

How to Start and Maintain a CPF Chapter **Manual for Volunteer Leaders**

Welcome to Canadian Parents for French!

Canadian Parents for French is an organization that serves members and stakeholders across Canada. CPF collaborates as a Network to strengthen member and stakeholder experiences and to enhance our service delivery.

Mission Statement

Canadian Parents for French is a nationwide, research-informed, volunteer organization that promotes and creates opportunities to learn and use French for all those who call Canada home.

Advantages of Chapter Status

Why Chapters?

The Canadian Parents for French is made up of three entities (National, Branch, Chapter) who are each accountable to the wider membership, since the most important decisions that impact French as a second language learning (core French and French immersion) take place at three levels:

- the federal government (which encourages and supports the learning of official languages)
- provincial/territorial governments (which have constitutional authority over education)
- school boards (who are often given local responsibilities from provincial or territorial governments).

The three levels are also important because conditions and needs can be different depending on location, so projects and responses must be tailored to meet the local context.

Finally, these entities form a coherent Network which reaches into communities large and small in every corner of the country, allowing our members to more effectively communicate to promote and support French as a second language learning.

The Role of the Chapter

Organized local Canadian Parents for French groups (we call them “Chapters”) are needed:

- to liaise between local CPF members and local decision makers and other stakeholder groups
- to liaise between local CPF members and the provincial/territorial (“Branch”) and National office of the organization
- to disseminate information about French as a second language learning within their communities
- to work to support local French as a second language programs
- to encourage and/or sponsor extracurricular French living/learning experiences for the young people in their communities
- to provide a critical mass of advocacy on the local, grassroots level that is then supported at the regional and national level.

Benefits to Chapters

CPF National is responsible for important resources and communications to the whole Network and ensuring systems and supports are in place to deliver on the vision. It works directly with provincial / territorial Branches, and has a coordination support role related to the Chapters across the country. Local Canadian Parents for French Chapters receive direct support from their provincial / territorial CPF Branch through:

- a rebate fee on membership dues as well as other financial assistance from grants, project funds, etc. Ask your Branch for details!
- support for their activities through our experienced staff members, our network of volunteer and professional contacts, the branch website, fact sheets, and our resource library.
- Increased credibility by belonging to a respected national/provincial/territorial organization.
- sponsorship of their representatives to attend conferences and learning sessions; on-site training as requested.
- bulk copies of CPF Branch and National publications and other resources for use in program promotion.

How to Start a CPF Chapter (10 Steps)

Establish a small Steering Committee to:

1. determine how your Chapter will be organized to accomplish its goals not just for the next year or two, but also over the medium and long term.
2. ensure there are at least 6 CPF members in good standing within the area of the proposed Chapter (as few as 5 households where two adults' names are on file as members).
3. review the CPF Chapter policies and guidelines, with the assistance of branch staff, to ensure understanding of expectations among Chapter members (for example, expectations related to child safety, volunteer code of conduct, financial and activity reporting, etc.)
4. prepare for a founding meeting and notify and invite all current CPF members in your area to attend. Obtain the list of members from the Branch office.
5. seek out individuals to take the various positions on your Chapter Executive, consisting of President, Vice-President, and Treasurer, as well as other officers as needed.

Hold a founding meeting at which the current CPF members:

6. review the Branch Bylaws and Chapter Policies.
7. elect a Chapter Executive in accordance with the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Chapter Policies.
8. approve the Chapter's initial priorities and set an activity agenda for the calendar year.

The new Chapter Executive then:

9. sets up a bank account in the Chapter name with at least two (2) signing officers.
10. applies to Canadian Parents for French for Chapter status by sending to the CPF Branch office:
 - a. a photocopy of the signed Application Form.
 - b. the contact list of Chapter Executives (Chapter AGM Report Form).
 - c. the Chapter bank account information form (to be kept on file at the Branch for reference).

How to Maintain a CPF Chapter

Chapter Responsibilities:

- Maintain that at least six (6) CPF members in good standing that live in the Chapter jurisdiction.
- Hold a minimum of one (1) board meeting per year, and one (1) Annual General Meeting with an election to determine the positions of Chapter Executive and to generate an annual plan that establishes priorities and goals for the year.
- Operate within the rules, regulations, Chapter policies, Branch Bylaws of Canadian Parents for French.
- Use Chapter membership rebate funds to promote French as a second language learning opportunities for students in your area.
- Immediately advise the Branch of any changes to your Chapter Executive.
- Submit Chapter financial and activity reports by the deadline to the Branch office.
- Be an active part of the Canadian Parents for French network by:
 - participating in branch and national programs and projects as appropriate to your chapter members' priorities, interests and availability.
 - maintaining regular communication with the Branch office and with members in your area through social media, live events and opportunities to network.
 - keeping the Branch informed of issues and trends in your area, so that the Branch can inform the other Branches and National, who in turn can work effectively on your behalf.
 - sharing your ideas, experiences, and resources with other Chapters across Canada.

Things to consider :

- Support all French second language programs including core French. This enlarges the potential group of members and volunteers and will avoid any conflict between supporters of various programs.
- Offer incentives to members, students and volunteers to congratulate effort and achievement and to motivate future involvement.
- Communicate with your provincial Branch regularly.
- Learn how to delegate to avoid burnout.
- Find ways to have fun.
- Keep meetings short enough to keep attention and long enough to accomplish clearly defined goals.
- Find family activities for members and volunteers to keep kids in the picture.
- Keep the media aware of Chapter activities.
- Offer resources to parents to keep them active and aware. (Speakers, updates of recent research or information about upcoming policy and funding issues can be invaluable).

Communication Responsibilities:

Branch to Chapter

Notice of upcoming events (Workshops / Training / AGM, Programs)

Volunteer recognition

Request reports on programs, questions

Information on new Branch projects

Membership rebates, membership statistics/list

Support available

Surveys

Tools: Communiqué, newsletters, email, phone calls, face-to-face meetings

Chapter to Branch

Send reports on activities
Request information
Reply to invitations (AGM, etc.)
Seek support
Request materials (brochures, display, bookmarks, give-aways, booklets, memberships, etc.)
Clarify
Survey
Report policy changes
Tools Email, phone calls, face-to-face meetings

Chapter to Member

Notice of upcoming events (training, programs for students, meetings)
Request volunteer participation
Welcome new/renewed members
Survey/gather information
Update membership list
Request support for advocacy/activities
Invite to meetings
Tools Email, phone calls, notes to parents, school newsletter, school meetings

Chapter Forms and Resources

Forms

- New CPF Chapter Status Application Form (one time only)
- CPF Chapter Executives Contact List and Banking Information (as required)
- [CPF Chapter Activity Report](#) (annual)
- CPF Chapter Financial Report (annual)
- CPF Chapter Meeting Template and Sample Meeting Agenda

CPF National Website

- [Chapter Support and Information Page](#)

CPF Social Media Accounts

- CPF National: on Facebook [@CandianParentsforFrench](#), on Twitter [@CPFNational](#), on Instagram [@cpfnational](#), and on [You Tube](#)

CPF Chapter Executive Roles and Responsibilities

There are three (3) required officer roles that every CPF Chapter Executive must include: President, Vice-President and Treasurer. This is required according to the Branch Bylaws. In addition, we strongly recommend the positions of Secretary and Membership Coordinator. It's common to see the roles of Treasurer and Secretary combined, but this can make for a lot of work for one person, and if possible we suggest that your board make these two separate positions.

As a charitable, not-for-profit, organization receiving government funding, Canadian Parents for French has a duty to report on all our financial activity. CPF Chapter activities are considered part of Branch activity and fall under Branch fiduciary responsibility, within their complete financial reporting. The Branch may also use the information provided by Chapters about additional funds they raise

locally to leverage further funding with matching grants. So, it's very important for the Executive to remain up to date with reporting, and to clearly report all activities and monies at the Chapter level.

The Chapter Executives is elected at the annual Chapter AGM, and additional officers may be added by the Board between AGMs. Here's a summary of what the various board roles entail:

President (mandatory position)

Estimated volunteer time: approximately 3-10 hours a month

The Chapter President is responsible for all Chapter business, ensuring that activities are based on the mission, vision and values of Canadian Parents for French, support the directions of the CPF Network Strategic Plan and follow the Branch Bylaws and Chapter Policies. This means that the President oversees the Chapter's governance, planning, community engagement, advocacy, and Chapter reporting.

The specific work that falls within the responsibility of the President includes:

- chairing all Chapter meetings, including the board meetings and the annual general meeting
- being responsible for the management of Chapter affairs, including acting as a signing authority on the Chapter bank account, and other official documents
- ensuring that required Chapter Activity and Financial Reporting is completed and submitted on time to the Branch
- maintaining correspondence with the Branch and relaying all pertinent information to the Chapter Executives and general CPF membership
- representing the Chapter at community and school district events, including advocacy efforts
- seeking out events in the community where there is an opportunity to network and raise the profile of the Chapter and of the work CPF does and distributing promotional and informational materials. (Banners, posters, and brochures that talk about French as a Second Language learning and its benefits are available by contacting the Branch).
- staying abreast of Chapter opportunities at the levels of advocacy, community events, and membership development
- understanding how, when, and to whom to delegate when the required work extends beyond the direct functions of their role, helping to engage new volunteers

Vice-President (mandatory position)

Estimated volunteer time: approximately 1-5 hours a month

The Chapter Vice-President assumes the President's role and responsibilities when the President is unable to do so. The Vice-President also assists the President in staying abreast of Chapter opportunities, helping with large projects and time-consuming duties, including assisting with emails, and with communications to the membership and to the public. The Vice-President's position has flexibility, and can be customized to address Chapter local needs, interests, expertise and capacity. As such, the Vice-President's role is a unique and integral part of your Board and Chapter work.

The specific work that falls within the responsibility of the Vice-President includes:

- overseeing aspects of Chapter Board operations, such as managing succession planning materials, identifying volunteer leaders in the community, introducing nominations for the Board, year-to-year.

- managing projects your Chapter has planned to undertake (as agreed to by the Board) in the areas of advocacy, community events, and membership development.

Treasurer (mandatory position)

Estimated volunteer time: approximately 1-5 hours a month

The Chapter Treasurer is responsible for preparing and overseeing all the financial activities of the Chapter. As Chapters maintain their own bank accounts and are required to have at least two (2) signing officers—the Treasurer is one of these two signatories on your Chapter bank account.

The specific work that falls within the responsibility of the Treasurer includes:

- preparing and monitoring, on a monthly basis, the Chapter's annual budget
- managing and reporting on the Chapter bank account, maintaining the monthly books (monthly spending and monies received), managing the Chapter rebates, keeping track of the monthly financial transactions and bank reconciliations
- preparing the required financials for each Chapter Board meeting as well as the annual financials for the Chapter AGM
- preparing and submitting the annual Chapter financial reporting to the Branch – this includes: approved budget; balance sheet; income statement.

Secretary (can be combined with the position of Vice President or Treasurer)

Volunteer time required: approximately 1-5 hours a month

The Chapter Secretary is responsible for what's communicated by the Chapter, recording and documenting decisions and actions, as well as maintaining the filing/archiving system of these records. In collaboration with the President, before each board meeting, the secretary creates the meeting agenda; gives email notice to the board members of the meeting a minimum of 14 days in advance of meeting date.

The specific work that falls within the responsibility of the Secretary includes:

- records and circulates the minutes of all meetings and makes them available to any voting member of the Chapter.
- during meetings, the Secretary takes minutes (according to Roberts Rules), and records the votes on all matters pertaining to financial and governance matters.
- after meetings, the Secretary finalizes the minutes and sends them to the Board prior to the next meeting.
- In terms of the Chapter AGM, the same steps are followed, prepares and sends notices of the meeting. However advance notice of the meeting must be given to all Chapter members, and must be given a minimum of fourteen (14) days in advance of the date of the meeting.

Discretionary roles:

Additionally, there are other Board positions that aren't mandatory but that perform a valuable function. These roles can be combined with other positions. Volunteer time required for these positions is approximately 1-5 hours a month. A few of them for your consideration are the following:

Membership Coordinator

The Membership Coordinator has a valuable role to play in welcoming new volunteer leaders as they join your Chapter, in planning membership outreach campaigns and liaising with the Branch regarding your Chapter membership lists to ensure accuracy – important functions to maintaining a thriving,

robust and engaged Chapter membership.

FI School Representatives

There are Chapter members who represent French Immersion schools in their district; the goal is to have each FI school represented. These aren't always voting board members; their function is more one of communication with the school district, school principal and parent community rather than governance. The reps can attend board meetings to report on priorities for their school.

Resource Coordinator

The Resource Coordinator sources out books and learning resources as part of fundraising efforts or as donations or prizes to share with students and/or families and schools that fall within your Chapter. The Coordinator will often work in tandem with the Chapter President, the Fundraising Coordinator (if there is one), as well as the Event Coordinator (if there is one).

Fundraising Coordinator

The Fundraising Coordinator is responsible for overseeing fundraising efforts, coordinating and communicating fundraising events at the local level, and for grant-writing on behalf of the Chapter. The Coordinator works closely with the President and can also involve collaboration with the Event Coordinator (if there is one).

School Event Coordinator

The School Event Coordinator works with the Board and with the Chapter members to identify French cultural events and performers to bring to the schools. The role includes planning the event/s, booking the entertainer/s, ensuring the payments for services, and may involve applying for socio-cultural grants, and other grants applicable if there isn't a Fundraising Coordinator.