



ANNUAL REPORT

The Centre for Civic Governance grows, fosters, and supports progressive leadership to advance equitable, inclusive, and resilient communities across Canada.

JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025



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What We Do

The Centre for Civic Governance, formerly known as Columbia Institute, is an independent public policy think tank based in British Columbia (B.C.). Our mission is to grow, foster, and support progressive leadership to advance equitable, inclusive, and resilient communities across Canada. We believe that communities that value social justice, the environment, and strong local economies are healthier and happier places to live.

Our goal is to support local governments to address and provide community-led solutions to the most pressing issues facing them, with a focus on reconciliation, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Our projects and initiatives focus on civic governance, scholarships, research, and local community programming.

www.ccg.eco



Centre for Civic Governance

In fall 2023, as part of our strategic planning process, we committed to undergoing a rebranding process. This process led to our new name: the Centre for Civic Governance. This decision was based on years' worth of conversations with local electeds and our community to develop a brand that better represented our mission and values, the work we do, and the people with whom we work.

In 2024, we started a rebranding process with designers represented by the Union Cooperative Initiative (UCI) to redesign our logo, visual assets, and branding guidelines.

We unveiled the new logo and branding at High Ground in March 2025.





Civic Governance Events

At our annual civic governance events we bring together local electeds (mayors, councilors, school trustees, and regional directors) to share ideas, deepen connections, and take away inspiration. These events include our in-person High Ground forums, our digital conversation series, and our dialogue and networking events during UBCM.

High Ground 2025

Our 21st annual civic governance forum was held in person at the Coast Coal Harbour Hotel in downtown Vancouver from March 7 to 8, 2025. This year's theme was "Tipping Points: Navigating Turbulent Times," considering whether things are really falling apart, or if it just feels that way.

The forum explored a range of topics, including climate change and public health, bystander training, leveraging community-municipal partnerships to respond to the toxic drug crisis, power mapping, smart communications, cyber hostility and political figures, and political polarization. The event drew 115 participants, mainly from B.C.



High Ground 2025

"[High Ground] was a great conference. So reaffirming of how powerful simple true approaches to our work are. [It] helps us all keep the faith".

"As a progressive minority in my community, the pressure to represent so many marginalized voices can feel intense. I look forward to High Ground each year as a place where I can connect with values-aligned peers, a place where I can put those pressures aside and feel grounded in myself again. I leave feeling refreshed and ready to re-open my to-do list".

Forum Sponsors: BC Federation of Labour, BCGEU, CMHA BC Division, CUPE BC, FPSE, MoveUP, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Vancity, and WE Consulting and Benefits

Tabling Sponsors: CityHive, CPAWS, Youth Climate Corps BC

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Conversation Series

Now in its fifth year (we began during the COVID 19 pandemic), we expanded our conversation series to offer unique virtual training and learning opportunities to local electeds.

Winter Conversation Series January - February 2025

- **Leaving a Legacy** with the Feminist Campaign School - 30 registrants
- **Climate Change and Insurance in BC Municipalities** with Investors for Paris Compliance - 40 registrants
- **The Future of Civility in BC** with Foundation for a Path Forward - 30 registrants
- **Local Climate Governance in a Shifting Political Landscape** with Climate Caucus - 97 registrants

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Spring Conversation Series May - June 2025

- **Why We Need a Coastal Marine Strategy and Law** with CPAWS-BC and WCEL - 20 registrants
- **Resisting in Turbulent Times** with the Feminist Campaign School - 30 registrants
- **Championing a Living Wage - A Conversation Among Progressive Leaders** with Living Wage BC - 30 registrants
- **School Board Trustees Championing Climate Action** with Climate Caucus and EcoSchools - 15 registrants

UBCM

We held two events during the UBCM 2024 forum: the Community Voices Reception and our annual Civic Governance Dialogue.

Community Voices Reception

For the Community Voices Reception, we partnered with four organizations - CityHive, Climate Caucus, CityShift at the YWCA, and Women Transforming Cities - to host an evening reception for local electeds. This partnership, initiated by CCG, was established due to feedback from electeds that they received too many invites from similar partners at the UBCM forum.

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The event was a great success, with 190 registrants and 120 attendees, with three provincial ministers and the Lieutenant Governor in attendance, as well as 44 councillors, 5 mayors, and 6 regional district directors.

Civic Governance Dialogue

CCG hosted the 2024 Civic Governance Dialogue at Simon Fraser University's Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The event provided an opportunity for local electeds to network and strategize around key resolutions at UBCM. The dialogue had 34 attendees, with 22 councillors, 1 mayor, and 3 regional district directors in attendance.



Scholarships

We know that the skyrocketing cost of education makes it difficult to return to the classroom for further learning, retraining, and/or skills advancement, which is why we are committed to supporting a number of lifelong learning opportunities.

In 2024, a total of seven scholarships, totalling \$6,250, were awarded to students across Canada.

These scholarships were provided by USW-TWU National Local 1944. They offer scholarships valued at \$1,000 each and three scholarships valued at \$750 each to children of active union members graduating from high school.



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Projects and Initiatives

Green Jobs BC

CCG housed the original iteration of GreenJobs BC from 2010 to 2017. Building on our strong labour union partnerships, GreenJobs BC addressed key issues such as the just transition, re-localisation, and the green/blue economy through a labour/environmental alliance.

CCG has started to reconstitute GreenJobs BC as "Green Jobs BC" in mid-2025, establishing a new collaborative initiative to bring together labour, Indigenous, and environmental efforts focused on a just transition. Our focus will be on promoting policies, programs and procurement actions to both advance a green jobs agenda, and meet the requirements of UNDRIP.

To date, we have convened leaders from eleven labour unions to discuss priorities, and have had early meetings with environmental NGOs and Indigenous organizations. We are also putting out research papers connected to this work, starting in mid-September with the release of "Jobs for Today."

INSPIRE: Inclusive Networking & Support for Public Officials in Rural Environments Project



The INSPIRE project is a collaborative between CCG and the Foundation for a Path Forward. This project, funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia's Racial Justice Grant, aims to identify ways to better support racialized local elected officials in rural communities across B.C.

In fall 2025, we will publish a report on the pilot project and continue the work to include expanding research across the country, establishing support groups for racialized officials, developing resources and toolkits on online harms, and executing programming connected to online harms and systemic racism during the lead up to the municipal elections in 2026.



WAGE: Systemic Change in Local Governments to Support the Advancement of Women and Gender Minorities

The WAGE project is scaling the Feminist Campaign School's "Barriers Project" to advance women's representation in leadership and decision-making roles. We are expanding the research agenda to Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, while implementing recommendations through programming, education, and training in these three provinces, as well as B.C. and Alberta.

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The project addresses the systemic barriers that women and gender minorities disproportionately face when running for, and serving in, municipally-held elected office, with a particular focus on those with intersecting identities of oppression. Work on this project began on July 1, 2024 with convening, research, and programming continuing until March 31, 2026.

Post Secondary Student Engagement Program: Green Cities



We continued our partnership with the University of British Columbia (UBC)'s School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) on their Green Cities course. In the Fall of 2024, we acted as an employer partner providing guidance to 80 undergraduate students.

The student produced policy papers on decarbonization, drawing case studies from rural and urban communities across the global north and south, concluding with recommendations for how local governments across BC could implement this work. The top four student groups presented their papers at High Ground 2025.

We will be continuing this partnership in Fall 2025.



Partner Research Projects

We collaborate with researchers and policy experts to analyze the issues facing our communities today and tomorrow and to recommend actionable steps to achieve a solution. This year's research partners included:

- "Research and Journalism on Democracy, Sustainability, and Social Issues," (Funded by Vohra Miller, Partnering with The Tyee)
- "Investors for Racial Equity Project" (Funding from Inspirit Foundation; Partnering with SHARE)
- "Know Your Rights in the CRD Project" Funding from Victoria Foundation, Partnering with Workers Solidarity Network)
- "Keep it Cool in Schools Project" (Partnering with Workers Solidarity Network)
- "Network Development Project" (Funding from the Echo Foundation. Partnering with SHARE)
- "Climate Disclosure Project" (Funding from Catherine Donnelly Foundation. Partnering with SHARE)
- "Reconciliation & Responsible Investment Initiative" (Funding from Glasswaters Foundation and Inspirit Foundation)



Governance & Operations

Board of Directors:

Brenda Chu - Secretary Treasurer, MoveUp

Trent Derrick - Indigenous Rights and Public Education Advocate

Irene Kauryzkha - Associate Director of Finance, SHARE

David Levi - President and CEO, Working Enterprises Ltd.

Hermender Singh Kailley - Secretary Treasurer, BC Federation of Labour

Civic Governance Advisory Council

Michael Clague - Social Planner, Order of Canada Recipient

Coralie Gregoire - BC General Employees Union

Ela Esra Günad - Hospital Employees' Union

Cheeyng Ho - WCS Engagement and Planning

Susan Kim - Councillor, City of Victoria

Seth Klein - Climate Emergency Unit

Ken Melamed - Former Councillor and Mayor of Whistler

Aidan Shirley - CityState Consulting Group

Dave Thompson - Councillor, City of Victoria

Tariq Tyab - Foundation for a Path Forward



Governance & Operations

The Team

Ankita Goyal - Research and Communications Coordinator

Melissa Gregerson - Events and Engagement Associate

Isabella Johnson - Senior Program Officer

Kevin Millsip - Executive Director

Sharon Roling - General Operations

Amor Verdeflor - Administration and Scholarships

Institutional Members

BC Federation of Labour

BCGEU

CUPE BC

New Westminster & District Labour Council

Special thanks to Vancity Credit Union



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The Centre for Civic Governance is located on the unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Salítwataʔ/Sellitwítulh (Tselil-Waututh) Nations.