

Going Beyond: Caring for Clients, People and Planet

With Passion & Purpose

CEA is transforming local and regional action into global emissions reductions and fewer climate change impacts.

April 2021



Introduction

The Energy Aware Committee was formalized in 1995 with a Memorandum of Understanding between the Union of BC Municipalities and the ministries of Municipal Affairs and Energy to support local governments in managing energy and emissions. From 1995 to 2002, the Energy Aware Committee operated out of UBCM offices in Richmond, BC. The Energy Aware Committee incorporated into a non-profit in 2004 and adopted the Community Energy Association (CEA) name.

CEA is non-profit society incorporated in BC with charitable status and, as such, goes beyond traditional Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) metrics and approaches. Our commitments represent the unique culture and commitment of CEA.

This document outlines our commitments to caring for our clients, our people, and our planet.

Clients

We have an unwavering commitment to our clients – local governments and first nations in BC and across Canada. CEA provides services and support on the journey from awareness to plans and through to implementation. We support local and regional action through the communities that we work for.

We are transforming these local actions into global emissions reductions and few climate change impacts. The twin passions of CEA are **local action** transforming to **global results**.

As a non-profit society with charitable status, we **donate 100% of our profit** to furthering our mission. We do this through allocating any unrestricted funds not required for the ongoing operation of the organization to ‘Special Initiatives Projects’ that are high leverage initiatives meeting important local government or indigenous needs that cannot be funded through other means.

At CEA’s **November 27 2019 Board meeting**, the following policy was adopted:

8. Special Initiatives Fund (SIF)

A. That the Board approve the creation of a Special Initiatives Fund (SIF) based on the updated funding, governance and use described below.

- **Background**
 - The idea of setting up a ‘special initiatives fund’ that would be funded by net income was raised at the February 2019 board meeting.
 - CEA has over the past several years had revenue in excess of costs
 - CEA is a mission-based organization
- **ED proposal:**
 - **Funding:** Unrestricted funds in excess of \$200,000 be transferred on a quarterly basis to the SIF.
 - **Reporting:** That the **Treasurer** report on SIF status at each board meeting
 - **Deciding:** That the **Board** receive recommendations from the Executive Director once per year on use of SIF and that **Board** issue a resolution as to the use of the SIF for the coming year with one option being to simply retain the SIF.
 - **Just in case:** In the case of a shortage of operational funds, the Executive Director will email the Board chair and treasurer, cc’ing the CFO of the need to access the SIF for operational purposes. The **Executive Director** will then transfer needed funds from the SIF to the operational account.
- **Uses of the SIF funds may include:**
 - 1) **Funding high-impact projects** that we are unable to secure external funds for. These initiatives should meet the tests of: a) being highly impactful to local governments on climate action; b) having a high likelihood of resulting in future CEA revenue (to replenish the fund); c) fill a significant, urgent gap
Note: this will result in what looks like a loss on the initiative from an accounting perspective.
 - 2) **CEA Organizational Investment:** This may include a) hiring of external advisors for CEA to optimize HR, Accounting, and other functions; b) one-time restructuring / business improvement costs; c) staff compensation for exceptional performance; etc

CEA's first round of Special Initiatives projects including developing a self-serve community energy planning tool for BC local governments based on CEA's Climate Leaders Playbook.

In addition to **donating 100% of profit** to urgently needed initiatives that no one else can fund, CEA actively **sources grants to support clients** in the actions that they want to take. CEA secures funding from provincial governments, federal departments, private foundations, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, utilities, development trusts and others to support our clients. Examples of this include the award-winning Accelerate Kootenays EV charging station deployment program that saw local governments invest approximately **10% of total project costs** with the remainder being sourced by CEA from grants.

It is also through grants that CEA publishes extensive research and 'how to guides' for local governments as well as facilitating communities of practice and peer learning such as the **BC Municipal Climate Leadership Council** for locally elected officials.

People

CEA **offers flexible working arrangements** including flexibility on location and work hours. Most CEA staff work from home offices across BC. This enables our highly qualified professionals to live in the community they want and still do the work they love while attending to family responsibilities.

CEA is committed to providing a safe working environment and fostering a sense of inclusivity. CEA does not discriminate based on gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation and meets all Federal and Provincial employment standards. The CEA Personnel Policies Manual details its employment practices including hiring practices, performance reviews, remuneration, dispute resolution and harassment.

The minimum wage that CEA pays regardless of location in BC is \$25/hour which is more than **20% higher than the 2021 living wage for Vancouver**. CEA provides benefits through UBCM's Pacific Blue Cross plan – the same one local governments across BC use. In addition, CEA offers an employee pension plan through Common Good to support staff in saving for retirement. As well, CEA offers 5 weeks of annual paid vacation and, for those working from home, a home office allowance.

CEA lets **staff choose to work less than full time** and pro-rates salaries accordingly. This lets staff balance work and life and recognizes that at different stages in life people will want to create different balances.

In exceptional times such as pandemics, CEA increases flexibility on sick days available to staff.

Part of caring for staff is ensuring the ongoing operations of CEA. CEA targets a minimum of 3 months of operational costs in unrestricted funds to ensure ongoing solvency in the case of delayed accounts receivable. CEA also manages annual net revenue carefully to ensure that losses do not accumulate and profits can support special initiatives and further employment.

Reconciliation

CEA has initiated a reconciliation working group composed of both board members and staff to direct CEA in its exploration of its role in reconciliation considering both internal processes and external

services to support indigenous communities. CEA is committed to determining and executing on its role in reconciliation.

Planet

CEA is transforming the local and regional actions with our clients into **global emissions reductions** and few climate change impacts. CEA staff are passionate about climate action and doing our part to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Environmental responsibility is not an additional consideration for CEA. It is why we exist.

CEA helps our clients, with the support of our funders, to reduce emissions in their own operations and cause the residents and businesses in their jurisdictions to save energy and emissions as well. CEA causes emissions reductions through:

- **Influence:** participation in boards, advisory committees, working groups and through one on one discussions with policy makers
- **Education and training:** of community staff, elected officials and key sectors that influence a local government's ability to achieve emissions reductions such as builders. CEA also supports communities of practice to connect peers to learn from each other.
- **Research and planning:** CEA conducts and freely publishes research for local governments on climate action and has conducted over 100 plans to save energy and emissions.
- **Implementation:** CEA manages infrastructure implementation and community scale retrofit initiatives, often regionally to provide the capacity that individual local governments don't have.

CEA is committed to reducing the environmental impact that its business activities have.

- Employees are encouraged to only print when absolutely necessary
- CEA's Fernie office separates recyclables and organics from waste to landfill. Remote staff are encouraged to do this at home.
- CEA educates its employees around home energy efficiency and informs them of available grants and rebates.
- Most employees work from home, therefore have no commute.
- When travelling to client locations, employees are encouraged to carpool where possible and/or drive an EV.

Measurement

CEA is in the process of developing metrics to measure its identified and achieved emissions reductions.

CEA measures its annual GHG emissions and purchases carbon offsets in order to achieve carbon neutrality.

CEA conducts an annual survey to gauge employee satisfaction.