

Chief and Council

Council's Competencies and Accountability

After much discussion with fellow community members, leadership is selected based on:

- Ambassadorship
- People skills – diplomatic and compassionate
- Negotiation skills
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Planning
- Leadership and motivation
- Financial management
- Understanding of Fiduciary and legal obligations
- Relationship

Key competencies for First Nation leadership have never been identified however based on the progress of some First Nations development has been made to determine the roles and responsibilities required for Chief and Council.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Chief

Consult with membership on a continuing basis to determine their need and seek their direction.

- Regularly report to membership on the activities of Chief and Council.
- Ensure regular Council meeting are held.
- Report to Council on activities that the Chief might be involved in.
- Act as primary spokesperson for Council and the Nation when dealing with the Government of Canada, Provincial Governments and other organizations.
- Acts as ex-officio of committees of Council.
- Be accountable to membership and Council.
- Be the lead negotiator for Council on new initiatives of the Federal and Provincial Governments.
- Provide direction and leadership to Council.
- Accountable to the membership and conduct business in an open and transparent manner.
- Will honour all motions, band council resolutions, policies and procedures passed at duly convened Council Meeting.
- Work closely with senior official of the Administration.
- Acts as a representative at special functions
- Is responsible for assigning responsibilities to Council
- Protects the Treaty rights of the community

Duties and Responsibilities of Councilors'

- Consult with membership on a continuing basis to determine their need and seek their direction.
- Regularly report to membership on the activities of Chief and Council.
- Represent Council on committees, board and other entities as authorized by Council.
- Act as spokesperson as authorized by Council.
- Act as chairperson during Council meetings as authorized by Council or delegated by the Chief.
- Report to Council on his/her activities.
- Will work with Administration in the sound financial management of the Nation.
- Approve the annual budget and work plan of the Nation.
- Accountable to the membership and conduct business in an open and transparent manner.
- Will honour all motions, band council resolutions, policies and procedures passed at duly convened Council Meeting.
- Provide direction to the senior official of the Administration.

Council's Accountability

Council bears the responsibility for public trust and accountability. This is no easy task. It requires attention, not only to avoid calamities but also to achieve greater effectiveness. Ten ways Council can carry out its responsibility for accountability is:

1. By clearly determining the vision, mission and strategies for their mandate.
2. By carefully selecting the Chief Staff Officer. This is one of the most important tasks and requires significant attention.
3. By ensuring effective goal setting, strategic planning, budgets and program monitoring. This requires policy and supportive processes.
4. By ensuring effective feed back and evaluation regarding programs and services. Using performance indicators will allow the Council to hold itself and the CSO and program managers accountable.
5. By regularly reviewing the performance and compensation of the Chief Staff Officer. A formal policy and process should be in place.
6. By overseeing the effective use of the resources of the First Nation. This requires financial and other reporting policy and a professional audit.
7. By serving as a court of last resort for member's complaints. This requires dispute resolution policy and a supportive process.
8. By insisting on the transparency of the organization and having a communication plan to relevant stakeholders.
9. By organizing governance activities to be efficient and effective.
10. By establishing a Council and organizational culture of openness and candour. This requires self-assessment.
11. Issues are discussed, differences expressed and solutions sought.
12. Policy on terms, performance and other accountability factors are also discussed.

First Nation Structure

The structure of a First Nation provides as a guideline on how tasks and plans are completed efficiently and effectively. It clarifies roles, responsibilities, delegation of authority and accountability.



Membership

Community members are responsible for the selection of a Leadership that will create a government that is transparent, accountable and gets the job done. Community members are also responsible for supporting the leadership plans for the community by participating in meetings, boards, and committee.

Chief and Council

Within the legislative framework that sets out the exercise of power by Chief and Council (Indian Act) set in place to ensure that First Nation leadership maintain their power and control over programs and services available and essential to their community. A quorum allows Chief and Council to build consensus and reflect decisions and need of the community. Refer to section 2(3) (a) and (b) of the Indian Act. Chief and Council cannot exercise their powers (make decisions or direction) without a quorum, this power cannot be delegated.

Defining the role of your fundamental players is important to the success of the First Nation. By developing job descriptions you identify the roles, expectations and accountability of your management. Job descriptions explain the responsibilities of the position identified, reporting relationships and work environment. The first step is doing a job analysis which provides an in depth knowledge. This process can be done by your Human Resource personnel or senior management.

For Chief and Council to ensure that its most senior employees are maintaining and developing required competencies (knowledge, skills, attitude) to meet job requirements, and that results are measured to agreed performance expectations, and, recognition and reward occur where merited may develop a Evaluation Process Policy. Best Practice # 6 is an Evaluation Process Policy as a guideline for leadership.

Best Practice # 4 is a Chief Senior Officer and Best Practice # 5 is the Senior Financial Officer job description that can be modified to fit the requirements of Chief and Council.

Chief and Council needs to:

1. Understand the Job

- **What job needs to done**
- **What are their duties and responsibilities**
- **What are their major and minor activities**

2. Identify Performance Behaviours

- **How do you know someone is doing an excellent, satisfactory or poor job?**
- **What are your performance expectations**

3. Essential Competencies

- **What are the most crucial or essential competencies required to determine excellent performance**
- **Understand types of competencies and skills**

4. Experience, Education and Training needed

- **Determine the required education, experience (work, volunteer and/or life)**
- **Remember to consider the availability of qualified people in your community and make sure qualifications are reasonable.**

5. Special Considerations

- **Criminal Records review**
- **Drivers, firearms and other licenses**
- **Professional Designation (for example: Certified Aboriginal Financial Manager)**
- **Physical requirements**
- **Occupational certification**
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A community's success is linked to how well the Chief or Council and Chief Senior Officer are doing. An evaluation is a process that Chief and Council can implement to hold the Senior Staff Officer and Senior Financial Officer accountable for performance and identify opportunities for improvement – an evaluation is an aid in personal development and relates to a career management plan. The evaluation ensures that the objectives of both Chief and Council staff are exchanged, reviewed to see if they are on track, and serve as a basis for salary review.

Chief Senior Officer and Senior Financial Officer

Chief Senior Officer (Band or Tribal Manager) and the Chief Financial Officer are the main persons in the First Nation administration. The Chief Senior Officer is responsible for the management of the programs and services provided by the First Nation. They plan, organize, staff, direct and control the Administration. They are a player in the implementation of the First Nation's Strategic Plan. Best Practice # 4 is a sample job description that can be used as template for your senior manager. The Senior Financial Officer is vital to the safekeeping of the Nations assets, they are the backbone to the financial success of the organization

Management and Staff Support

Through the devolution of Federal programs First Nations are directly responsible for the delivery of services to community members. Depending on the internal structure staff can report to a Senior Manager or Director who reports to the Band Manager or they may give authority to a Board or corporation. Recruitment, performance appraisal and capacity development offers a strong base for a successful organizational structure

Management is responsible for the delivery of services according to the direction of Chief and Council through their Strategic plans, business plans and agreements with other governments. They plan, organize, staff, control and direct the employees in meeting the goals set by Council.

- A manager makes organizational decisions and handles a variety of problems that arise on a daily basis. They identify the problem and offer choices in course of action.
- They are responsible for the daily routine of their employees and make sure they are performing their duties as outlined in their job descriptions
- They plan out strategies on having effective and efficient services to the membership.
- They are key in the communication of information to employees on the plans of Chief and Council. They ensure communication is clear and concise to avoid misinterpretation and dissatisfaction
- They include employees in the development of goals and objectives as set out by the overall strategic plan.
- They provide guidance to employees and provide training, coaching and support
- They are responsible for the evaluation of employees and provide feedback on their effectiveness.
- They provide the necessary tools required to get the job done.
- They lead by example they are accountable of their own activities and performance. They set high standards to achieve their goals.

Program Responsibilities

Managers are also responsible directly for programs under their direction. Under the arrangements made with the federal and provincial government there are certain program standards that must be met.

Financial Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for budget and the development of cash flows

Boards and Committees

As a government Chief and Council are responsible for all activities in the community from Social Service, Health, Public Works, Administration, Economic Development and other services required in the community. In order to get the job done Chief and Council may delegate their powers and duties to a Corporation through its board or to a committee who will give advice and recommendations.

The major responsibilities of Board of Directors

- **Determine the Organization's Mission and Purpose**
- **Select the Executive**
- **Support the Executive and review his or her performance**
- **Ensure effective organizational planning**
- **Ensure adequate resources**
- **Manage resources effectively**
- **Determine and monitor the organizations programs and services**
- **Enhance the organization's public image**
- **Assess its own performance**

The duties of an effective Board/Committee member:

- **Attends meetings regularly**
- **Reads background material and minutes**
- **Is willing to serve on committees**
- **Speaks up when he or she has something to say**
- **Doesn't dominate the discussion**
- **Keeps comments relevant**
- **Listens when others speak**
- **Brings out quiet members**

What makes a successful Board?

- **The Board as a whole has unity in purpose**
- **The Board moves smoothly toward agreed upon purpose**
- **Members have an open mind and are willing to listen to new ideas**
- **There is a feeling of getting somewhere. Satisfaction is tied to a Board's Accomplishments**
- **Board members feel that they play an important part and have input to decision making**

- **When members agree to disagree, hard feelings do not linger**
- **Members receive recognition and appreciation**
- **Members set aside their own goals aside to benefit of the entire project**
- **There is a team approach built on fairness, respect and responsibility**
- **Adhere to the Board or Committee Code of Conduct like Best Practice # 4 a Sample Code of Conduct for committee and staff**

Major duties of the Chief Executive Officer

The role of CEO may vary depending on whether the organization is for profit or non-for profit. The major role of the CEO is plan, manage, coordinate, control and administer the day to day activities of the organization.

The following is list that includes major functions usually addressed in a job description

- **Board Administration and Support** – supports the operation of the Board by advising and informing Board members.
- **Program and Service Delivery** – oversees the design, marketing, promotion, delivery and quality of services
- **Financial, Tax, Risk and Facilities Management** – recommends yearly budgets for Board approval and prudently manages organization’s resources within those budget guidelines according to laws and regulations
- **Human Resource Management** – effectively manages the human resources of the organization according to personnel policies and procedures that fully conform to current laws and regulations
- **Community and Public Relations** – assures the organization and its mission, program and services are consistently presented in strong, positive image to relevant stakeholders (members, chief and council and external stakeholders)
- **Fundraising (non-profit – specific)** - oversees the fundraising planning and implementation

Communication and Community Engagement

Through visiting, storytelling or having a feast was the way of getting information to community members. Today information sharing information is done by social networking such as facebook, chat rooms, tweeter and emails especially by the youth of the community. Chief and Council needs to adapt different methods of getting information to the community.

Whatever the method of communication it is important foremost for Chief and Council to listen. You need to understand the community member's values, beliefs, fears and needs. By listening you also have the core element of communication with the governments and corporations.

Listening is about the HEART - Hear, Empathize, Acknowledge and Respond.

Community members and the outside world communicate with leadership by oral or visual means. The key to good communication is a plan that has a vision, commitment and most important buy-in. If the community or a business does not agree with the method of communication it will fail. So it is essential to develop a communication plan that takes into consideration the needs of all community members, elders, youth and children. We must also take into consider the importance of the relationship with governments and businesses.

A Communication Plan will ensure that you have a clear mandate and strategy. When developing your plan makes sure you take both traditional and modern methods of communication into consideration. Make sure it simple for leadership and communities to understand. It should have purpose and meaning to be the best possible and to remember you can't do everything.

Communication Plan

Elements of a Plan

- 1. Overall Strategy - provides direction and overall purpose of the communication plan.**
- 2. Goals and Objective – What are we trying to achieve and how do we measures its success.**
- 3. Audience- Who are we communicating with and why? What are we expecting to happen once the message is delivered?**
- 4. Key Messages – connects the gap between what your audience believes it knows and what you're trying to communicate.**
- 5. Approaches and strategies – what resources do I need to get the job done?**
- 6. Budget – how much will the resources cost? I.e. Human, infrastructure and maintenance.**
- 7. Evaluation – How do we know we have done a good job?**

Sample

Communications Plan Template

Background

Provide a few sentences or paragraphs on the nature of the project or initiative (history and role). What is the current situation and what needs to happen? If your goal is to create awareness of a project or program, detail any communication activities that have been undertaken in the past.

Include any public environment information (public opinion, media coverage, research etc.). Are there any contentious issues?

Communications Objectives

What are you trying to achieve? What do you want your audience to do? How will you measure success? Objectives should be specific, concrete and measurable.

Key Audiences

Who are we communicating with? Who do you want your communications messages to reach? List audiences with a brief rationale for each. Consider all potential audiences.

Key Messages

What do you want/need your audiences to know?

List at least three key messages you might use. These may be further broken down into specific messages for specific target audiences. It's important to know what words will resonate with your audiences. What ideas will they embrace?

Messages should be short and to the point. One sentence if possible.

Strategic Considerations

Outline any challenges, opportunities and environmental factors that need to be taken into consideration. Include information that would be relevant in determining the communications approach and messaging. Identify pros and cons of the strategy.

Communications Approach

Describe the recommended communications approach. Will it be pro-active or reactive? Will it be a low-key or high-profile approach? Local or province-wide?

Communications Activities and Tools

What you plan to do and how you plan to do it, as well as a list of deliverables. What tools are you going to use (i.e. news release, poster, advertising etc.)? If significant and directly related to the deliverables, timing and implementation considerations can be included here.

Timeline

What is the project schedule? Establish timeline with specific milestones and deadlines for completion of activities.

Budget

Estimate resources (financial and human) required completing each component of the plan. If no additional costs to the communications budget, please indicate.

Evaluation

List what tools you will use to evaluate success. For example:

- stakeholder/partner feedback
- media monitoring
- public opinion research
- Web site hits

DEVELOPING POLICY CHECKLIST

The following are essential questions to consider in developing policy. Follow up on those questions responded to with a “no” answer.

Essential Questions	Yes	No
1. Is the policy consistent with our plans and strategic direction?		
2. Have all the relevant issues and stakeholders connected to the policy been identified?		
3. Are there prior or similar policies that will need adjustment as a result of the new policy?		
4. Have we reviewed the possible barriers to implementation of this policy		
5. Are the policy objective, policy, and application through procedures clear and do they address the barriers?		
6. Have those with relevant knowledge been consulted?		
7. Has a plan of communication been developed to support the approval and understanding of the policy?		
8. Is it clear how this policy will be monitored? Are accountability aspects considered?		
9. Have we benchmarked this type of policy with similar organizations?		
10. Have we assessed the liability, financial and human resource impact?		
11. Will this policy be combined with other policies in an organization policy manual?		
12. Is the policy in compliance with other statutory requirements?		
13. Is there a firm date as to when this policy will be reviewed again?		