

# Parachute - Safe Communities Designation Program

## Ten Steps to Designation

Carrying on in the tradition started by Safe Communities Canada, Parachute is pleased to designate communities that have made a commitment to local injury prevention. Linked to an international movement that began in 1989, Canadian Safe Communities believe that a safe life is a basic right. A designation is a public affirmation of a community's aspiration to create a safer life for all its citizens.

Communities who have obtained the Safe Community designation have shown commitment to promoting injury prevention and safety promotion locally. They have brought together local officials from their municipalities at a Leadership Table, including representatives from local government, public health, police, fire and emergency services, educational institutions, local business and health and safety organizations. Designated Safe Communities have completed a formal Priority Setting Exercise and community scan, to inform their programming decisions, and they have a plan for sustainability.

The official designation of a municipality as a Safe Community indicates a publicly articulated commitment to work towards a safer locality for all. It is not an end point, but rather, the beginning of a concerted effort to make injury prevention and safety promotion a top community priority with tangible results, ultimately creating safer places where citizens can live, work and play. Communities that choose to see the designation process through to the end and commit to a collaborative relationship with Parachute, members of the Parachute network and others in the domain of health and safety, are also agreeing to some guiding principles, namely leadership, sustainability, community engagement and prioritization of injury prevention.

### Starting the process

Prior to becoming a Candidate Community, a community representative must make contact with Parachute to receive introductory information about the Safe Communities designation program. Once a decision has been made to pursue designation, a local government official, generally the mayor, the warden or their designate, must write a **letter of intention**. With that letter, Parachute will consider the community to be a Candidate Community, and it will be eligible for assistance as it undertakes the 10 steps to designation.

The following describes the steps Candidate Communities go through to achieve designation.

## **STEP 1: Create a Leadership Table**

The Candidate Community must bring together representatives from various sectors to form a Leadership Table. Members of the Leadership Table must include representation from:

- ◆ Local government
- ◆ Public health
- ◆ Police
- ◆ Fire
- ◆ Emergency medical services

There should also be representation from as many of the following groups as possible:

- ◆ Educational institutions
- ◆ Local businesses
- ◆ Health and safety organizations
- ◆ Community organizations and NGOs such as recreation groups, youth organizations, and seniors organizations
- ◆ Appropriate provincial ministries such as Transportation, Labour, Health
- ◆ Local media

Ideally, all of these groups should be represented. If they are not part of the Leadership Table, the Candidate Community should be able to demonstrate that they attempted to engage these groups.

## **STEP 2: Create and adopt a formal Terms of Reference and a Succession Plan**

The Safe Community Leadership Table must create a formal Terms of Reference that will guide the work of their Safe Community. This Terms of Reference should be formally adopted by the group and should provide information about the management of the Safe Community. As part of the adoption of the Terms of Reference, the Leadership Table should collectively appoint an executive committee with two co-chairs that will spearhead the work of the Safe Community, and create and adopt a succession plan should the co-chairs need to step down at any time.

### **STEP 3: Complete a formal Parachute Priority Setting Exercise**

The Safe Community Leadership Table must initiate and complete a formal Priority Setting Exercise which conforms to the Parachute model. A separate Priority Setting Exercise Guide is available, which outlines the process for organizing and implementing this activity. As a result of the Priority Setting Exercise, your community should have *three to five identified priorities* where you will focus your efforts.

### **STEP 4: Complete a Community Scan**

As a complement to the Priority Setting Exercise, the Safe Community Leadership Table must initiate and complete a community scan which gathers information on current programs administered locally by other organizations that address health and safety concerns. A Community Scan Guide is available with suggested questions. It is the Leadership Table's responsibility to administer the scan and analyze the results.

### **STEP 5: Identify your Safe Community initiatives and evaluation mechanisms**

With the results from the Priority Setting Exercise and the Community Scan, the Safe Community Leadership Table is responsible for determining which initiatives will be championed by the Safe Community. The choice of injury prevention and safety promotion activities must reflect the three to five priorities established in the Priority Setting Exercise and take into account activities identified in the Community Scan. The initiatives chosen must have evaluation components built into their planning.

### **STEP 6: Identify and fund your budget**

The Safe Community Leadership Table must create and fund a budget to respond to operational needs. The budget should demonstrate proof of a reasonable plan for sustainability, and should reflect plans for the next three years. The budget should demonstrate the ability to maintain a coordinator position, either hired or through in kind support. The budget must identify funding sources.

### **STEP 7: Coordination**

The Safe Community Leadership Table is responsible for ensuring a Coordinator is available to administer initiatives. This Coordinator can be newly retained or retained through an in-kind arrangement. The Coordinator can be full or part-time, depending on the Safe Community's needs and budgetary allowances.

## **STEP 8: Develop a community action plan**

The Safe Community Leadership Table must develop a community action plan to guide their work over the coming years. Included in this plan must be a strategy to inform the community of their presence and injury prevention priorities and initiatives.

## **STEP 9: Finalize your application**

Once all the steps for designation have been completed, the Safe Community Leadership Table must apply to Parachute for designation. The application must include evidence that all the steps to designation have been completed, and must include the following:

- ◆ A formal letter from the co-chairs and a representative of the municipal authority expressing their intention to seek designation.
- ◆ A signed MOU with Parachute.
- ◆ A membership list of the Safe Community Leadership Table with affiliations listed.
- ◆ The adopted Terms of Reference.
- ◆ The Safe Community's Succession Plan.
- ◆ A description of the Priority Setting Exercise and results.
- ◆ Evidence and results of the Community Scan.
- ◆ Copies of minutes from the last two meetings of the Leadership Table, which must have taken place within the previous 12 months.
- ◆ A Community Action Plan, which includes evidence of the Safe Community's planning for upcoming initiatives based on identified priorities and taking into account the Community Scan. An evaluation plan must be included, as well as a communication strategy.
- ◆ A copy of the operating budget for the Safe Community.
- ◆ Proof of administrative capacity.
- ◆ A formal letter signed by the co-chairs outlining the Safe Community's commitment to meet at least three times a year and to participate fully in the Parachute partner network.

## **STEP 10: Designation Ceremony**

Organize a ceremony to celebrate your official designation and promote your Safe Community. A designation guide is available for further detail.