to a task force by the Board. When time permits, a call for nominations for task force members will occur through member associations/organizations, requiring endorsement from the CFLA member association/organization. In urgent situations, the Board may appoint members with relevant expertise following consultation with member association staff and leadership. The Executive Director or a board member is an ex-officio member of all task forces.
- Internal Communication: task forces communicate by email and may request a CFLA-managed email discussion group. Task forces meet virtually using software licensed by CFLA or a member organization, at a frequency determined by the chair in consultation with the group, and the Executive Director if CFLA meeting support is required.
- External Communication: statements, guidelines and communication produced by task forces will be translated according to CFLA translation policy following approval by the Board in their original language.
- Reporting: task forces must provide an initial status report to the board three months after their formation, and following that at least every 6 months until completion of the deliverables or the end of the task force timeline. The specific frequency of reporting must be established in the terms of reference. External communication and deliverables are provided to the board as a report for approval prior to distribution.

Expert Advisors

Expert advisors are individuals who have been appointed by the Board to represent CFLA and Canadian libraries on a national or international committee or group, or to represent CFLA in communication with another organization, such as the federal government. Within the scope of that appointment, the individual is authorized to speak on behalf of CFLA without additional approval by the Executive Committee.

Initiation: requests for appointment to external groups should be directed to the CFLA Board through a board member, the Executive Director, or an existing CFLA appointee on a national or international group.

Terms of reference for appointments to external groups must include a scope statement for the external group as well as the following:

- Coordination: the expert advisor will organize their own participation in the external group.
- Membership: the Board will appoint members with relevant expertise following consultation with member associations and groups.

- Internal communication: a CFLA email address may be provided to an expert advisor upon request. CFLA may consult with expert advisors from time-to-time to provide advice to CFLA related to their area of expertise.
- Reporting: the expert advisor will provide a short annual report to the CFLA Board on the activities of the external group, no later than January 15th for the prior year. External communication and deliverables should be provided to the CFLA board for awareness prior to public distribution by the external group, according to the procedures agreed by the external group.
- Translation: documents requiring communication to CFLA members may be translated upon request if resources are available, in accordance with CFLA policy.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- Proposal for Initiating a Task Force Template
- Terms of Reference Template.
- Report Template
- CFLA-FCAB Bylaw no.1 article 46: Committees of the Board of Directors