



SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANIZING AN ALUMNI/AE CLUB

NEWCOMERS and **ALUMNI/AE CLUBS** exist in many cities and towns across Canada. Our clubs are diverse; some for women only, others men only, an increasing number are co-ed while some offer family memberships. Many Clubs now have a change in circumstances clause for membership as well. This allows people to join if they retire or lose a spouse for example.

When clubs reach a sufficient size or differing interest level as deemed by the Executive Board, the bylaws may be changed to limit the length of time a member may stay in Newcomers. This time interval, at the discretion of each individual club, is usually limited to two or three years. An Alumni/ae Club/Association is then created to allow longer-time residents to continue the friendships they have formed.

We at National Newcomers Association (NNAC) believe that when a Newcomers' Club decides to form an Alumni/ae Association it is always done with kindness and in the spirit of friendship and cooperation. The experience you bring with you from a Newcomers club is invaluable when setting up a new club. Based on these principals we make the following recommendations as to the procedures for forming an Alumni/ae Association, and encourage the use of the Newcomer documentation such as By-Law and Policy and Procedures, etc. .

A group of prospective Alumni/ae Association members discuss and plan the following items:

- 1. Club Name:** Alumni/ae Clubs across the country have many names. Some examples incorporate Newcomer's as part of their title i.e. London Newcomers Alumnae Club while others like Calgary NuGrads do not.
- 2. Fill the Executive positions.** These positions may be appointed or filled on a volunteer basis for the first year, since elections may not be possible in the first year of Club formation. Executive members are expected to attend both General and Executive Meetings. If the Club is formed with low membership, it may be necessary to fill only the mandatory positions: President, Vice-President, Membership Chairperson (if possible) and Secretary/Treasurer. These people will then find it necessary to amalgamate some duties (i.e. publicity, hospitality, social activities, newsletter etc.) and seek some assistance from the membership to perform all required duties. Determine the club's Board Meeting schedule and if you're going to have monthly General Meetings including the membership. Meeting minutes need to be taken at each meeting.
- 3. By-Laws:** The easiest way to set up new by-laws is to adopt the original Club's By-Laws and change them as necessary. Creating, developing and amending bylaws is time consuming but if done correctly will provide guidance, direction and solve conflict for years to come. Bylaws should be voted on and accepted by the membership and reviewed on a regular basis as the dynamics of the club change. Clearly define your purpose and state it in your constitution.



Consider the following as potential articles:

- Membership and Dues – eligibility requirements and disciplinary actions; when dues are due
- Meetings – types (General Meeting vs. Special Meeting) including voting procedures, quorum requirements, proxy voting and voting procedures (show of hands, secret ballots etc)
- Prohibitions – sharing of the membership list for example
- Executive Board and Duties of the Officers and Committees – duties of each clearly defined
- Elections – nominations, term of office and voting procedures
- Governance – accepted operating rules of the club
- Financial Records, Fiscal Year and Borrowing – review of the records, what is your fiscal year dates and rules relative to borrowing by the club
- Amendments to Bylaws – process to propose amendments and how they will be accepted or rejected

4. **Budget:** The Club is a non-profit organization and membership fees are used to meet the operating expenses of the Club (i.e. venue rental, fees, etc.). Membership fees are determined by the individual Club, usually in the range of \$25 to \$50 per year.

5. **Decisions** regarding incorporation, waiver forms and insurance must be made by the club executive. Each club has to determine what is best for them in each instance. Incorporation laws and processes vary from province to province and you must use the guidelines based on the province your club is located.

Further information can be found at:

British Columbia: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/not-for-profit-organizations>

Alberta: <https://www.alberta.ca/grants-funding-and-supports-for-non-profits>

Saskatchewan: <https://www.saskculture.ca/programs/organizational-support/organizational-resources/setting-up-a-non-profit-organization>

Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/start-and-operate-not-profit>

New Brunswick:

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.201449.Incorporation_of_Non-Profit_Companies.html

Nova Scotia: <https://novascotia.ca/NonProfitSector/>

Further information, along with examples, can be found on the NNAC website:

- ‘Club Guidance’ menu: contains various documents such as sample By-Law, Conflict Resolution
- ‘Insurance’ menu: contains the latest information regarding insurance offerings.



6. Draw up a calendar of events so that activities do not fall on conflicting days. This is important if you are joining activities with your sister Newcomers Club.

Determine the dates for the monthly general meetings and executive meetings. For example, the general meeting may be held on the 1st or 2nd Tuesday or Wednesday of each month. (Mondays and Fridays are usually too close to the weekend for good attendance; however, it will depend upon the preference of your membership.) Most clubs hold their executive meetings one or two weeks before each general meeting in order to have sufficient time to plan the general meeting, do publicity, etc.

7. Plan the Monthly General Meeting. It may be held in the afternoon or the evening; it may take the form of a luncheon or dinner, or it may be a planned program with a guest speaker and light refreshments.

If possible, make inquiries within your community to see if there may be a meeting room available in a church, library, school, etc. Usually, facilities are available at a reasonable cost (or sometimes, free) to non-profit organizations. Usually, the Vice-President is responsible for obtaining the meeting place and planning the program. Set up a communication network for club members, whether it by email, Facebook page or a website.

PROGRAM: Usually consists of a guest speaker or demonstration. Try to have a good variety with some light and serious topics. Some ideas are: speakers on community services, local history, health and nutrition, cooking, parenting, recycling, travel, etc. As a non-profit organization, Newcomers usually cannot afford a speaker's fee; however, many clubs give their guest speaker a small gift. As a suggestion; if a speaker has the potential of obtaining business as a result of his/her attendance, then a thank you card is sufficient. The Membership Chairperson (or Vice-President) and the Treasurer should be available at the door to greet new members and to accept membership fees. Other Executive members should make themselves available to greet members and guests, and to make them feel welcome.

Not all clubs have monthly General Meetings. For example Toronto has a monthly Board meeting but only gather all members in September and June. They provide other opportunities for all members to gather together. Each club will decide how best to meet the needs and interests of their members and community.

8. Newsletter: Each club publishes a monthly newsletter to notify members of the general meeting and other upcoming events. A club will usually elect a newsletter editor, who is part of the executive group. In a very small Newcomers Club, a core executive member, or a volunteer from the general membership will often assume the job of newsletter editor.

9. Membership Roster: The Membership Roster should be available to all members; posting it on your secured web site in a member's only section is a great way for everyone to have the most up-



to-date list. A roster should contain the following for each member: Name, Address, Telephone Number, email address and partner's name. Other information that could be made available through the Membership Application would be: names of children, birth date of member (for celebratory purposes), where the member moved from and any other particulars the Executive might find necessary. Clubs should take steps to protect the contact details of their members. This can include such things as: ensuring these are on a secure site, ensuring members are advised to only use for contact purposes, advising members to shred any previous paper copies of rosters etc. Most clubs state in their By-Laws that the membership roster is "NOT TO BE USED FOR SOLICITING OR SELLING".

10. Activity Groups: Activity groups are formed when there is sufficient interest in a particular activity. These groups are self-supporting and may make their own rules as long as they do not conflict with the By-Laws of the club. A second Vice-President or Activities coordinator/director is responsible for the club's activities groups. This person appoints the convenors and helps to organize new activities, and acts as a liaison between the groups and the executive. One must be a member in good standing to participate in activities. If a particular activity takes place in the home, members usually take turns hosting. There is usually no fee to join activity groups, however, members are responsible for any expenses they may incur.

The above information is meant to offer information as a guide to organizing a Newcomers' Alumni/ae Club. The extent to which these suggestions will be followed will depend very much on the feeling of the membership of your Club. It is important to note that whatever works best is usually what the members feel most comfortable with.

For your interest:

- Alumnus is used to refer to a male graduate or former student
- Alumni is the plural of alumnus but can also be used to refer to a group of men and woman graduates/former students
- Alumna is used to refer to a woman graduate or former student
- Alumnae is the plural of alumna

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