

Membership Code Development Guide

Membership Code Development Committee of Council

The Governance Committee started work in 2011 towards the development of certain governance tools (documents) such as:

1. Constitution
2. Leadership Manual
3. Leadership Selection Code
4. Membership Code

In 2015, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada notified COTTFN that a submitted proposal written by the Governance Portfolio had been approved for the development of a Membership Code. The timeframe attached to this approval is March 31, 2016.

Committee Members

1. Betsy Kechejo, COTTFN Councillor, Governance Portfolio
2. Raymond Deleary, COTTFN Councillor
3. Beulah Kechejo, COTTFN Indian Registry Administrator, Staff Support
4. Brenda Young, COTTFN Community Justice Director, Staff Support

COTTFN Conversations

The valuable input of all COTTFN is needed in order to develop a Membership Code that reflects COTTFN values, community, and the survival as a Peoples. The following opportunities will be available for communicative conversations:

1. *Monday, December 14, 2015 – COTTFN Community Centre – attended by only 15 COTTFN*
2. February, 2016 – Four circles: London, Windsor, COTTFN Seniors, COTTFN Youth – Details to come at a later date
3. March, 2016 – COTTFN Community Centre (Review “Draft”) – Details to come at a later date

Options:

Complete the attached survey and submit to COTTFN Administration Office

Conversation Goals

The purpose of gathering input is to guide the writing of the COTTFN Membership Code focused on two main sections:

1. A shared definition of eligibility for membership for COTTFN
2. An understanding of rights and responsibility attached to being a member of COTTFN

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Framework

***important to remember that there is a difference between “Status” granted under the provisions of the *Indian Act* and the granting of “membership” under a COTTFN Membership Code**

“Status” basis for tax exemption, access to non-insured health benefits and treaty entitlements, and eligibility for post-secondary education assistance

“Membership” defines a social and political collective (i.e. a sense and legal recognition of belonging to a group). It conveys political rights (to vote and run for council), and in most First Nations is a condition of access to programs and services administered by the First Nation. Many First Nations equate the concepts of membership and citizenship. (excerpt from information provided at community conversation on December 14, 2015)

The main sections of the COTTFN Membership Code and suggested questions to consider are as follows:

ELIGIBILITY

- Who should be a member of COTTFN?
- Who is eligible to receive programs and services in COTTFN?
- Who is eligible to transfer into COTTFN?

ADMINISTRATIVE

- What mechanisms need to be put in place to implement the COTTFN Membership Code?
- Who has the authority to grant or deny membership?
- What rights and responsibilities attach to being a member of COTTFN?
- Who is responsible for paying for services?

APPEAL PROCEDURE

- What is the process to appeal a decision on membership?
- What are the grounds to appeal a decision on membership?
- Who has the authority to override a previous decision on membership?

AMENDMENT PROVISIONS

- What is the threshold required to implement amendments?
- What is the process to make amendments to the COTTFN Membership Code?

Next Steps

The information collected will comprise the COTTFN Membership Code. Eventually, this Code as written collaboratively will be put forth to COTTFN for a ratification vote. Once ratified COTTFN will determine and maintain its own membership list.