



## Introduction

The Healthy Leagues Self-Assessment was created as a way for Community Leagues to look at how well their role is going. This assessment was created by asking Community League representatives what they thought made a League healthy through our General Meetings. The questions were then tested by several Community Leagues to determine their validity.

This guide is intended to help you complete a self-assessment, help you understand the questions in the self-assessment and help you find resources to help your board improve itself.

## Completing the Assessment

1. Each board member works through the assessment on their own either online or in hard copy. When answering the questions, consider the following when responding.
  - Strongly Disagree means that we have had no discussion as a board, a process does not currently exist, and/or there is no clear understanding of this area
  - Disagree means there has been some discussion though no work in this area,
  - Agree means we have had some discussion in this area, we have made strides for improvement, and/or there is a process in place
  - Strongly Agree means we have solid processes in place and has been a focus of the board, there is success in this area
2. If the board completes the paper-based version of the survey, the board would then identify someone to compile the results. When doing this, you would average the scores, but also note areas where there is a major difference in scores among the board. If the board completes the online version, the EFCL will send the results to your board.
3. The Board would look at their summarized results at a meeting and discuss any areas where there were major differences.
4. The Board would identify areas where they want to improve (1-3 at a time).

## Understanding the Questions

This section will help you understand what each question in the assessment is trying to address by breaking it down further.

### Foundations

**We have a clear mission and vision statement.**

There are lots of ways that people talk about mission and vision, but your vision is the type of world that you want to create through the work of your League. A mission statement flows out of your vision and it talks about how you make impact in the community. Some similar words that may be used to talk about this are values, targets or aim statements. Don't get too caught up in the terminology, this question is



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really asking if you have these types of statements in writing. If you are in the process of writing these for your organization, your answer would depend on how far in the process you have gotten. If you have a plan to look at these I would answer Strongly Disagree or Disagree, but if you have gotten to the point where you have something in writing (even in point form) I would lean towards Agree.

**We have effective strategies & plans.**

Your strategies and plans are where the mission and vision of the League get turned into the work of the League. These will normally cover a timeframe of 1-5 years depending on the type of planning that you have done. The document may be called a strategic plan, an organizational plan or many other names. The important concept here is that you have a written plan to make impact in the community that works for your League.

**We have an effective board structure.**

Every Community League is a little bit different, so asking a few questions about your board will help you answer this question. Do you have the right number of people on the Board to provide direction and oversight for the League? Do you have people leading all the major areas of the Leagues' work? Does your Board use committees to help with their work?

**We understand and follow our bylaws and policies.**

Every Community League is a registered society and is required to have a set of bylaws for the organization. These bylaws set the rules of how the organization is run. As your bylaws will not cover all of the situations that arise for the board to act on, the bylaws should be supplemented by policy. Each member of the board should have reviewed the bylaws and policies to gain an understanding of them.

## **Community Engagement**

**We are aware of the needs of the community.**

The question is looking at your knowledge of the needs of the community as a whole (both members and non-members of the League). This knowledge could come from a variety of sources (like surveys, feedback at events, community conversations). It may be impacted by your experience in the community, but shouldn't only be based on your own experience.

**We are responsive to community feedback.**

This question asks you to consider if you change your programming and activities based on the feedback that you receive from the community. This should include positive feedback like suggestions for programs and negative feedback like bad experiences at a program. Some examples are below. As a registered Society, you are accountable to your membership directly and through them your community as a whole.

Feedback received	Possible response(s)
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<p>A member complains that a program is being held in a space that she can't access in her wheelchair</p>	<p>If the program is being held offsite, look at alternate locations for the program.</p> <p>If the program is being held onsite, consider if the League needs to make renovations or accommodations.</p>
<p>A member doesn't like a program you are running. He says it is a waste of money.</p>	<p>If you did a needs assessment before starting the program, share this with the member to help show why you are running this program.</p> <p>Share the results of the program with the member to help him understand the value.</p> <p>Stop the program if appropriate.</p>
<p>A community member would like to start a program where youth clean up the neighbourhood. She has seen it work in other parts of the city and has a few youth that are excited to get some volunteer hours. She needs a place to store their equipment.</p>	<p>Work with her to set up the program.</p> <p>Connect her with another group in the community that she could work with.</p>

**We communicate effectively with our community.**

This question asks you to look at how well you communicate with your community. There may be a number of ways you communicate with the community (newsletters, email, website, in person), so make sure you are considering all of them. The effectiveness of the communication can be monitored through program analytics, feedback and considering the demographics of your membership.

**We collaborate with other organizations.**

There are many opportunities to collaborate in the community. It could be with other non-profits or businesses in the neighbourhood or with Community Leagues across the city. The collaboration could be informal one-off conversations , a regular presence at your meetings or formal partnerships.

**Board Composition**

**We reflect the diversity of our community.**

Diversity comes in many forms, such as age, gender, ethnicity, housing status, and income. After looking at the types of diversity in your community, ask if you see this reflected in who sits on your board.

**We have processes that help us manage Board turnover.**



There are different ways to manage turnover on a Board, but doing it well means that you have a way to find out when people are leaving and develop a plan to replace them (succession planning). It also means that you have a way of helping new board members understand their role on the Board (orientation). Ideally these processes would be written.

**We have strong leadership.**

When considering this question, you should think about the leadership skills that individual board members have and the balance of leadership skills and styles that exists among the board as a whole.

Some examples of leadership skills include: delegation, motivation, creativity, providing feedback, trustworthiness and accountability.

## **Board Processes**

**We support opportunities for board development.**

Developing the skills of individual board members is key to creating a strong Board. Supporting this development can take different forms (raising awareness of opportunities, providing funds for board members for development, inviting presenters to meetings for learning opportunities). It is important to consider the sharing of this learning with the broader board and the application of what has been learned.

**We thank members for their contributions through volunteer recognition.**

Volunteer recognition helps to encourage volunteers to contribute more in the future.

Some examples of volunteer recognition include: events to thank them for their contributions, thank you cards, small gifts, awards, mentioning their contribution in newsletters or at public events.

**We have accurate and reliable record keeping**

Board records (minutes, reports, policy and financial records) should be correct and should be available to your members. When looking at the question, consider how easy (or difficult) it would be to find particular records.

**We are financially accountable**

The Board of a Community League is accountable to their membership to manage the finances of the League appropriately. As a board member, are you confident in the way the finances of the League are handled?

**We have regular, well attended meetings.**

Regular meetings means that your meetings have a schedule (eg the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month) and that they are held as planned. Well attended meetings mean that you are you able to meet your quorum requirements at your meetings.



## **Board Working Style**

**We embody principles that allow us to serve in the interest of the community.**

Does the Board have a core set of values or principles that they use? Some examples include respect, active listening, accountability, and transparency. Are these values or principles commonly understood by the whole board?

**We work cohesively and collaboratively.**

To work cohesively means to work towards a common purpose. Forming the common purpose collaboratively means combining the variety of points of view of the Board to build a solution with many strengths.

**We incorporate fun and creativity into our work.**

It takes a variety of approaches to build strong solutions for the community. When you incorporate fun or creative activities into the work of the Board, unexpected solutions are more likely to come up.

**We balance the workload amongst board members.**

Each board member may have a specific role and they may have some times that are busier than others, but the goal is to have the work of the Board roughly equal between the members of the team.

## **After the Assessment**

You've completed step one (going through the assessment with the Board) and step two (discussing where you want to focus). Now the EFCL and the City are here to help!

Through a conversation with the EFCL or your NRC, we would be happy to help identify resources and training. The EFCL and your NRC are trained in the Self-Assessment process and the questions that are asked in the self-assessment. This helps us to understand how we can help you learn in the areas that you most want to see growth.