

Great communities build great credit unions.

Great credit unions build a
more prosperous Alberta.

2023 Board Candidate Guide.

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The board of directors of Connect First Credit Union Ltd. (connectFirst) invite eligible members to put their names forward as candidates to run in the 2023 board of directors' election. Our member-elected board of directors works to ensure that we're a forward-looking, responsible and successful credit union, driven by what matters most: our members and our communities.

The Nominations Committee's mandate is to identify qualified candidates for election, overseeing a fair and transparent endorsement and election process.

Voting for open board of director positions of connectFirst will be held online between January 23, 2023 and March 5, 2023.

If you'd like to be considered for a position on the connectFirst board of directors, please complete and submit the Candidate Application which can be found on our webpage connectfirstcu.com/DirectorElections.

Call for Candidates

In 2023, there will be four (4) positions available on the connectFirst board, held for 3-year terms.

Seats on Board of Directors	Seats Available in 2023 Election	Term
12	4	3-years

Questions? Please email boardcandidates@connectfirstcu.com. Qualified Candidates are expected to attend a virtual information session held on Thursday, October 20, 2022 from 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Key Dates

Here are a few key dates in the connectFirst election process:

September 2, 2022	Call for Board Candidates Open
October 7, 2022	Call for Board Candidates Closed (<i>Deadline to submit: 5:00 pm MST</i>)
October 20, 2022	Candidate Information Session 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm MST
November 16 - 18, 2022	Candidate Interviews
Jan. 23 - Mar. 5, 2023	Online Election
Mar. 15, 2023	connectFirst AGM, Election Results announced

Extraordinary Members

connectFirst needs a thought-leading passionate board. Strong leaders who are key decision-makers and influencers. We are seeking candidates who are strategically agile, with vision and experience to influence change through its oversight of our strategic direction.

Board Competencies, Skills & Attributes

The competency profile of connectFirst is set out on page 7 of this package. Candidates are asked to complete a self-assessment against all the competencies, skills and attributes listed.

For recruitment in 2023, the board has identified 2 specialty skills within the full competency profile that are areas of focus in its recruitment efforts. These are:

Entrepreneurial Leadership

- Ideal candidates will demonstrate a high degree of sustainability literacy, especially on the most material environmental, social and governance (ESG) trends, risks and opportunities for the credit union
- Bring an understanding of how environmental and social change is impacting businesses, supply chains, members, employees and the communities they operate in.
- Can integrate this understanding and knowledge with business objectives to provide expert input into the creation of organizational strategy and competitive advantage
- Knowledge of the growing expectations on boards for ESG disclosure and communications
- Provides thought leadership on how to integrate ESG into board processes and policies, e.g. board recruitment process, board diversity policy.

Digital

- Ideal candidates will have a background in the strategic use of digital technologies acquired through a senior technology leadership role.
- Bring an understanding of the 'new digital' world and its deployment in the financial services industry, i.e. digital banking.
- Have an informed perspective on the impact of digital innovation on the delivery of goods and services, changing customer expectations and methods of interaction with members, suppliers and business partners - both the opportunities and challenges this presents for the credit union.

Recognizing that board members may not have all desired core competencies and specialty skills when appointed, we are seeking candidates who demonstrate a commitment and aptitude to acquire a level of competency necessary to make them effective board members.

Overall, a candidate's ability to contribute to the success of connectFirst in achieving its strategic objectives will be considered important.

Candidates will be required to submit a formal Candidate Application, attest to their eligibility and demonstrate how their competencies and skills align with what the Board is seeking in 2023.

Eligible candidates are also expected to attend an information session on October 20, 2022 to learn more about connectFirst, our board, and expectations so they can make an informed choice about whether running for a board seat is right for them.

The full list of core competencies, specialty skills and behavioral attributes with detailed descriptors for each are available in Appendix A.

Expected Commitment

The connectFirst Board Mandate is set out on page 5. There is significant time commitment demanded from board members.

Preparation, attendance and active participation in regular board and committee meetings, strategic planning sessions and other special meetings or board development sessions is an expectation and responsibility of board members.

Through the Board Attendance Policy there is an expectation that board members will attend all board and committee meetings in person, unless unable to do so. Remote attendance is made available through Microsoft Teams.

The Board and Board Committees meet a minimum of 4x per year. Committee meetings take place one week prior to the full 1-day Board meeting, over a 2-day period. In general, board members are appointed to 1 or 2 Committees. The Committees of the Board include:

- Audit & Finance Committee
- Governance Committee
- Human Resources (HR) Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Risk Committee

To ensure compliance with the connectFirst Bylaws, board members must attend a minimum of 75% of all regularly scheduled board and committee meetings. Board attendance is reported to the membership at our AGM.

Board members are also expected to attend an annual strategic planning session held over a 3-day period and Annual or Special General Meetings of the Members.

On average, a board member will require between 20 - 30 hours/month to be effective in their board responsibilities.

The schedule of board and committee meeting dates for fiscal year 2023 is available in Appendix B.

Endorsement

The Nominations Committee is responsible for conducting an interview with all eligible candidates to gather consistent data and to objectively assess (using a scoring matrix) how candidates meet, or do not meet, the core competencies, skills and attributes. This will inform their decisions regarding endorsement. They will strive to endorse the most qualified candidates based on the published needs of the board. An external consultant is engaged to support the integrity and objectivity of this process.

The Nominations Committee may endorse a maximum number of candidates. This is up to twice the number of vacancies on the board. For example, in 2023 there are four (4) vacancies. The Nominations Committee could endorse up to a maximum of eight (8) candidates. The actual number of candidates endorsed may be less depending on the candidate's qualifications relative to the published competency profile.

connectFirst welcomes and values applications from all members who meet the eligibility criteria set out in the Credit Union Act, connectFirst bylaws and board policies, and the competency profile published to the membership within this guide.

Let's Bank on a Brighter Future - Together

We're re-imagining what a credit union can look like for our members and Alberta - and we're just getting started. connectFirst is building a movement of hope for a brighter future and creating a place where both you and your money matter.

Our members belong here—we believe we all belong here. And that working each day to make Albertans more secure and prosperous is a purpose worth fighting for.

A Little More About Our Business

With over \$6B in assets under management, connectFirst is one of Canada's largest credit unions but we're unlike your typical bank. We've been recognized as one of Canada's Best Managed Companies for 20 consecutive years - the only Canadian credit union to achieve this status - we proudly employ over 750 Albertans. We offer banking, borrowing, and investment solutions to 125,000 members at 42 communities across Alberta, but that's not all we're about.

To us, banking is about more than money - it's about people. Each year, all employees recommit to Our Member Pledge: to help our members achieve their dreams by growing our expertise, know-how and passion; create remarkable experiences with every interaction by connecting with and understanding our members; and create a more prosperous Alberta by helping our members and communities grow.

Our members are owners and through our governance process, they have a say in how we operate, they earn dividends for common shares and investment shares, and they have access to an extensive array of financial products and services.

Mission

To Make Money Make a Difference

Vision

To do what's right for every member

Values

Think Big:

We embrace new ideas to create the greatest possible value for our members.

Act Local:

We actively seek out local ways to positively impact the communities we live, work and thrive in.

Take Charge:

We succeed when you succeed. We're accountable and take ownership over situations to deliver results.

Make it Easy:

We listen, seeking to understand and find every opportunity to make your experiences with us helpful and easy.

connectFirst Board Mandate

The board of directors is responsible for the governance of connectFirst, as well as establishing policy and direction in accordance with associated bylaws and the Alberta Credit Union Act.

Every board member has a fiduciary responsibility to act honestly and in good faith in the best interests of connectFirst and to exercise the due care, diligence, and skill that a prudent person would exercise in similar circumstances.

Key Accountabilities

Complies with duties and responsibilities as set out in the applicable provincial and federal legislation;

Adheres to all board policies regarding conduct, conflicts of interest, related party transactions, political activities, attendance etc.;

Ensures they are well informed on relevant organizational issues, comprehends materials prior to meetings, and analyzes information to vote knowledgeably and in the best interests of the organization;

Brings own experience, wisdom, point of view, judgement and influence to bear constructively on issues and to Board decisions;

Interacts with fellow board members and management in a respectful and constructive manner while listening to and exercising tolerance for others' perspectives;

Makes reasonable inquiries about the information provided by management to ensure they have acquired adequate information necessary for decision making;

Abides by and supports all decisions and positions taken by the board in a positive manner; and,

Supports member communications process, including participating in photo shoots for corporate activities, board member photos, board elections etc.

Board Member Eligibility

Make the commitment to strong, responsible and ethical governance of your credit union.

The following information outlines the mandatory requirements for all board members, as well as the skills, experience and qualities connectFirst seeks in its board members. This information will assist you when deciding to submit your application as a candidate.

Qualifications

To qualify as a candidate for connectFirst's board, you must meet the requirements as set out in the Alberta Credit Union Act, our bylaws, and Conflict of Interest Policy including:

- Be 18-years of age or older;
- Be a member of the credit union for a minimum of one year on or before March 9, 2022;
- Be an appointed designate of a corporate member for a minimum of one year on or before March 9, 2022;
- Be a Canadian citizen or a person who has been lawfully admitted into Canada for permanent residence;
- Be a resident of Alberta;
- Be able to be bonded with a fidelity bond.

Additionally, there is an expectation that candidates are actively engaged in doing business with the credit union through their day to day banking.

A person may not be a board member if:

- They are employed in a position, not within the Connect First Credit Union Ltd., that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest situation, as determined by the board;
- They are a board member or employee of a business selling competitive products or services to Connect First Credit Union Ltd.;
- They have been in the past 3 years, in violation of the Connect First Credit Union Ltd. policies, the Code of Conduct or bylaws, as determined by the board;

- They are an Immediate Relative of a board member or employee as defined in Bylaw 1.1(j), e.g., spouse, common-law partner; child, parent, grandparent, brother, sister etc. of a Connect First Credit Union Ltd. board member or employee;
- They have been an employee of Connect First Credit Union Ltd. or its legacy credit unions in the past ten (10) years as of the closing date of the Call for Board Candidates;
- They are in litigation with Connect First Credit Union Ltd.; or
- They have loans in arrears with ConnectFirst Credit Union Ltd.

*Specific examples of potential conflict are provided within the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

Board Participation & Time Commitment

Board & Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are scheduled over two workdays within 6 weeks following each fiscal quarter end. Board meetings are scheduled one week following committee meetings, typically on Tuesday. Directors are expected to set aside 3 full days to meet these obligations. See Appendix B: Sample Board Calendar within this Candidate Guide.

Meeting materials are provided to board & committee members one week prior to the meetings; and board members need to devote enough preparation time in advance of the meeting to ensure productive discussions, informed decision-making and quality board governance.

Planning Sessions

Annually, the board and senior management team participate in an annual strategic planning session. Advance preparation for this meeting can be significant.

Stakeholder Engagement

Board members are expected to attend the AGM and any special member meetings that are held during the year.

Credit Union and Co-operative Events

Board members have opportunities to attend a variety of events hosted by the Alberta Credit Union System and Canadian Credit Union Association, as well as the broader cooperative sector.

Learning

Following election, new board members are provided with a comprehensive orientation to the board and credit union operations. Board members are required to complete the Credit Union Director Achievement (CUDA) program - Level A - offered through CUSOURCE Credit Union Knowledge Network, within their first year as an elected board member. Annually, all board members must complete mandatory AML/Privacy training provided by connectFirst.

connectFirst has a formal Director Orientation, Education and Development Policy that supports learning and individual development plans. It is expected that board members will achieve a minimum level within all identified core competencies within an agreed timeline.

We are committed to assessing individual and collective effectiveness of the board through an annual board assessment process.

COVID-19

During COVID-19 the connectFirst board had to find new ways to ensure it is fulfilling its fiduciary obligations and stewarding the organization appropriately. All scheduled board and committee meetings were maintained through remote, virtual platforms and at times ad hoc meetings were called. Board candidates are expected to be flexible to meet changing governance processes and attendance requirements.

Board members will be required to follow the same COVID-19 protocols that are in place for employees. This could include masking, social distancing and/or proof of vaccination. Proof of vaccination is not required to be a board member or attend meetings or events of connectFirst.

At this time, in person attendance is expected at board and committee meetings.

Compensation

The Board Remuneration Policy outlines the compensation board members receive for their services. Transparent disclosure of board member remuneration is included in the Annual Report, including specific amounts paid, and listed by board member.

Board members are compensated through a Flat-Fee Annual Retainer that includes attendance/participation in all board and committee meetings, credit union system meetings, community events, the credit union's annual general meeting, and other duties related to their roles, such as business, special and ad hoc meetings. A small allowance to supplement costs with respect to internet access is included.

Board members are also compensated for travel time and mileage outside of the flat-fee retainer.

Once elected, board members will receive onboarding which includes details of board compensation, policy and processes.

Competency Profile

connectFirst is committed to ensuring the board of directors collectively have the knowledge and competencies necessary to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities through informed decision-making. connectFirst also believes that the knowledge, experience and skill of each board member are important elements in the success and viability of the credit union.

There is a general expectation that all candidates are computer literate, able to navigate within a virtual meeting environment and have a good understanding of board governance, the types of decisions made by boards and their fiduciary duties.

The qualifications for a connectFirst board member consist of 3 integrated elements.

1) Core Competencies:

connectFirst has established 7 core competencies which are applicable to all board members and has determined that candidates should have a strong competency in each of the 7 core areas, or the ability and time to acquire strong competency within a specified period following their election on the board. Information on these competencies is provided in Appendix A.

The board recognizes that not all board members, when elected, will be experts in all core competencies required of them. It is expected that all board members will commit to learning and development to fulfill their role and will achieve minimum requirements for the 7 core competencies within an established time frames.

2) Specialty Skills:

In addition to general experience and competency requirements outlined above, connectFirst has established specific specialty skills and abilities that are relevant to our organization. These skills and abilities are attached within Appendix A. It is generally anticipated that not all board members will achieve or possess these specialty skills, but it is acknowledged that having a mix of these skills brings value and an enhanced dynamic to the board.

3) Behavioral Attributes

Every board member must adhere to the highest ethical standards, display solid business judgement, have strong interpersonal skills and demonstrate a passion for the credit union system, cooperative values and community involvement.

Board members must also be self-directed, collaborative individuals who demonstrate highly developed interpersonal skills, and an ability to work collegially while maintaining independence of perspective. Board members must be prepared to commit the required time and energy to serve on the board for connectFirst including a commitment to maintain up-to-date knowledge of industry standards and global trends impacting the financial services industry.

Core Competencies	Specialty Skills	Behavioral Attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Digital (Area of Focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Entrepreneurial Leadership (Area of Focus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrity & Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Risk Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Technology/Data Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stewardship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Governance & Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Financial Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Independence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Audit & Compliance Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enterprise Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Informed judgement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Legal/Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">CEO Performance Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sustainability/ESGInnovationBusiness Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Change Management

*Descriptors of Core Competencies, Specialty Skills and Behavioral Attributes are available in Appendix A.

Candidates will be required to submit a formal Candidate Application, attest to their eligibility and demonstrate how their competencies and skills align with what the Board is seeking in 2023.

Board Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

connectFirst has identified diversity, equity and inclusion as essential elements in attracting high-calibre board members and maintaining a high-functioning board and business. In accordance with connectFirst's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, and recognizing that competence is paramount, the board is particularly seeking expressions of interest from well-qualified candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and viewpoints.

Within policy, the Board of connectFirst defines Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as:

Diversity

Any difference in people, in our organization, including visible diversity (race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability etc.) and non-visible diversity (personality, skills, identity and orientation, background and experience, decision-making preferences, perspectives, geographic location, socioeconomic status, ability etc.).

Equity

Practices and policies designed to treat everyone fairly, regardless of characteristics or background.

Inclusion

Environments in which everyone feels a sense of belonging and has the opportunity to be a full and meaningful contributor.

The goal of the board is to promote and foster an inclusive environment where board members feel welcomed, supported, listened to and able to contribute their personal best. This includes a commitment to inclusive behaviours, fair treatment based on one's needs, valuing uniqueness and cultivating a sense of belonging, enabling an adequate voice for all board members in decision making.

The board has committed to bring its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy to life through action planning and is at the beginning of its journey in creating a roadmap of future activities that it would intend to share publicly with members as well as keep them informed on progress.

For more information refer to the [Board Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Policy](#) available on the connectFirst website.

Endorsement

connectFirst believes in the value of endorsement as a governance practice which supports board effectiveness, board relevancy and board renewal. It has a Board Endorsement Policy whose purpose is to

- (i) clarify the expectations and standards by which candidates will be selected for possible inclusion in the Credit Union's recommended slate of candidates during the elections process; and
- (ii) promote transparency and ensure consistency in the process followed to determine whether a candidate should be endorsed.

ConnectFirst believes that governance practices such as endorsement provide members with assurance that a candidate's values, interests, experience and qualifications are those that would enhance the boards' current composition.

The [Board Endorsement Policy](#) is published on the connectFirst website.

Submitting Your Application

In 2023, members will be electing four (4) directors to the board. After carefully reviewing this Candidate Guide and deciding to put your application forward for endorsement as a board candidate, please complete the online application at: connectfirstcu.com/DirectorElections.

Application Deadline

October 7, 2022 5:00 pm MST

Elections Results

Director Election results will be announced at our AGM on Wednesday, March 15, 2023.

Thank you for your interest in the 2023 Director Elections! We look forward to your voting participation in this vital democratic process.

~ connectFirst Credit Union, Board of Directors