



AIRDRIE BOARD OF YOUTH AFFAIRS

Terms of Reference

1. Background

The Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs (ABYA) was first formed in 2005, as the Hyjinx Youth Council, with the goal to empower youth in Airdrie to deal with issues that affect them. In 2013, members began the process of rebuilding and redefining the goals and structure of the group.

In 2023, the Board began the process of formalizing its structure to become an official Committee of City Council in 2024. This evolution reflected the Board's continued growth and commitment to supporting meaningful youth participation in municipal governance. The Board is governed by an associated bylaw that defines its mandate, responsibilities, membership, and relationship with City Council.

2. Purpose

The Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs serves as a bridge between City Council, City administration, youth, and the community by functioning as an advisory body to the City of Airdrie. Members of the ABYA will provide a voice for Airdrie youth through advocacy and consultation.

The Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs will advise the City of Airdrie on:

- Youth involvement in the planning and development of City services and programs
- How the views of youth can be solicited and conveyed to Council
- Matters of planning and infrastructure
- Matters relating to policy and strategic development

Vision

Empowering youth voice in the community

Mission

To educate and empower the youth community by providing advice to City departments and City Council on issues that affect youth, and through partnerships with other youth-focused groups, agencies, and organizations.

Mandate

The Board provides information and advice to Council, Administration, and local youth organizations as directed by Council based on recommendations provided by the Board in relation to issues that may affect youth in the Airdrie community (B-15/2024).

3. Values

- Youth have the right and responsibility to play an integral role within their community
- Youth should be encouraged and given the opportunity to take a leading role in issues that affect their lives
- Youth should be consulted whenever decisions that affect them are being made
- Youth are able to make positive contributions to their community

4. Goals

- To advise City Council and City of Airdrie administration regarding matters that concern youth
- To provide a forum to address and discuss concerns that affect youth in Airdrie
- To empower youth and give them the ability to facilitate change
- To allow youth to develop important skills such as leadership, research, writing, and communication.

5. Membership

- The ABYA will consist of a minimum of 7 members and maximum of 11.
- Membership is open to youth ages 13 to 22
- Membership is limited to youth that are currently residing within the City of Airdrie
- Three levels of membership are available to youth: Executive Membership, General Membership, and Ambassador Membership

5.1 Executive Membership

Executive members assume all the duties of the General Membership, while also providing leadership and direction to the ABYA. Executive members should be responsible, organized, and enthusiastic. A voting process of the General Membership will determine executive members.

Chair

Provides leadership to the Board, ensures meetings are effective and inclusive, oversees Board activities, and serves as the primary liaison between the Board and the Youth Engagement Specialist.

Responsibilities:

- Provide leadership during board meetings and support effective decision-making.
- Facilitate meetings and discussions to ensure all members have the opportunity to contribute.
- Collaborate with the Youth Engagement Specialist to develop meeting agendas and priorities.
- Participate in Board subcommittees as required.
- Support the preparation and completion of the annual/end-of-year report.
- Oversee and review Council Liaison updates before submission.
- Represent the Board at community, organizational, and stakeholder events as appropriate.
- Promote accountability and ensure Board members fulfill their responsibilities.
- Support member engagement, recruitment, and succession planning.

Vice Chair

Supports the Chair in fulfilling their responsibilities and assumes the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unavailable.

Responsibilities:

- Act on behalf of the Chair when required.
- Participate in Board subcommittees as required.
- Assist with the preparation and completion of the annual/end-of-year report.
- Support and oversee Council Liaison updates.

- Assist with Board member onboarding by communicating and supporting new recruits.
- Support the Chair by monitoring Board priorities, projects, and action items including tracking actions aligned with the strategic focus areas and subcommittees projects.
- Help facilitate meetings and discussions to ensure all members have the opportunity to contribute.

Secretary

Supports effective governance by maintaining accurate meeting records, tracking Board actions, and ensuring timely communication and documentation.

Responsibilities:

- Record and maintain accurate meeting minutes.
- Track Board motions, decisions, and action items.
- Distribute meeting materials and Board documentation as required.
- Complete quarterly Council Liaison updates.
- Complete feedback messaging for unsuccessful youth grant applications.
- Ensure Board records are organized and stored appropriately.
- Support the annual/end-of-year report through quarterly summaries of Board activities and accomplishments.
- Monitor attendance and report quorum requirements during meetings.
- Assist with Board and stakeholder correspondence as needed.
- Monitor emails on a bi-weekly basis.

5.2 General Membership

The General Membership is an integral part of the ABYA and requires enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication from everyone involved.

- Providing advice to City Council and City administration on issues that affect youth in the City of Airdrie.
- Working with other departments, agencies, and organizations working on youth initiatives when applicable.

- Conducting relevant research that addresses present and future concerns of Airdrie youth.
- Voting on decisions that affect the ABYA.
- Attending all activities, functions, presentations and meetings of the ABYA.
- Actively recruiting new members to the ABYA.

5.3 Ambassador Membership

Ambassador Membership is available to youth ages 13–22 who wish to stay connected to the Airdrie Board of Youth Affairs (ABYA) but are unable to have a seat on the board currently. This membership category is intended for youth who are actively involved in other youth councils, advisory committees, volunteer groups, school leadership organizations, community organizations, or youth-serving initiatives within Airdrie and the surrounding area.

Ambassador Members provide valuable perspectives and help ensure that ABYA remains connected to the broader youth community. While Ambassador's do not hold voting privileges or elected Board positions, they may be consulted on issues affecting youth and invited to participate in engagement opportunities, projects, events, focus groups, surveys, and discussions as needed.

Ambassador Members may contribute by:

- Providing feedback on youth issues, programs, initiatives, and community priorities.
- Sharing perspectives from other youth councils, volunteer groups, school leadership teams, and community organizations.
- Participating in consultations, surveys, focus groups, or community engagement activities.
- Supporting or volunteering at ABYA events and initiatives when available.
- Acting as ambassadors by sharing information about ABYA opportunities within their networks.
- Helping identify emerging issues, trends, and opportunities impacting youth in Airdrie.

Consultation with Ambassadors may occur through a variety of methods, including:

- Face-to-face meetings or conversations

- Email communications
- Surveys and online engagement tools
- Special events, workshops, or consultation sessions

5.4 Subcommittees

The ABYA may establish or disband subcommittees as required. ABYA members will define terms of reference for each committee. Subcommittee work is overseen by the executive group and the Social Planning staff.

ABYA members also have the option to sit as non-voting members of any of the City Council advisory boards or committees. If ABYA members wish to be voting members of City Council boards, they must apply using the standard volunteer application form.

6. Reporting Structure

The daily operation of the ABYA is under the direction and supervision of the Social Planning Department.

- Act as a liaison between ABYA, City of Airdrie administration, City Council, community organizations, and residents.
- Assist with the development of timelines, task lists, and other aspects of project management.
- Identify opportunities for engagement with internal departments.
- Track and support members' involvement.
- Oversee all reports and presentation to Council.
- Monitor all financial matters for the group.
- Review and approve all decisions made by the ABYA.
- Perform operational day-to-day tasks, on behalf of the ABYA.
- Recruit new members and support in training and orientation.
- Facilitate the development of partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders.
- Function as chaperones to related events, activities, and training opportunities when appropriate.
- Maintain an up-to-date listing of all ABYA members, including relevant contact info.

- Supervise any online platforms that the board holds.

7. Attendance

- Members should notify the ABYA Chair or the Social Planning staff 24 hours in advance of a meeting if they know that they will be absent.
- The following is considered an excused absence: school commitments, illness, emergency, and prior commitments deemed at the discretion of the ABYA Executive.
- If a member misses three consecutive meetings without prior notification (i.e. unexcused absences), they will be asked to resign from the ABYA.

8. Election Process

- The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary positions are filled through an annual election process. Any board member aged 15 or older is eligible to run for an executive position.
- Members serving in executive roles may seek re-election and serve consecutive terms. There is no maximum limit on the number of years a member may hold an executive position.
- Board members may remain on the board until they age out of the program at 23 years old. To continue their membership each year, all members must participate in a reflection-based renewal process to assess their ongoing commitment, engagement, and suitability for board participation.