

A. Community Relations Councils (CRCs)

are groups of diverse community members and stakeholders who collaboratively and constructively engage one another, and any other relevant entities, for the purpose of learning about, informing others, examining, advising on and supporting key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations.

B. Community Relations

refers to the relations between (1) particular community groups, and/or (2) between the community as a whole and particular community groups

C. Community Development

refers to activities that constructively protect, maintain and enhance key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations (in accordance with the ethical framework that a society uses to govern its affairs)

D. Key Characteristics of Community Relations Councils

a. Diverse Citizens and Stakeholders

membership of CRC is primarily oriented toward diverse community members, stakeholders and decision makers who are capable of making a constructive contribution to learning about, informing others, examining, advising on and supporting the development of key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations

b. Constructive Contribution

support processes of engagement, analysis and advising that are generally considered valid and constructive (aligns with the ethical framework and broadly supported practices that a society uses/endorsees to govern its affairs)

provide input that is likely to produce insight and learning regarding the quality of community life issue under consideration

seek to both inform and learn, support and challenge, maintain boundaries and be flexible, committed to learning before advising open to creative methods, perspectives and ideas

provide reasonable representation of a community group (participation has potential to promote constructive community relations)

E. Self-Management oriented

a. CRCs are self-organizing and managing (within the framework provided and supported by the SCHAC), and are encouraged to:

(1) secure diverse and representative council members that are capable of making a constructive contribution to the activities of the council

(2) actively seek out local and relevant partners (e.g. City/County Council, local Government, local Chambers of Commerce etc.)

(3) develop a statement of their mission, vision and values that reasonably aligns with the overall mission, vision and values of the official South Carolina Community Relations System

(4) develop a general service provision model from the choices embedded within the flexible/accordion style service provision model developed, offered and supported by the CRC (or any other model that appropriately achieves the mission of the official CRC)

(5) use an organized system of decision making that respects fundamental outcome and process ethics (Roberts Rules is suggested)

(6) set goals, develop plans for achieving those goals, and manage the execution of their plans within their chosen service provision model (with assistance from the SCHAC and others where necessary)

(7) keep a reasonable record of their mission, vision, values, membership, meetings and activities (each council will decide on the recording methods, level of detail, privacy etc.)

(8) work collaboratively with SCHAC, and commit to making a reasonable effort to conduct their affairs in accordance with the spirit and provisions of the South Carolina Human Affairs act (1972)

(9) attempt to send representatives to the annual South Carolina Community Relations Council Conference

F. Types of Community Relations Councils

a. Partner Oriented

A partnered council has an established partnership with City/County Council, Mayors Office, local Government, local Chamber of Commerce or any other established, consequential, reputable and aligned entity (e.g. a local and reputable non-profit organization, economic development association etc.). The nature of the partnership is determined by the type, level and point of partnership:

b. Type of partnership (direct vs indirect)

Directly involved partners actively participate within the general management and service provision activities of the council (e.g. a city Mayor that chairs a council or a Chamber of Commerce representative that is a permanent member of the council). Indirectly involved partners

are not directly involved within the general management of the council and are supportive in other ways (e.g. a City Manager who attends the annual presentation of the Council, or a Chamber of Commerce that provides facilities support for services provided by counsel)

c. Level of Direct Involvement (Leadership vs General Participation)

The level of direct involvement ranges from leadership (e.g. a City Mayor who chairs a Council) through to general direct/active involvement (e.g. Chamber of Commerce President who is a permanent and active member of the general management team)

d. Point of Partnership

The partnership takes place with a partner entity (e.g. city/county council, city/county government, Chamber of Commerce, economic development association, non-profit organization etc.) who has a management team or manager who authorizes the partnership (e.g. a Chamber of Commerce executive team or the office of the President of the Chamber). The partner must also identify the operational point of contact between the partner and the council (e.g. a partnership with the City Manager's office where the City Manager delegates the point of contact and council chair responsibilities to a staff member who is responsibility for community relations - this role within the partner organization becomes the point of partnership)

A non-partnered council does not have a partnership with the types of entities described above. Non-partnered councils are established and managed by non-affiliated local citizens (not affiliated with the type of entities described above) but may have indirect partners who indirectly support the council management and/or service provision process (e.g. a city government that allows the council to use their boardroom for meetings and their training room for putting on approved events)

The SCHAC encourages the formation of partnered CRC because they expand the involvement and support of key stakeholders and provide established pathways for providing advisory and support services.

G. Limited vs Full-Service Councils

In acknowledgement of and respect for the volunteer basis of most councils and other partners, and the varying resources available to these groups, the CRC has developed a flexible accordion style service provision model that can expand, and contract based on the interests, needs and resources of particular councils. The service provision model chosen by a council can

range from a single simple element of the suggested model (e.g. maintain an informative website) to multiple and potentially all of the proposed elements. CRCs are also free to choose alternative approaches that support achieving the overall mission and vision of the official community relations and development system

The elements of the flexible/accordion style service provision model include the following:

- **General Meet, Greet and Discuss**

is an organized but relatively informal process that brings together diverse community members and key community stakeholders for the purpose of meeting one another, developing their relationships, networking, and discussing key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations. These discussions may result in the decision to make use of one of the other elements of the flexible/accordion style service provision system

- **Expedited Community Review**

is an efficient, brief and organized process that brings together diverse, informed and collaborative community members and key community stakeholders, for the purpose of:

- (1) promoting constructive engagement and relations both within and between diverse community members and key community stakeholders*
- (2) conducting an expedited review of key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations*
- (3) providing a brief report on the outcomes of the expedited community review process (CRDD-SHAC provides a brief, organized and online form for gathering the information)*

- **Information Management System (Website)**

is an information management system that:

- (1) collects, organizes and disseminates constructive and useful information via a website, about the quality of community life and key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations;*
- (2) promotes constructive online community engagement via (a) an editorial process;*
- (b) a one-way engagement process (e.g. blog); and*

(3) an online discussion board (the engagement components are voluntary additional components that are added to the web sites in consultation with the CRDD-SCHAC).

- **Events Management**

is an organized process for planning and executing an event that supports constructive examination and shaping of key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations.

- **Supporting the Local Issues Management Process**

is an organized and comprehensive process that brings diverse, informed and collaborative community members and key community stakeholders together for the purpose of:

(1) promoting constructive engagement and relations both within and between diverse community members and key community stakeholders;

(2) providing diverse, comprehensive and organized support for a community issues management process that addresses key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations;

(3) providing a brief report on the outcomes of the issues management process to the CRDD-SCHAC.

- **Group Relations Development**

is an organized process that brings members of community groups into constructive engagement with one for the general purpose of improving their mutual awareness, empathy and relations.

- **Social/Community Crisis Management**

is a expedited and managed process that provides community members and other key stakeholders with the opportunity to constructively express their perspectives and experiences of what is generally and reasonably considered a crisis (impending crisis), with regard to key contributors to the quality of community life, including community relations.

Each CRC is encouraged to work with representatives of the SCHAC to identify what components of the service provision model they wish to include within their particular service provision model.

H. Temporary vs Permanent Councils

A permanent CRC is established with the objective of functioning on an ongoing basis. Under appropriate circumstances, the SCHAC may support

the establishment of a temporary council that is established and functions in accordance with the guidelines, principles and values of the Community Relations Council. For example, a local competent sponsor may approach the CRC to establish a temporary group of diverse community members and relevant stakeholders in order to execute an element of the suggested accordion style/flexible service provision model (e.g. a local sponsor may approach a CRC to set up and conduct an expedited community review regarding a particular contributor to the quality of community life, including community relations)

I. Types of Council Members and Participants

CRCs are typically comprised of the following participants:

Core/permanent members are a diverse and representative group of ongoing members that directly participate within the process of governing the council and supporting the execution of its services.

Temporary members are participants that are invited to support the activities of the council for a particular period of time (e.g. a subject matter expert that is invited to provide input on an issue that the council is considering, or a local official that is invited to hear an advisory presentation conducted by the council etc.)

J. Member Selection

The SCHAC works with the sponsor(s) of a council to establish and execute (where necessary) member selection policy and procedures that (1) meets the general standards established by SCHAC (see below), (2) supports the reasonable needs of the sponsor(s) (reasonably incentivizes continuing sponsorship), and (3) supports the efficient and effective functioning of the council. The member selection process may range from an invitation/appointment process to an openly advertised process in which all community members are eligible to apply.

The process must reasonably attempt to secure diverse members who:

- are reasonably representative of key elements of the community and groups associated with issues under consideration

- are capable and committed to making an informed/useful and constructive contribution to the management and/or activities of the council

- are willing to work within the general operating framework outlined for the mission, vision, values and functioning of the official South Carolina Community Relations and Development System

Constructive inclusion is a process of promoting participation of diverse stakeholders in order to ensure diverse representation and input, while ensuring that participants have the capacity to make a constructive contribution and the process is manageable

K. General Functioning of a Community Relations Council

CRCs have 2 parallel and interconnected processes

(1) Council Management Process, and the (2) Service Provision Process

a. The council management process includes the following:

- set up and maintaining the general discussion and decision-making process (e.g. Roberts Rules)
- develop and implement the general policies and procedures that govern the functioning of the council
- select a chair, secretary and treasurer (if necessary)
- secure council members
- select the service(s) that will be delivered
- manage the website (if a council chooses to have a website)
- implement the service provision choices
- send a representative of the council to the SC CRC Conference (takes place every 2 years)
- conduct a review of council activities and make a brief report to SCHAC.

Each council develops their own schedule of management meetings and participation within meetings may take place via remote access where the technology exists.

b. The service provision process is comprised of the various service(s) that a council chooses to provide (e.g. an expedited community review). Each council is encouraged to select suggested service(s) from the flexible-accordion style service provision model provided by the Community Relations Division of the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission.

Integration of the Processes

CRCs need to conduct at least two (2) management meetings a year (annual preparation meeting at the beginning of the year and a review meeting at the end of the year). Once the service provision plan for the year has been established, councils may focus their attention delivering the services. This may be limited to having a meet-greet-discuss session(s) or include other services like community events and group relations development meeting(s).