

The main purposes of a Family Council are to improve the quality of life of long-term care residents and to give families and friends a forum for sharing their experiences, learning and exchanging information. While each Family Council is unique, many have similar goals. The four most common goals are **support** for residents, their families and each other; facilitating and enhancing **communication** between families, staff and residents; providing a forum for **education** and discussing relevant issues; and, **advocacy** on behalf of all residents (not on individual issues).

Many Councils decide to do some fundraising, whether it's for a specific project or for their ongoing activities. Family Councils Ontario does not encourage fundraising as a primary Family Council activity as it may distract from the primary goals of support, communication, education and advocacy. Many other Councils do not fundraise and their work is as important and successful as those that do. Fundraising is not a requirement for a Family Council and is not an activity that needs to take place.

This fact sheet contains information and important points to consider for Councils who do fundraising or are considering a fundraising activity.

Things To Do and Consider Before Fundraising

1. Check in with the administration: It is important to let the administration know about any plans the Council has to carry out a fundraising activity within the home.
2. Does your home have an auxiliary or other fundraising body? Many Homes have an auxiliary whose mission is to fundraise for activities for the residents that the home cannot provide. If the Family Council is thinking about fundraising then it is very important to check in with the auxiliary so that there will not be competing fundraising activities within the home.
3. Accountability: Handling money well is an important aspect of fundraising so that all money raised is accounted for and the accounts are clear and balanced. Many Family Councils who have not thought this through have had challenges. Consider:
 - If the Council decides there is a need for a bank account, talk to the bank about the responsibilities and various options for an account. Whose name will be on the account and who will have signing authority?
 - Will there be a treasurer and what will be the treasurer's responsibilities? It is important to think through not just the role in general but also what the job of the treasurer will specifically include – how will he/she report on the funds? How often?
 - How will decisions about the money be made? How many members of the Family Council need to be present to make a fundraising or funding decision?
 - What happens when one of the signing authorities leaves? Think through the process of how to ensure that the signing authority on the account does not leave with them.

- How will you communicate with the Family Council, family members, donors and the general public how funds will be collected and what the money is going towards? People want to know what they are being asked to support!
4. What is the purpose of the fundraising activity? Does this fundraising activity have the approval of the Family Council's general membership?
 - It is essential that the fundraising activity has a designated purpose and proceeds are used only for that purpose.
 5. Other things to think about:
 - Make sure that fundraising is not the primary focus of FC activities. Family Councils are more than a fundraising committee.
 - Be cautious of any requests the home makes regarding fundraising. Do not fundraise for things the home has a responsibility to provide.
 - If planning an activity that involves any raffle or gambling, make sure you have visited your local municipal offices to explore the licencing required for these activities. Once you have the information ensure the all members understand fully their responsibilities and are in agreement with the activity.
 - Is there any potential conflict of interest i.e. an activity that results in more than an incidental personal benefit to an individual or corporation?
 - Consider the number and extent of activities each year: How will the fundraising activity impact on time spent on all activities by FC members?
 - How will you coordinate efforts across groups? Check in with the Residents Council and other groups in the home.

Check out the Family Councils Ontario website for ways that your Council can support the residents, families and Long-Term Care Home through a variety of activities. Visit www.fco.ngo.

Charitable Status

Some Family Councils have inquired about obtaining charitable status in order to provide donors with a tax deductible receipt. This can be a complex undertaking which might divert the Councils from their main purpose of improving the quality of life of residents. For more information on charitable status, contact The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the government department responsible for granting organizations charitable tax status. Phone the Charities Client Assistance department at 1-800-267-2384 or visit <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca> for more information.

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