

SENIORS SERVICES PLANNING TABLE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE:

The Seniors Services Planning Table will serve as a collective forum for a broad range of community partners representing the complex network of opportunities and services for seniors. Representatives from health, social, recreational, and other program areas associated with seniors will come together on a volunteer partnership basis to share information and ideas while exploring opportunities for joint planning and system development. The Seniors Services Planning Table will function as an advisory body to all members, addressing matters deemed to be of collective interest and relevant to one of the following categories.

Seniors Services Planning Table: Activity Parameters

A Focus on Seniors and Their Needs

An overriding mandate of the Seniors Services Planning Table is to support and develop a coordinated, accessible continuum of services that enable seniors to stay healthy and live as independently as possible and with dignity. The design and delivery of services should respond to the needs of seniors and reflect their priorities and wishes.

Enhanced Partnership as a Primary Goal

The Seniors Services Planning Table will pursue enhanced linkages and partnerships to achieve a seamless system, improve quality, access and the best use of limited resources.

Information, Ideas and Best Practices

Information sharing is fundamental to community-based planning and all providers experience common needs. The Seniors Services Planning Table will facilitate formal and informal information exchange, provide an opportunity for programs to present and seek information and ideas while jointly exploring new approaches and best practices. This will include efforts to inform and encourage the public about what is available and how to access it.

Equity, Transparency and Procedural Fairness

The contribution of all partners will be valued equally with a goal to enhancing overall capacity and strengthening respective community programs. Experience tells us that the improvement of any service sector must involve the coordinated engagement of citizens, service providers and funders.

Joint Planning Opportunities

The Seniors Services Planning Table will explore opportunities to undertake joint planning initiatives. These activities might include, but are not limited to: system planning, needs assessments, environmental scans, service inventories, the development of system navigation mechanisms, and program evaluations.

Quality Enhancement

Opportunities to improve program quality may be explored through the sharing and pooling of staff and expertise across sectors.

Administrative Efficiencies

The members of the Seniors Services Planning Table will exchange information regarding administrative practices and consider integration opportunities to achieve critical mass levels otherwise unattainable by independent partners. Common approaches to information and technology systems would be beneficial to all partners.

Program Development Feedback

Agencies and organizations that are pursuing program expansion or the development of new programs may wish to brainstorm initiatives with the Seniors Services Planning Table partners, seeking advice and feedback.

Opportunities for Staff Growth and Development

The partnerships established through the Seniors Services Planning Table will facilitate enhanced employment, staff development and training opportunities across multiple organizations. Collaboration of this nature will reduce interagency competition and address recruitment and retention challenges.

Enhanced Capacity to Negotiate and Work with External Partners

A strong, integrated, well-coordinated delivery system at the community level is capable of bridging the government “silos” that otherwise create unnecessary barriers between levels of services. The Seniors Services Planning Table will be well-positioned to relate to external partners with respect to program development, program integration, and supplementary funding opportunities through various grants and incentive programs, inside and outside of government.

Beyond these specific goals, the table will also provide a forum that welcomes a diverse membership who will be encouraged and welcome to develop new ideas and initiatives and who, as a group with shared responsibility and ownership, will have the opportunity, and responsibility, to collectively think beyond our specific mandates and funding parameters and to develop made in Muskoka initiatives and approaches.

MEMBERSHIP & ROLES:

1. Membership is open to individuals (i.e. seniors) and representatives of organizations with an interest in and/or mandate to provide and/or access services to seniors in Muskoka. Where possible, persons who make decisions or develop programs and policies will be encouraged to attend.
2. The Chair for the group will be rotational.
3. Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible.
4. Opportunities for individuals and groups to address the Planning Tables' members on issues of services for seniors will be encouraged.
5. Members will be expected to participate regularly, and to keep the larger group informed of programs and initiatives underway at their own club/agency/organization level. Members are also encouraged to share information from this table within their own organizations so that the resources of the group can inform those programs. Should delegates be asked to attend on a member's behalf, the member should ensure they are familiar with the work of the group and can continue to provide the expertise of their agency/group, so as to maintain continuity of purpose.
6. Muskoka will ensure there are resources for arranging and facilitating meetings.
7. The Rotational Chair, with input from the group, will be responsible for developing agendas.

MINUTES:

1. The District Municipality of Muskoka will record and distribute minutes to all members.

MEETINGS:

1. Meetings will be scheduled bi-monthly initially.
2. The Seniors Services Planning Table may assign specific projects to smaller working groups which might need to meet more frequently, and which would report back and share findings with the broader membership.
3. An evaluation mechanism will be established to determine the ongoing efficacy of the group, and will be applied at the discretion of the Planning Table. The Planning Table will remain active until such time as the membership determines meetings should cease.