

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION CRITERIA

The following criteria apply to community organizations as a whole in Quebec.

These groups must be:

1. NON-PROFIT

A non-profit organization (NPO) is a group of individuals who do not intend to make pecuniary gains to distribute among the members of the group. This legal entity engages in non-profit activities that are altruistic, moral, cultural, social, philanthropic, national, patriotic, religious, charitable, scientific, artistic, professional, athletic, sporting, educational or other in nature.

Concretely:



- You should have a document entitled "**Letters Patent**" bearing the seal of the Government of Quebec - The Inspector General of Financial Institutions.
- This document confirms that you are legally incorporated as an NPO according to the third part of the Companies Act.
- There must be a minimum of 5 people on your Board.

2. COMMUNITY-BASED



If it is not rooted in the community, it is not a "community" organization. There is no standard model of **community rooting** but overall it is about being open and active in the community. It also involves trying to be part of its development and improving its social fabric.

Concretely:

- You are involved in networks and local consultation bodies.
- You know your community and your community knows you.
- You talk about "**our neighborhood**" or "**our community**" to describe your environment.

3. ASSOCIATIVE AND DEMOCRATIC

Participatory culture maintains the organization's **vitality**. It reflects the role of members in the organization.

Democratic life has a character that derives from the respect of legal provisions. It refers to the **power of members** in the development and orientations of the organization.

Concretely:



- Your members take part in committees, general meetings, newsletters, and social activities.
- They can propose activities.
- They vote at the general meeting and may propose and vote modifications to your action plan.
- Board members are duly elected.

4. FREE TO DETERMINE THEIR MISSION, ORIENTATIONS, APPROACHES, AND PRACTICES



The **autonomy** criterion marks the necessary distance between the organization and the public authorities. Standards, legislation, government programs or other types of requirements **should not dictate or guide the practices or approaches** of a community organization.

Concretely:

- You search for alternatives and new ways of solving problems.
- Your sources of funding and your financial partners do not influence the accomplishment of your mission.
- No local or regional actor has the last word on your programming, practices, and approaches.



ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY ACTION (ACA) ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations associated with the independent community action movement must also meet the following criteria:

5. TO BE CREATED THROUGH A COMMUNITY INITIATIVE



In the spirit of autonomous community action, an organization must be born from the desire of a community to rally around an issue and to put forward initiatives to improve the situation.

Concretely:

- Your organization was founded on the voluntary personal involvement of citizens of your community.
- It is not the result of the application of a program, nor a political intervention or the work of professionals representing the public network.

6. TO PURSUE A SOCIAL MISSION THAT PROMOTES SOCIAL CHANGE



The organization's mission is structured around a democratic **empowerment** process by which the community shows its willingness and ability to find adequate answers to some of its needs. The organization's efforts aim not only at solving problems, but also at **preventing** them.

Concretely:

- You help people to develop their capacity to take action.
- You offer training and give information on different topics affecting your members. You fight against prejudices.
- You take part in protests and events aimed at improving the living conditions of your members.

7. TO USE ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP PRACTICES AND BROAD-BASED APPROACHES ROOTED IN A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF THE ISSUES AT STAKE



The will, needs and abilities of the members guide the actions of the organization. Prevention and awareness are at the heart of practices and interventions. These involve a global vision of the factors influencing the situation of a person or a group.

Concretely:

- You mobilize your members around collective issues and encourage them to take initiatives.
- You demonstrate a willingness to act on the economic, social and cultural root causes of the problems experienced by your members.

8. TO BE GOVERNED BY A BOARD THAT IS INDEPENDENT FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR



An organization governed by a board of directors made up of people representing the government network cannot claim to meet the leading principles of the independent community group movement.

Concretely:

- Your Board of Directors does not have reserved seats for funders, elected municipal officials, or representatives of the CISSS or CIUSSS.
- No public authorities, serving in a personal capacity must have an undue influence on the decisions of the organization.

