



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL  
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## Our History

**Media Contact:** Marika Albert  
250-383-6166 ext 107, 250-885-6306  
marika@communitycouncil.ca

The Community Social Planning Council (CSPC) begins its origins in 1936 by agencies delivering social services in the community. At the time, the Great Depression was in its seventh year and many agencies were concerned with ongoing poverty and affordable housing issues. This group called itself the Council of Social Agencies and had two main goals: the establishment of a Community Chest and the reduction of overlapping services. This was not a unique model, as there were many Community Chests and Councils of Social Agencies throughout North America. The Council of Social Agencies in Victoria started the first Community Chest fundraising drive in 1937 and worked closely with the Community Chest to distribute the funds raised to the organizations working with the poor. The Community Chest evolved into today's United Way of Greater Victoria.

In 1947 the name of the Council of Social Agencies was changed to the Community Welfare Council. The President of the Community Welfare Council Mr. F.E. Winslow said at the time of the name change.....

....."The Community Welfare Council as the name implies, belongs to every citizen of Greater Victoria. It is one of the organizations which knows no municipal boundaries, no parties and no denominations. If it receives the backing of all citizens whose community sense is keen, it can show that democracy is able to ensure that life shall be full and happy for everyone at every age. To thus ensure the welfare of all by the co-operation of all is the only, and the certain way, to end all fear of atomic warfare. Humanity can never afford to forget that peace is not the absence of war nor is it a state of apathy. The peace we desire might be better termed Harmony, and it ends the moment that minds cease to strive for it. But minds that work in harmony constantly increase the degree of harmony."

By 1949 the Community Welfare Council consisted of 45 agencies and groups, of which 19 received funding from the Community Chest. At the time, the structure was that community organizations sent representatives to sit on the Community Welfare Council and the Council appointed nine representatives to sit on the Community Chest Board. Twenty percent of the Council membership consisted of "citizens of proven ability and interest in social services work".

One of the major concerns of the Community Welfare Council throughout the 1940's and 1950's was housing, particularly the need for better housing for Seniors. The Community Welfare Council undertook the 1950 housing survey with direction by Dr. Leonard Marsh, of the University of British Columbia, who had recently completed a similar survey for the Strathcona area of Vancouver. The Victoria survey was concerned mainly with the financial nature of the housing problem. The chief concern was that people are being forced to pay rents that are too high, and as a consequence are not obtaining the essential food, clothing, and recreation. The main recommendation of the report was that Victoria establish a Victoria Housing Authority, similar to the one in Vancouver, to build subsidized housing and to take over the administration of houses built by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation after the war. It was not until 1982 that the Capital Regional District established a Housing Corporation.

The organization incorporated in 1966 and then obtained its charitable status in 1967 with the following charitable objectives set out in the constitution.

“to improve the quality of life for everyone in British Columbia’s Capital Region, particularly the people who are disadvantaged due to poverty and distress. The work includes the advancement of factors influencing quality of life, including social well-being, community health and education and the alleviation of poverty and its related elements.”

Throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s, the organizations named changed to the Community Council of Greater Victoria. The focus of work was to facilitate cooperation among agencies in the community, to eliminate overlapping of services, to create informed public opinion to effect social reforms and to promote cooperation rather than competition between agencies.

In November 1973, the President of the Community Council, John Di Castri, told the Victoria Colonist that the Community Council was closing its doors after 37 years as a coordinating and planning agency for social services. He explained, “The council’s board of directors and membership have decided the council is no longer needed now that the Capital Region Board is taking over responsibility for social service planning in the Victoria area.” The then Executive Director of the Community Council, Garth Homer, was hired as the first social planner in the Capital Region District. Unfortunately, he died suddenly and no replacement was ever hired to fill the vacancy.

Meanwhile, the organization found itself without funding, as the CRD had taken over responsibility for social planning. However, the Community Council had a dedicated Board, which met annually to keep the society alive, albeit dormant. In 1983, funding was acquired to advise the United Way and the Ministry of Human Resources on grants for family serving agencies. This led to the formation of the Association of Family Serving Agencies (AFSA). The Community Council also conducted research and issued reports on housing and rent controls. Gradually, the Community Council attracted contracts to coordinate AFSA, the Youth at Risk Network, Child and Youth Advocacy and to incubate new initiatives such as Bridges for Women and the Human Exchange. By the late 1980’s, the Community Council had a full-time Executive Director, several other full time staff.

In the early 1990’s the name was changed to the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria reflecting a broader vision to serve local governments and funders as well as social service agencies.

The Community Social Planning Council has continuously evolved to respond to community needs, trends and priorities. It provides leading-edge research, education and evaluation for its members, strategic partners and clients and leadership in convening multi-sector collaborations.

In 2010, new leadership brought new focus on community economic development as method of creating a strong local economy which includes and supports all Victorians.

## OUR VISION

Sustainable and inclusive communities creating their own social, economic, cultural and environmental futures.

## OUR MISSION

The Community Social Planning Council leads social planning in BC’s Capital Region, and creates innovative programs, resources and opportunities that contribute to sustainable social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions for all residents, particularly those who are most disadvantaged. We lead collaborative action to create solutions to community needs based on engagement with those most affected.