Alberta Rural Connectivity Coalition Policy Committee Terms of Reference

Committee type

Standing – The Policy Committee will contribute to the development of ARCC's long-term policy and advocacy initiatives, including identifying emerging issues relevant to rural, remote, First Nations and Metis broadband, and ensuring that ARCC proactively advances policy proposals to close the digital divide and support digital inclusion.

Purpose

- To monitor ongoing and emerging issues relevant to rural, remote, First Nations and Metis broadband in Alberta and Canada in order to identify avenues to advance ARCC's mandate and mission statement
- To identify initiatives, programs, and consultations from government and regulatory agencies, and determine how ARCC might best participate to advance its mission statement
- To develop policy responses and materials to disseminate to ARCC's members as well as anyone with an interest and stake in rural, remote, First Nations and Metis broadband
- To outreach with relevant government stakeholders and decision makers
- To work collaboratively with the ARCC Planning Committee to ensure that the yearly Alberta Rural Connectivity Forum and other ARCC initiatives reflect contemporary policy priorities, issues, and solutions
- To work collaboratively with the ARCC Planning Committee to ensure that ARCC's annual strategic plan reflects the relevant consensus on policy priorities, issues, and solutions
- To share the experiences of rural, remote, First Nations and Metis communities with respect to digital inequity and digital inclusion, and provide organizations and advocates with information to close the digital divides in their communities and throughout Alberta.

Deliverables

- Development of policy positions and supporting materials to advance ARCC's mandate and mission statement
- Ongoing participation in the policy process at different levels of government
- Development of policy positions and documents that ARCC members can participate in voluntarily or can reference for their own interventions
- Successful execution of the annual Alberta Rural Connectivity Forum (ARCF) event
- Development of ARCC's annual strategic plan, as well as long-term policy and advocacy efforts
- Building a collaborative environment for ARCC, its members, and relevant stakeholders to share experiences with the digital divide in Alberta and discuss solutions

Membership

The ARCC Policy Committee is made up of 5-10 self-nominated individuals with a direct stake or noted expertise in rural broadband deployment in Alberta's rural, remote, First Nations and Metis communities; and who support ARCC's mandate and mission statement. Admittance as a Policy Committee member will be incumbent on a majority vote of existing committee members. Policy Committee Members will work collaboratively with each other and ARCC's Planning Committee to advance ARCC's mandate and mission statement.

The Policy Committee members will have noted expertise or direct experience with issues relevant to rural broadband deployment in Alberta or Canada, and will draw on this expertise to develop ARCC's long-term policy and advocacy initiatives. This will include:

- Identifying ongoing and emerging issues relevant to rural, remote, First Nations and Metis broadband
- Developing stances and messaging to pursue ARCC's mission statement
- Ensuring that ARCC's member community is kept apprised of avenues to pursue broadband deployment in their communities
- Identifying relevant consultations undertaken by all levels of government
- Ensuring that the consensus of ARCC's member community is reflected in policy materials

Policy Committee members will also endeavor to assist in the design, planning and execution of ARCC programs and initiatives, when possible.

Authority & Meetings

The ARCC Policy Committee will meet virtually on a monthly basis for a duration of one hour. The Policy Committee may decide to organize additional meetings when necessary.

Responsibility for scheduling, notetaking and disseminating relevant materials will fall to the Policy Committee Secretary who will be selected from among those policy committee members who volunteer for the role. The Secretary will be responsible for:
- Determining the date and time of meetings
- Providing a meeting agenda prior to each meeting
- Disseminating minutes taken at each meeting

Responsibility for facilitating Policy Committee meetings will fall to the Policy Committee Chair, who will be selected from among those policy committee members who volunteer for the role. The Chair will be responsible for:
- Calling meetings to order
- Facilitating meetings such that they are timely, efficient
- Ensuring each committee member has the opportunity to provide their input

Wherever possible, Policy Committee decisions will be made through an informal, consensus-based model. When a formal decision is required, as determined by the Committee Chair or by a motion, the decision will be subject to a majority vote of committee members.

Policy Committee members and the Policy Committee Chair and Secretary will seek to track and disseminate the following items to each other, the Planning Committee and external stakeholders when necessary:
- Outstanding items and tasks
- The deadlines of deliverables and who they are delegated to
- Updates on tasks
- Formal reports on the outcomes of ARCC initiatives, including ARCF, and areas for improvement