Family Councils Ontario

TOWN HALL MEETING

FCO TOWN HALL · FALL 2026 · TAKEAWAYS

Fall 2026 Town Hall

FCO's work so far this year, a new strategic plan, education and learning pathways, the Champions program and the new online Community of Support.

DATE	HOSTED BY	PRESENTED BY	RECORDING
November 16, 2026	Taeyeoung Jung, Bilingual Events and Project Manager	FCO staff	Watch on YouTube youtu.be/LQwAAm2s9oE

Key takeaways

1. FCO has had a busy first half of the year. From April to September, staff held 56 consultations with Family Council members and 39 with home staff, delivered 28 presentations and met 12 times with the Ministry of Long-Term Care.
2. A new strategic plan is on the way. It's shaped by focus groups with Family Council members and home staff, and an update is expected in spring 2027.
3. There are many ways to learn. Education sessions for councils and leadership teams, the free monthly forum series and the Family Council Foundations e-learning all meet people where they are.
4. Champions bring support into the home. Ten champions have been trained since July, and FCO is looking for more.
5. You're not alone. The new online Community of Support at cos.fco.ngo connects families, care partners, residents, staff and volunteers across Ontario.

FCO by the numbers

Highlights from the first half of FCO's fiscal year, April to September 2026.

56
consultations with Family Council members

39
consultations with home staff

7
councils received coaching

28
presentations delivered

4
guest speaker presentations

4
Family Council Week events in June, three in person and one virtual

45
community partner engagements

3 + 6
system-wide quality improvement initiatives and research projects

12
meetings with the Ministry of Long-Term Care

- Consultations are phone calls, emails and meetings about an issue. With councils, topics include the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, leadership structure and working with the home. With home staff, they cover what support is appropriate from the staff assistant and how to avoid interference.
- Coaching means an FCO program staff member attends a council meeting to give in-the-moment support.
- Partners include the Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care, the Ontario Long-Term Care Association and AdvantAge Ontario. FCO meets regularly with the ministry to share what families are telling us and help shape policy.

Staffing update

- Indigenous Long-Term Care Relations Coordinator: FCO is working with Turtle Island Staffing, an Indigenous recruitment firm, and hopes to have someone in place early in the new year.
- Welcome, Jasmine Lai: our new Admin and Finance Coordinator supports bookkeeping, financial reporting and administration, so the programs, communications, policy and leadership teams can focus on their work.

A new strategic plan

A strategic plan is a decision-making document that defines where an organization is going, what it will focus on and how it will measure progress. It usually covers three to five years.

How we're building it

FCO started early, in the summer, to make time for feedback from the people we serve, through focus groups with Family Council members and with long-term care home staff.

What we asked

- What can FCO do better?
- How can we prepare for a growing long-term care sector, with more homes, more beds and more caregivers finding their way?

Stay tuned. We expect to share the plan in spring 2027, possibly at the Spring Town Hall.

Education and learning pathways

Many ways to learn. One shared goal. Strengthening Family Councils takes education and support for everyone involved: families, council leaders, long-term care staff and leadership teams.

Empowering partnerships

FCO provides education sessions to both Family Councils and long-term care leadership teams. Each group learns from its own perspective, and the information complements each other's, building trust and stronger relationships.

Family Council education	Leadership team education
Understanding Family Councils and their role	Legislative duties and responsibilities to councils
Rights, powers and responsibilities	Current best practices and sector expectations
Effective communication and advocacy	Meaningful engagement with families and caregivers
Governance and leadership skills	Building transparency, accountability and trust
Building and sustaining membership, and working with leadership	Understanding the role and value of Family Councils

Monthly Forum Series

Learning together across Ontario: free, expert-led education for family members and caregivers, Family Council members and leaders, and long-term care staff and leadership teams.

How it works

- Every topic is offered twice a month, in a daytime and an evening session.
- Live and interactive, with time for questions and discussion.
- Recordings are posted on YouTube. The Q&A stays confidential.
- Open to everyone in Ontario at no cost.

Topics

- Foundations: Understanding Long-Term Care; What is a Family Council & Best Practices; Family Council vs. Family Advisory Committee
- Council development: Terms of Reference, Code of Conduct & Confidentiality; Increasing & Sustaining Membership
- Partnership and advocacy: Role of the Licensee; Leading Councils to Advocacy

Family Council Foundations e-learning

Our newest program: a free, self-paced series of four modules to help family members and partners in care understand, join, develop and lead Family Councils. Complete all four to receive a certificate your council can post with pride.

Module	What it covers
1. Starting a Family Council	What councils are and why they matter, legislative powers and responsibilities, and how to start or join one
2. Family Council vs. Family Advisory Committee	Key differences, authority and influence, and moving from an advisory group to a Family Council
3. Leadership Styles & Leading Family Councils	Leadership approaches, running effective meetings, communication, advocacy and conflict management
4. Terms of Reference & Code of Conduct	Governance fundamentals, roles, decision-making and building sustainable, accountable councils

Family Council Champions

FCO offers a lot of education, but we aren't in your home every day. Champions are. Ten champions have been trained since the program launched in July.

Who is a champion?

A family member, friend or other important person in a resident's life who knows the home and its people, and cares about strong Family Councils.

With a council

Champions help the council grow, encourage families to take part, and keep it going through changes in leadership or times of conflict.

Without a council

Champions keep momentum going after an FCO presentation, build interest, and help organize a planning group to start one.

Become a champion. Whether your home has an active council or has struggled to start one, a champion can help. Champions also connect with each other to share ideas. Learn more at fco.ngo/family-council-champions.

The Community of Support

An online peer-support community where people connected to long-term care in Ontario find each other, share what they've learned, and know they aren't navigating this alone. It's open to families and care partners, residents, staff and volunteers.

- You're not alone: connect with council members across Ontario, including through private messages.
- Practical resources: shared tools on effective meetings, recruitment and self-care.
- A space for you: open and closed groups for council leaders, caregiver grief, artists, French speakers and more.

Join the Community of Support

Scan the code or visit the site to get started.

cos.fco.ngo

How to join

1. Visit cos.fco.ngo, click Join a Community, then Log in / Sign up.
2. Create your account.
3. Join the spaces that fit you and say hello.

Q&A highlights

Questions are summarized without names, as the discussion was confidential.

Residents now arrive frailer and stay a shorter time, so fewer families get involved in councils. How is FCO addressing this? Could FCO get the message into mainstream media?	It's a real challenge. As more people are supported to age at home, residents arrive with higher care needs and closer to end of life, and many caregivers come in during a crisis. This will directly inform FCO's new strategic plan. We're also looking at community newspapers and other media to raise awareness of long-term care and of caregivers' changing role during the move. Stay tuned.
Why can't people who no longer have a loved one in long-term care be Champions? Aren't we missing out on their knowledge?	Someone who has been part of a council and wants to move into a supportive or coaching role can be eligible. A Champion needs to know what is happening in the home now, and what families, friends and staff need today. The Champions program is also still a pilot: FCO is reviewing the data and outcomes from participating councils to shape it. Interested in becoming a Champion? Learn more at fco.ngo/family-council-champions or email info@fco.ngo.
Will Community of Support groups be organized by region, so people nearby can meet for a coffee chat?	You can already start a group message with up to 38 people and turn it into a video call. FCO is exploring regional options, without creating barriers, and would love to build invite-only groups for individual homes, run by admins chosen with each Family Council, to help councils grow online.
How safe and confidential is the Community of Support?	It runs on FCO's own platform, separate from other tools, with no advertising. Only three groups are open: Art, General Questions and Introductions. All others are closed to non-members. There's a confidentiality page on the site, a code of behaviour, and moderators and admins who look after the space. Any online space carries some risk, but privacy is a top priority.
Where can I find these resources to share with my home?	Everything is on fco.ngo. Everyone who registered will also get a follow-up email with a recap and links to everything presented.

FCO services

Education	Build knowledge, confidence and skills
Consulting	Connect you with resources and guidance
Coaching	Look at current practices and suggest areas for growth
Leadership training	Help leadership stay informed, aware, engaged and accountable
Conflict resolution	Help resolve interpersonal and operational challenges
e-Learning	Self-paced learning: fco.ngo/resources/e-learning
Family Council Champions	Support local capacity and community engagement: fco.ngo/family-council-champions

Who you heard from

Taeyeoung Jung	Bilingual Events and Project Manager (host)
Sam Peck	CEO: FCO updates, staffing and strategic planning
Heather Webster	Outreach Coordinator: education and learning pathways
Cathleen Edwards	Manager of Knowledge Mobilization and Evaluation: Champions program
Ioan Williams	Senior Communications and Events Manager: Community of Support

Questions about your home or council? Email info@fco.ngo and a staff member will respond.

WATCH THE RECORDING

Fall 2026 Town Hall

The presentation is on our YouTube channel. Feel free to share it with your council. youtu.be/LQwAAm2s9oE

KEEP LEARNING

Monthly Forum Series

Daytime and evening sessions every month, free. Register at fco.ngo/forums

Family Councils Ontario

Questions? We're here to help.
info@fco.ngo · 1-877-622-9968 · fco.ngo