



# Become a Blue Community!

## Five steps to paint your town “blue”

You can become a part of the local and global movement for water security and justice by joining the Blue Communities Project.

The Blue Communities Project encourages municipalities to support the idea of a water commons framework, recognizing that water is a shared resource for all, by passing resolutions that:

- Recognize water and sanitation as human rights.
- Ban or phase out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events.
- Promote publicly financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater services.

By adopting a simple framework like this, municipalities can contribute to the protection and preservation of the most precious and vulnerable public good: water!

### Step 1: Find your friends

Find others in your community who are also concerned about local water issues, and form a Water Watch Committee. Across the country, Water Watch committees fight to keep water safe, clean and publicly owned. A few places to find your fellow Water Watchers are:

- Community groups and local organizations in your municipality.
- Members of local Council of Canadians chapters.

Send an email to [bluecommunities@canadians.org](mailto:bluecommunities@canadians.org) and we can put you in touch with local chapters or others already working on making your community a Blue Community. We also have lots of tools, materials and tips to share.

- Your municipal labour unions. These unions usually represent the workers who manage and provide the water in your municipality. They will likely know of any private contracts or tenders that exist, and are strong allies in the fight to protect water.

Next, contact a friendly municipal councillor and discuss the idea of your municipality becoming a Blue Community. See if they are willing to speak to the issue, and whether they anticipate any concerns or questions from council. There is probably someone on your city's council who will champion this cause – you just need to find them!

### Step 2: Do your research

It's important to do your research and identify potential obstacles and current contracts your municipality has that might prevent it from becoming a Blue Community. Through your contacts, find out:

- Whether your municipality has a current bottled water contract (e.g. Pepsi or Coca-Cola), and when it ends. The local municipal union or member of council can probably help with this.

- If there is a contract with a private company for your municipality's water and wastewater services. Again, your local union or a friendly councillor can be very helpful in finding this information!
- What your municipality does in the event of non-payment of a water bill, or with an account that is in arrears. For example, there might be a by-law or municipal policy that covers shut-offs for non-payment of bills, and this is something you will want to address. The UN has made clear that water disconnection policies are a violation of the human right to water.

### Step 3: Put forward your resolution

Once you have laid the groundwork and have all the necessary information, ask the municipal councillor to table a resolution that commits the municipality to becoming a Blue Community. This process could take a bit of time for council to request a report from staff. Sample resolutions are available in the Blue Communities Project Guide.

Plan for a presentation to council when the resolution comes forward. This presentation could be delivered by the councillor, by you, by local community groups, or by someone from the Council of Canadians.

### Step 4: Build public support for Blue Community

Gathering public support throughout the process is critical to the success of the campaign. You can start this process anytime, but it's particularly important to encourage the public to voice their support for the Blue Community Project to their councillors after the resolution is tabled.

Gather support through petitions, letter writing campaigns, letters to the editor, op-eds, presentations, etc. Community education can be hard work, and the Council of Canadians, as well as most unions, have the experience and resources to help.

### Step 5: Celebrate your success in becoming a Blue Community!

Congratulations! By making your community a Blue Community, you are helping to safeguard water for future generations. Make sure to contact Council of Canadians for your Blue Community certificate and so we can celebrate your success!

This checklist covers Blue Communities Project in municipalities, but can be applied to schools, universities, faith-based communities or other institutions. Contact us to find out more.

### For more information

The full Blue Communities Project Guide is available online at [canadians.org/bluecommunities](http://canadians.org/bluecommunities). You can also call the Council of Canadians toll-free at 1-800-387-7177 or email us at [bluecommunities@canadians.org](mailto:bluecommunities@canadians.org)

Read Maude Barlow's new book, *Whose Water Is It Anyway? Taking Water Protection into Public Hands*.

Visit [cupe.ca/water](http://cupe.ca/water) or email [waterwatch@cupe.ca](mailto:waterwatch@cupe.ca)

