



## Terms of Reference - National Coalition for Healthy School Food

Updated May 2021

**The Coalition for Healthy School Food is seeking** public investment in and federal standards for a universal cost-shared school food program that would see all children having daily access to healthy food at school. Building on existing programs across the country, all schools will eventually serve a healthy meal and/or snack at little or no cost to students. These programs will include food education and serve culturally appropriate, local, sustainable food to the fullest extent possible.

Membership in the Coalition is open to **non-profit organizations**, including non-profit co-ops and social enterprises, unions and networks made up of non-profit organizations, who support the mandate of the Coalition and are willing to publicly support and advocate the CHSF's position.<sup>1</sup>

These Terms of Reference articulate the roles that members play in the Coalition.

### Objectives of the Coalition for Healthy School Food:

1. **Engagement:** Raise the public and media profile of healthy school food programs and build a movement through collective action, campaigns and projects.
2. **Advocacy:**
  - a. Federal: Advance policies and government financing for healthy, universal school food programs at the national level by engaging with decision-makers and undertaking diverse strategies.
  - b. Provincial and Municipal: Support members and provincial chapters in their work to advocate at the provincial and municipal levels for an expansion of funding as well

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<sup>1</sup> While not members, the Coalition encourages all levels of government to endorse the Coalition's position. Government can demonstrate their support by endorsing the Coalition's call for a universal cost-shared healthy school food program and their logo will appear on the endorser's page. We encourage as many Individuals as possible to support our call for a universal cost-shared healthy school food program by signing up on our website for more information and becoming Individual Supporters.

as shifts in policy and curriculum.

**3. Collaboration:**

- a. Among Members: Create a space where members are inspired to network, share best practices, learn from one another, and take on self-organizing initiatives such as collaborative projects.
- b. External: Facilitate conversations among governments, corporations and our members on appropriate matters (e.g. local program logistics).

- 4. **Research**: Advance knowledge and understanding of healthy school food programs by encouraging, compiling and sharing research on healthy school food programs.

All of the Coalition’s advocacy work must remain non-partisan. The advocacy actions and positions expressed are those of the Coalition for Healthy School Food and do not necessarily represent the official actions and/or positions of all the organizations represented.

**Structure at a glance:**

	<b>Members</b>	<b>Steering Committee (SC)</b>	<b>Advisors</b>
<b>Type of organization involved</b>	Non-profit organizations including non-profit co-ops and social enterprises, unions and networks of non-profit organizations		
<b>Way of supporting</b>	Support our call for a universal school food program	Supports the development of the work plan and its implementation	Supports national Coordinator to make decisions between SC meetings and stewards processes that are of a conflict of interest for the Coordinator
<b>Capacity</b>	May grow to hundreds	15-20 reps from the Coalition - comprised of 1-2 reps from each province and territory along with relevant major national and provincial organizations	3
<b>Decision-making capacity</b>	4 meetings/ year Can give feedback to the SC	Monthly meetings; <b>Key decision-making body</b>	Meets when needed; Makes time-sensitive decisions that need to be made in less than a week
<b>Method of joining</b>	Online form; Approved if they meet set criteria	Established at the Fall in-person meeting of the Coalition	Established at the Fall in-person meeting of the Coalition

<b>Method of Communications</b>	Google group	Steering Committee Google group	Emails
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## Roles and Responsibilities

### Member Organizations:

Membership in the Coalition is open to **non-profit organizations**, including non-profit co-ops and social enterprises, unions and networks made up of non-profit organizations, who support the mandate of the Coalition and are willing to publicly support the CHSF’s position.

Membership is free. Organizations such as charitable foundations that are at arm’s length from a for-profit company are not eligible for membership in the Coalition.

### Becoming a Member Organization and Appointing Representatives:

- Organizations become members by filling out the [“Become a Member” form](#) on the CHSF website. They are approved if they meet the criteria for membership.
- Member organizations will provide their logo to be placed on the Coalition’s member page of its website and as an appendix on written communications.
- Each member organization will appoint an individual to be their official representative. Additional representative(s) from the same member organization can also have their name added to the Coalition’s member email list (Google Group). More than one member of an organization can attend the Coalition phone meetings or in-person yearly meetings.
- Committees or working groups shall be struck to help advance specific initiatives deemed a priority by the Coalition. Member organizations may invite subject experts from their organization to represent their organization on subcommittees of the CHSF.

### Member Meetings:

- Meetings of the Coalition will be scheduled between one and four times annually, one of which will be in person when finances permit the cost of an in-person meeting.
- Meetings will be called by the National CHSF Coordinator. Members who become aware of emerging issues that would necessitate a meeting are encouraged to contact the Coordinator with this request.

### Member Roles and Responsibilities:

Members of the Coalition will, where possible:

- Attend meetings, including 1 yearly in-person meeting (at the member's expense).
- Actively participate in Coalition initiatives.
- Provide timely feedback, representing their organization's position, on issues of relevance.
- Act as a liaison between the CHSF and the member's organization by communicating and sharing relevant information from the Coalition to appropriate personnel within the organization they represent; and sharing relevant information, key projects, resources and initiatives from their organization with members of the Coalition.
- Disseminate Coalition initiatives to relevant audiences.

#### **Member Communications:**

- All members can publicly communicate agreed upon messaging as members of the Coalition. Members are encouraged to check with the Coordinator if they need clarification about the agreed-upon messaging or if they are suggesting new positions.
- Member organizations are encouraged to take Coalition positions to their respective organizations for endorsement; however, no member organization will be bound by the direction or position of the Coalition.

#### **Steering Committee Decision-Making:**

- At the in-person meeting of the Coalition, members confirm Steering Committee members to make substantial decisions during the remainder of the year and the Advisors to support the Coordinator between meetings.
- Members are encouraged to voice their perspectives to the Steering Committee at and between member meetings. This includes requesting the Steering Committee to reconsider and revise any item that about which it has reached. The Steering Committee will strive to address any input and concerns in their decisions when at all possible. The yearly in-person meeting will enable members to provide their perspectives that will direct the Coalition's work in the year ahead.

#### **Records:**

- The Coordinator will keep minutes of the Coalition's members meetings and will record in such minutes all perspectives voiced at the meeting. Draft minutes will be circulated and will be clearly marked as drafts until the minutes are approved at which point 'draft' will be removed by the Coordinator. Materials are kept for a maximum of 5 years, unless otherwise deemed necessary by the Coalition members.

### **Ownership of Materials:**

The CHSF works according to and encourages principles of Creative Commons Licensing (specifically [Attribution-Non-Commercial](#)), with the addition of asking permission first. CHSF encourages members to share their own resources for use and adaptation by others, and asks that those who use these materials credit the source, whether it be materials created by CHSF, FSC or a different member of the Coalition.

CHSF often uses or adapts materials that have been developed by one of its member organizations. In these cases, CHSF will seek permission first and then apply Creative Commons principles.

### **Provincial and Territorial Chapters and Action Group:**

Organizing a national campaign in a large and diverse country like Canada is always most successful when people in each province or territory work together. Action is often easily planned province by province, even when the focus is advocating for National policies. That is why members of the Coalition have decided to organize themselves in each province and territory, with some deciding to become formal Provincial or Territorial Chapters and others to agree to be listed with other members in their Province or Territory as a Provincial and Territorial Action Group.

The Terms of Reference of each Provincial or Territorial Chapter or Action Group will support the goals and activities of the Coalition for Healthy School Food as well as other goals and activities as determined by each chapter to advance their work locally, so long as those goals and activities do not contradict the goals and activities of the Coalition for Healthy School Food<sup>2</sup>. Provincial and Territorial Chapters can develop Terms of Reference based on these Terms of Reference and agree that they will share their Terms of Reference with the Coordinator of the Coalition for Healthy School Food for comment and feedback to ensure consistency of language and messaging,

### **Members of Provincial and Territorial Chapters and Action:**

- Members of the Coalition are considered members of the Provincial and Territorial Chapters or Action.

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<sup>2</sup> Confirmed at the [May 28, 2019](#) Coalition Steering Committee Meeting.

## **Steering Committee members:**

SC members are member organizations with the capacity to offer more sustaining support to the Coalition. The Steering Committee is the decision-making body of the Coalition; however, its decisions must reflect the input of member organizations.

## **Becoming a Member of the Steering Committee:**

- Each year at the in-person meeting in the fall, a Steering Committee will be confirmed, on the basis of recommendations made by the outgoing Steering Committee. Steering Committee Members will have a term length of 1 year, which can be renewed.

## **Steering Committee Meetings:**

- The Steering Committee will meet in between Coalition member meetings to **discuss and make decisions** about issues that are important to the direction of the Coalition. The Steering Committee will include representation from groups in each province or territory as well as organizations that provide a national overview.

## **Steering Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities:**

Members of the Steering Committee will:

- Oversee the work of the Coalition.
- Advance the strategy of the Coalition by contributing staff time and financial support.
- Advocate for Coalition goals.
- Support fundraising efforts to ensure that the Coalition has at least one funded coordinator staff position as well as project funds.
- Take leadership roles in Coalition activities and working groups.
- Approve and finalize communications materials of the Coalition.
- Fulfill responsibilities outlined under 'members' above.

## **Decision Making:**

- The Steering Committee generally uses a consensus-based decision-making model (See Appendix A).
- If a vote is required, a decision is made by a quorum of voting members where 66% (2/3 of those voting) must agree for a final decision to be made. Every member organization on the Steering Committee has one vote. FSC, the host organization, only has one vote

as a member organization. The Coordinator can voice their perspective but does not have a vote. A majority of the members (50% of members +1) of the Coalition's Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum.

- For decisions that need to be made between meetings, an email will be circulated to Steering Committee Members with a clear proposal giving them one week to state their position. If a faster decision is needed (under one week or requiring a deeper conversation) decision making will fall to the Advisory.
- Decisions made by the Steering Committee will be circulated within 30 days to members of the Coalition.

#### **Communications:**

- Members of the Steering Committee will communicate via a mailing list (Google Group).
- There will be two levels of email communication to the Steering Committee:
  - Emails that provide information, and where feedback is optional.
  - Emails that are for decision-making will be clearly marked as such and will identify how long members have to review and respond.

#### **Loss of Steering Committee Status:**

- Any Steering Committee member missing 3 consecutive meetings without regrets will be deemed to have resigned from the Steering Committee. These members will be approached by the Coordinator to confirm their engagement with the Coalition.

#### **Records:**

- The Coordinator will keep minutes of Steering Committee meetings and will record in such minutes all decisions and aspects that have been considered in reaching decisions. Draft minutes will be circulated and will be clearly marked as drafts until the minutes are approved at which point the 'draft' will be removed by the Coordinator. Materials are kept for a maximum of 5 years, unless otherwise deemed necessary by the Steering Committee members.

#### **Advisors (or Advisory Subcommittee)**

Advisors provide the coordinator with decision-making support for timely issues arising between Coalition Steering Committee meetings where a decision is needed in less than a week. As such, they must be able to respond to urgent emails in a timely matter.

#### **Becoming an Advisor:**

- Three Advisors are agreed upon by the members of the Coalition at the annual in-person meeting at the same time as the Steering Committee is agreed to by the members of the Coalition.

### **Decision-Making:**

- The Advisors will strive to make decisions by consensus. If consensus is not possible Quorum will be 50+1 for a vote.
- Decisions that are made will be promptly shared back to the Steering Committee as a point of information.

### **Host organization**

The Coalition has no legal status. Its current organizational host is Food Secure Canada (FSC). FSC initiated and has led the development of the CHSF by supporting staff time, coordination of meetings and actions as well as fundraising.

FSC will continue in this leadership role by:

- Supervising and housing the CHSF coordinator and any other staff or consultants (who will carry out many of these functions) and providing staff oversight for those staff funded through the host organization
- Submitting, receiving and administering grants and donations on behalf of the Coalition and providing bookkeeping and accounting support (for a 15% admin fee for all funds received).
- Managing CHSF membership and maintaining records of meetings.
- Coordinating communications with members and the public to ensure collective messaging.
- Reviewing and approving the Coalition's annual work plan to ensure that the proposed work meets FSC's organizational requirements and policies such as the need to be inclusive and non-partisan.
- Offering feedback on legal, media and public relations issues.
- Meeting monthly with the Coordinator to discuss relevant issues and those of strategic interest to the Coalition and FSC.

FSC is a non-partisan, non-profit organization. Any activities undertaken by CHSF must also be non-partisan.



The FSC Board of Directors will seek a member who will act as Board Liaison with the Coalition Steering Committee and the Coalition Steering Committee will seek a member who will act as Steering Committee Liaison with the FSC Board of Directors.

## **National Coalition Coordinator**

As funding is available, the Coalition will have, at minimum, one paid staff member, the CHSF National Coordinator, who is a member of the staff team of FSC. This may be a part-time or full-time position depending on funding and work plan. The Coalition Coordinator is accountable both to the FSC Board and its ED and to the Coalition Steering Committee and the broader Coalition membership. The Coordinator is hired by the FSC ED, who will consult with the Coalition Steering Committee about the person hired. In the case of Contract Termination, the FSC ED will consult with the Coalition Steering Committee.

The Coordinator:

- Facilitates meetings of the CHSF and the Steering Committee.
- Develops agendas and reviews meeting minutes.
- Facilitates discussions and linkages with other organizations.
- Attends/represents the CHSF at meetings and events.
- Represents the CHSF in media and communications work.
- Takes on non-partisan advocacy work on behalf of the Coalition.
- Works closely with CHSF members to proactively identify opportunities for action, funding, collaboration, and other relevance to the Coalition and its members.

As funding permits, other staff or contractors may also be hired by the host organization. Other coalition members may also seek funding for dedicated staff or contractors to implement the work of the Coalition for Healthy School Food nationally or in specific provinces or territories.

## **Committees and Working Groups:**

Committees and Working Groups can be struck when needed.

## **Frequency for reviewing the Terms of Reference:**

The terms of reference will be reviewed annually.

## **Appendix A: Details of the Consensus Model**

The simplest and most basic definition of consensus is “general agreement ... collective opinion” (The Canadian Oxford Dictionary)

In this approach, people are not simply for or against the decision, but have the option to situate themselves on a scale that lets them express their individual opinion more clearly. This model is usually used with a round, so that everyone in the meeting is given the opportunity to state where they are according to the following six levels:

1. Fully support.
2. Support with reservations
3. Acceptable
4. Will not block it, can live with it
5. Need more information or more discussion
6. No; cannot accept it.

If someone is at level 2, 3 or 4, they have the option of explaining their reservations. These can be addressed by the meeting, if the group wishes to. This is not absolutely necessary for achieving consensus if everyone is already at 4 or higher, but it usually improves the recommendation or suggestion being discussed.

If someone is at level 5, they have the obligation to explain what information or discussion they require from the group. If someone is at level 6, it is important for them to try to offer a solution that can accommodate their needs and the needs of the rest of the group.

In addressing someone’s reservations, it is important to ask:

1. Everyone for possible solutions (the person expressing the concern and the rest of the group - both have a responsibility to find solutions); and
2. People to suggest improvements or alternatives that meet the objectives of the entire group.

*Source: National Evaluation Team for Children Terms of Reference, Annex C and adapted from the BC Labour Force Development Board.*

## Appendix B: How Other Groups can Support the Coalition

The Coalition seeks to build a broad base of support for a national universal cost shared school food program. It has developed a range of opportunities for a diversity of supporters to engage with the Coalition who do not qualify for membership.

	<b>Endorsers</b>	<b>Researchers</b>	<b>Individual Supporters</b>
<b>Type of organization involved</b>	Any non-profit group that chooses not to be a member OR any government body that wants to endorse the Coalition's vision.	Academics	Anyone
<b>Way of supporting</b>	Endorse our call for a universal school food program; supports the Coalition in whatever way is decided upon (e.g. sets up strategic meetings); Logo is listed on the endorsers' page of the website	Are involved in research on school food	Support our call for a universal school food program
<b>Capacity</b>	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
<b>Decision making capacity</b>	No decision making	No decision making	No decision making
<b>Method of joining</b>	Online form; Approved if they meet set criteria	Join the School Food Working Group sub-committee of the Canadian Association for Food Studies	Sign on to listserv using the form on the Coalition's website
<b>Method of Communications</b>	Receive updates about progress and opportunities to share info or engage in Coalition activities	Receive emails, will have their own Google Group	Receive emails from mass mailings.