

What to Expect If You're Elected

Updated May 2025

Thank you for your interest in becoming a candidate for election to a three-year term on the Folk Canada Board of Directors. Election to the board represents an opportunity to serve the Canadian Folk Community, develop new relationships, and to champion and guide the organization into the future.

That said, Folk Canada board membership should be considered carefully. This document serves to inform your decision whether to stand for election, and to help you manage your board duties if elected.

Overview

Folk Canada (formerly Folk Music Ontario + Folk Music Canada) was founded in 1987 by six Ontario folk festivals, after the inaugural meeting of the Ontario Council of Folk Festivals in 1986. Folk Canada exists to foster and promote the Folk, Roots and Traditional Music industry across the country and on the international stage.

Board members may be encouraged to participate in committees and support initiatives complimentary to their skill sets, depending on the needs of the organization.

What does the board do?

While many directors may bring their own expertise and particular areas of interest to their board participation, the essence of their role is to act as caretakers and overseers of the organization on behalf of the community at large. More specifically, a board member works to:

- set the organization's mission, vision, and overall strategy, and modify both as needed.
- monitor management and hold it accountable for performance.
- select, evaluate, support, and, if necessary, replace the Executive Director.
- develop and conserve the organization's resources—both funds and property.
- serve as a bridge and buffer between the organization and its environment, advocating for the organization, representing the interests of its stakeholders, and building support in its wider community

Expectations

Folk Canada operates at a level of commitment and quality of a professional non-profit arts organization. As with any other board, directors are expected to maintain duties in three critical areas:

- *Duty of care*: exercising proper care and prudence as a board member, including attendance at

meetings, proper preparation, independent judgment, proper review of finances and other reports.

- *Duty of loyalty*: putting the organization's interests before one's own in board matters, including speaking as "one" voice on important public issues, respecting confidentiality, and avoiding (or declaring) conflicts of interest.
- *Duty of obedience*: ensuring that the organization's central purpose guides all decisions and the 'laws of the land' are respected, including compliance with government regulations (ONCA, charitable, remittances, etc.), awareness and adherence to Folk Canada bylaws and policies.

Our Mission

At Folk Canada, our mission is to preserve and promote Canadian folk music, empower folk musicians at all career stages, and foster an inclusive and vibrant folk music community through advocacy, education, and collaboration. We are dedicated to serving as a comprehensive resource and catalyst for the growth, recognition, and sustainability of the folk music industry across Canada.

Our organization is driven by the belief that folk music serves as a powerful medium for storytelling, cultural expression, and community connection. We work tirelessly to ensure the continued vitality of this art form, preserving its traditions while also fostering innovation, exploring technology, and embracing contemporary influences.

As a leading force in supporting and nurturing the diverse talents that comprise Canada's folk music landscape, we are dedicated to providing folk musicians with the necessary tools, resources, and platforms to develop their craft, reach wider audiences, and build sustainable careers. By offering our annual conference, mentorship programs, workshops, performance and networking opportunities, we aim to empower artists at every stage of their artistic journey, from aspiring newcomers to seasoned professionals.

Inclusivity lies at the heart of our organization. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment that celebrates the diverse voices, cultures, and traditions within Canadian folk music. By actively promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity, we aim to ensure that all artists, from all backgrounds, genders, and abilities, have equal opportunities to participate, collaborate, and shine within the folk music community.

As an arts service organization, we recognize the importance of building strong partnerships with like-minded organizations, government agencies, and community stakeholders. Through collaborative efforts, we seek to amplify our impact, and advocate for increased recognition and support for folk music. Together, we can nurture a thriving and resilient folk music industry that serves as a testament to our unique cultural diversity and shared collective identity.

General information about the board, including a list of current board members, [is available here](#).

Some points to highlight include:

Getting Elected:

Individuals that put themselves forward as nominees may be requested to participate in a brief interview with our nominating committee. Once the slate of nominees are selected, they will stand for election by the Folk Canada membership through electronic ballot. Elected or acclaimed directors will begin their term when election results are ratified at the Folk Canada Annual General Meeting with terms concluding in three years from their ratification date, at the Folk Canada AGM.

Conference

Board members are expected to attend the annual Folk Music Ontario Conference, and any board-related activities therein. Board members receive a complimentary registration to the conference and - when possible - a complimentary night's stay at the conference hotel and travel support.

Board Meetings

The entire board meets four times a year in addition to the Annual General Meeting. Review of documents and follow-up of action items may require several additional hours of work connected to each meeting.

Board meetings typically take place on weekends or weekdays/evenings at times agreed upon well in advance. Board meetings will take place online, with two in-person meetings taking place at the conference and board retreat, respectively.

Annual General Meeting

Folk Canada directors are expected to attend the Annual General Meeting (held online in the Fall).

Committee Meetings

Folk Canada directors are expected to participate in at least one committee, and a maximum of three. You can anticipate spending as much time on committees as on board business itself.

Executive Committee Meetings

Directors are encouraged to take on leadership roles at some point during their tenure (President(s), Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Committee Member-at-Large). The Executive Committee may meet more often and/or on an emergency basis, meaning there may be an additional commitment for those who step into these roles.

Other Service

To the extent possible, board members are asked to attend/support Folk Canada events outside of board and committee meetings, including the annual conference, AGM, and other events

Membership

As per our bylaws, Directors are required to maintain an active Folk Canada membership at the

individual level. If the purchase of a membership is prohibitive to you, feel free to contact us and inquire about accommodations.

Responsibility and Liability

The board is accountable to the Membership for the implementation of the vision and mission of Folk Canada. The board operates on a robust legal foundation and carries liability insurance.

Remuneration

Directors serve without remuneration. Expenses are covered where possible, but as a rule, board members must cover their own expenses. These are therefore kept to a minimum.

Summary

Before standing for election to the board, you should very carefully weigh your work, family, professional and charitable commitments and consider whether you can accommodate more. Generally, a board member can expect to contribute an average minimum of 4 hours per month to their duties, not including meetings or special roles they may take on.

This document cannot fully capture the personal, social, professional, and artistic rewards that come with being a director of Folk Canada. Directors serve in a respected position within a dynamic, dedicated organization.

On the board and throughout the organization, Folk Canada aims to nurture a safe and welcoming community. Should you choose to let your name stand and become elected as a director, you should expect to be respected for who you are, valued for your contributions, and encouraged to grow during what will hopefully be a transformative experience in your life.