

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY LIVING ONTARIO**

This document ensures that Board members and others connected with CLO speak about the organization in a clear, accurate, and uniform manner. This document also provides responses to frequently asked questions.

### **Who is Community Living Ontario?**

Founded in 1953, Community Living Ontario is a nonprofit organization providing a voice for people who have an intellectual disability as well as their families, friends, allies, and support providers across Ontario. We proudly advocate on behalf of more than 100,000+ people with intellectual disabilities in the province while championing the inclusion efforts of over 119 organizations.

### **What does Community Living Ontario do?**

Community Living Ontario provides leadership through advocacy, education, policy development, and in-person and virtual initiatives. CLO aims to remove barriers with the goal of creating a more inclusive Ontario.

Some of the organization's current initiatives include family engagement and youth outreach via Reaction4Inclusion and the Youth Advocacy Committee; mentorship via Student Links, and employment for people with lived experience via Ready, Willing and Able - a national employment program. Information about our initiatives can be found on our [website](#).

CLO also offers a strategic partner program for like-minded companies who wish to be involved with the organization and its audiences, donors, governments, media and other non-profit organizations.

### **What is the difference between Community Living Ontario and local support providers?**

Community Living Ontario, as a provincial leader, coordinates the voices of people who have an intellectual disability, their families, allies, and support organizations to drive change towards an inclusive Ontario – and beyond. Support providers (also known as developmental service agencies) directly assist people who have an intellectual disability and their families to live a good life in their chosen community.

### **What is Community Living Ontario's mission?**

Community Living Ontario, together with people who have an intellectual disability, their families, friends, and support providers, brings about change with a mission to create an authentically inclusive Ontario.

### **How is Community Living Ontario connected nationally and beyond?**

Community Living Ontario is an active and important voice for the province of Ontario at Inclusion Canada and Inclusion International – both organizations promote inclusion nationally and worldwide.

### **How does Community Living Ontario include people who have an intellectual disability and their families?**

Community Living Ontario highly values and upholds the voices of people with lived experience and their families on our Board and in committee work, at our forums and

educational events and more. Individual [stories of success](#) and challenge help to form our priorities and keep us relevant. Indeed, CLO's Council is made of self-advocates who meet regularly to discuss their objectives and to influence groups on a larger scale, including school boards, community organizations, conferences, and universities via their presentations, social justice outreach and public talks.

### **Who are Community Living Ontario's members?**

Community Living Ontario's members are local support providers in Ontario who work directly with people who have an intellectual disability, their families, and allies to ensure people's needs are met and that their voices are heard.

### **What are the benefits for member organizations?**

Members gain access to a wide network of like-minded people, programs, and organizations.

Members participate in addressing the most challenging issues with one voice, and contribute to positive change when addressing governments, policymakers, the media, and the public at large.

Membership also provides access to resources such as CLO's popular virtual Communications Network; our annual conference (including member discounts), and regular webinars that address current challenges & offer best practices featuring content experts, constituency engagement opportunities and links to larger networks outside of Ontario via [Inclusion Canada](#) and [Inclusion International](#).

### **How do I get involved with Community Living Ontario?**

There are many ways to get involved with Community Living Ontario, for example: Connect with your local support provider who is a member of Community Living Ontario

- [Become a mentor](#) for our Student Links initiative
- Attend or apply to be a speaker at a workshop, webinar, or conference.
- [Register](#) for our engaging weekly newsletter, Update Friday, and stay connected through our social media platforms.
- Apply to join a working group, committee, or the board.
- [Donate](#) to our cause on a regular or one-time basis.
- Express your support for the movement and get first access to information by becoming a ["Friend"](#) of Community Living Ontario

### **What are some successful advocacy examples?**

Community Living Ontario leads individual and collective advocacy to face challenges raised by self-advocates, families, and support providers.

Recent success includes:

- Making direct funding for services more available, thanks to changes to the Family Managed Home Care program.
- Making Registered Disability Savings Plans more accessible, thanks to federal legislative changes.

- A permanent \$3 wage increase for direct support professionals in the sector.
- Increased attention to the problem of violence against people with developmental disabilities.
- Increased relationship-building within government, including key leaders in the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (where, notably, the CLO Council met with Minister Michael Parsa).

### **What work has Community Living Ontario helped lead and what still must be done?**

For over 70 years, Community Living Ontario has worked with people with lived experience, families, allies, governments, the media, and other advocates to successfully lead people with an intellectual disability and their families.

We are especially proud of the ongoing efforts to:

- Led the impactful and fulsome #5ToSurvive campaign advocating for a 5% increase to base funding for support agencies. Facets of this campaign include:
  - 100,000 impressions on social media
  - 47 engagements in traditional media across the province
  - 11,000+ online petitions sent to MPPs across Ontario
  - 95% engagement of all MPPs either in person, on the telephone or via email.
  - Press conferences covered by major media including CTV, Global, and the Toronto Star.
- Continue to deinstitutionalize services and supports.
- Secure income supports to help reduce poverty.
- Ensure all children and youth are included in the school of their choice.
- Advocate for real work for real pay as an equal opportunity for all.

These efforts and many others remain on the agenda in opportunities like the annual “Community Living Ontario Day at the Legislature.” We are motivated to keep going by the very real reminder that there is still so very much yet to do!

### **What is the role of the Community Living Ontario Board?**

The role of the Community Living Ontario Board is to make sure that the core values and mission are followed, protected, and moved forward on behalf of all members and supporters. The Board oversees the work of the Chief Executive Officer. Also, the Board is responsible for the Strategic Plan and overall governance. The Board must include people with lived experience and those with a full range of diversity and skills to provide leadership towards a fully inclusive Ontario.

### **What is the role of the Community Living Ontario Council?**

**The Council** is a very important part of Community Living Ontario and consists of 12 elected advocates from across the province. Council connects with other advocates to ensure all voices are heard. The council advises the Board on how to address important issues, find solutions, and share information with our members and the community. Council offers suggestions, opinions, knowledge, experience, and ideas on topics that will better the lives of people who have an intellectual disability. The council appoints one voting member to the Board of Community Living Ontario.

### **What is the role of the Community Living Ontario Provincial Executive Directors**

### **Coordinating Committee?**

The Provincial Executive Directors Coordinating Committee (PEDCC) is the core working group of the Executive Directors of over 100 local service providers. Its role is to support the goal and vision of Community Living Ontario and act as a forum for sharing information and creating solutions to problems at the provincial level. A member of the PEDCC is appointed to the Community Living Ontario Board of Directors as a non-voting member.

### **What is the role of the Community Living Ontario Youth Advisory Committee?**

The role of the [Youth Advisory Committee](#) is to provide space for youth to inform the work of Community Living Ontario. The committee provides an opportunity to take a leadership role in decision-making and give direction to Community Living Ontario's youth engagement initiatives, including [Reaction4Inclusion](#). The committee makes sure Community Living Ontario remains relevant and up to date on issues that impact the lives of youth in Ontario who have an intellectual disability.

### **What is the role of the Community Living Ontario Family Engagement Steering Committee?**

The role of Community Living Ontario's [Family Engagement Steering Committee](#) is to give a voice to the unique experiences and contributions of families. This committee helps to inform the work of Community Living Ontario in our efforts to change laws and practices that impact directly on the family experience. This committee can appoint a voting member to the Community Living Ontario Board each year.