



Governance Framework

Introduction and Background

The Toronto HIV/AIDS Network includes AIDS Service Organizations, HIV-related programs, people living with HIV/AIDS, community members, and broader organizations that have an impact upon the lives of people living with and at risk of HIV/AIDS.

A strategic plan for HIV/AIDS Services in Toronto was developed through the Toronto HIV/AIDS Community Planning Initiative (TCPI), a regional consultative process conducted during 2005-2007. The process was initiated and sponsored by the provincial AIDS Bureau, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) with guidance from the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS (OACHA). The Plan (March 2007) recognizes that, in order to address diverse HIV/AIDS related needs and service gaps, Toronto requires a broad-based ongoing HIV/AIDS planning and coordination function. The ongoing Toronto HIV/AIDS Network emerged from this planning process.

The Governance Framework was determined through a collaborative process undertaken by the Steering Committee with the Members during 2008 and 2009. The process was completed in January 2010 and included consultations on the Mission, revised Objectives, name change and logo, to reflect the transition from a planning process into an ongoing network.

Governance Framework

1. Mission Statement

The Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN) facilitates HIV/AIDS planning, collaboration and innovation to improve access to programs and services for people from diverse communities living with, affected by and at risk of HIV/AIDS.

2. Objectives

1. To facilitate community HIV/AIDS strategic planning that responds to local needs.
2. To improve access to services for people living with HIV and at risk for HIV.
3. To provide more coordinated, integrated and effective services.
4. To develop innovative service delivery models.
5. To foster opportunities to collaborate and develop partnerships in programs, services, research, amongst related sectors and at local, provincial and national levels.

3. Guiding Values

- Greater Involvement of People Living With and Affected by HIV/AIDS (GIPA principle)
- Driven by documented and expressed needs
- Inclusion

- Harm reduction
- Respect and integrity
- A social justice and anti-oppression approach
- Integration of services
- Accountability

4. Vision: key features of a future HIV/AIDS system

The following were identified as desired features of a future system, set out as goals toward which we will strive:

- Client-directed services
- Needs driven
- Comprehensive and responsive
- Accessible
- Culturally competent and grounded in an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework
- Coordinated and collaborative
- A focus on ongoing system quality improvement
- Efficient and effective

5. Recommended Priorities

The 2007 Plan provides a framework through which issues and gaps that would benefit from coordination and collaboration can be addressed. Ten recommended priorities were established for realizing positive changes in Toronto:

1. Establish an ongoing HIV/AIDS planning and coordination committee.
2. Develop an accessible, coordinated HIV/AIDS service information system.
3. Promote integrated, innovative and targeted prevention education strategies.
4. Improve the responsiveness of health and social services to people living with HIV/AIDS.
5. Enhance the capacity of HIV/AIDS-specific programs and services to serve more diverse communities across Toronto.
6. Improve access to a range of affordable and appropriate housing for people living with HIV/AIDS.
7. Advocate to address income and employment-related needs.
8. Develop a coordinated training strategy targeted at HIV/AIDS organizations and programs.
9. Promote infrastructure partnerships and address human resource retention issues.
10. Coordinate implementation of Toronto's HIV/AIDS Plan with Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), provincial HIV/AIDS strategies and other emerging initiatives.

6. Membership

THN is organization based. The member organizations (Members) determine who from their organization participates.

THN will be open to new Member participation. Invitations to new Members will be linked to priorities and issues - to assist with gaps and implementation of current recommendations and new priorities established in future planning discussions. New member organizations and programs will be relevant to the needs of people living with and at risk of HIV/AIDS and will support the Mission, Values and Vision of THN.

The Steering Committee will recruit new member organizations to further priorities. The Steering Committee (SC) will take suggestions for new Members from current Members and Working Groups. Requests to become a Member may also be initiated by the organization. If any disputes arise regarding membership, SC will bring to the Members.

The Members' list will be updated once a year by e-mail. The e-mail will reiterate the purpose of THN, its Mission, Values and Vision and report on the status of the priorities and recommendations in the Plan. Organizations will be asked explicitly to confirm organizational Membership, their contact(s) and participation in Members' meetings and/or Working Groups.

Working Groups may include organizational participants AND individuals who are not delegated by member organizations, at the discretion of the Working Groups' Co-Chairs. There may also be a role for time limited 'guest' participants to bring expertise on specific tasks.

Consensus is the preferred method of decision-making. Votes will not often be needed. Voting will be used for election of Steering Committee members. One organization, one vote. Significant shift in priorities in the future must be supported by Members. This may be done by Members signing on to show their agreement.

- 7. GIPA principle - Greater Involvement of People Living With and Affected by HIV/AIDS (GIPA)**
Develop/use mechanisms to engage PHA involvement and input into the work of the Steering Committee and Working Groups.

8. Steering Committee

8.1 Steering Committee Composition:

THN will strive for the following composition on its Steering Committee

A minimum of:

- People living with HIV/AIDS (one-third)
- from ethno-cultural agencies/programs
- from Aboriginal agency (one-third from ethno-cultural and Aboriginal)
- from AIDS focused agencies (simple majority)
- from broader, health and social services, may have Local Health Integration Network (regional health planner and funder) experience
- Two (2) Community members

And consideration of:

- Vulnerable populations and emerging groups affected by HIV/AIDS
- Gender
- Continuum of Services (includes from HIV prevention and health promotion to palliative care)
- Working Groups cross-representation

8.2 Size of the Steering Committee:

Minimum of nine (9) and maximum of eleven (11).

8.3 Steering Committee Members' Terms:

SC members' terms are three years and are staggered

8.4 Steering Committee Terms of Reference (attached)

8.5 Community members on the Steering Committee:

The Steering Committee will have two Community members who are to be recruited and appointed by the Steering Committee.

Criteria:

- GIPA principle: Greater Involvement of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. At least one of the two will be a person living with HIV/AIDS.
- Has knowledge of HIV community and services; is accessing services.
- Brings an independent voice - not on staff at an ASO or HIV specific program; open to volunteers.
- Preference for demonstrated development in leadership, for example, Ontario AIDS Network (OAN) PHA Leadership Development Training or other PHA capacity-building program, and/or committee experience.
- Criteria in common with other SC members such as taking on the role and responsibilities in the Terms of Reference and supporting THN Mission, Values and Vision.

Recruitment process – open and transparent. The Steering Committee will use a variety of strategies to reach potential candidates including: posting sent to Member organizations/programs and Working Groups, posting at Member organizations, on Member web-sites, and newsletters accessed by clients and volunteers.

Selection: Governance sub-committee – made up of members of SC, may involve additional THN members - will review applications, meet with candidates, review references and make recommendations to the Steering Committee.

8.6 Steering Committee – Annual election of organizational members

Steering Committee Role

- Steering Committee responsibility to ensure an inclusive, open, engaging process that encourages people to come forward for available seats.
- SC will not put forward a recommended slate.
- SC role is to help ensure candidates are available in keeping with the composition that THN agrees it strives for. May include active encouragement.

Process

- SC members, who are not running for election, to identify priorities and gaps in desired SC composition. Includes creating a chart that shows perspectives and skills that continuing SC members bring and compares with the desired composition that THN strives for.
- Open call to Member organizations – with Composition THN strives for and above information.
- THN is organization based. Nominations must have support of the nominee's member organization.
- Candidates are asked to provide information on how they help fulfill the desired composition in their short bio and/or at the Members' Meeting.

- Some of the SC members will volunteer to make themselves available to talk to any candidate about the role and expectations as an SC member.

Election at Members' Meeting

- Nominations can also be made from the floor at Members' Meeting.
- Members may vote by motion and holding up ballots.
- Member(s) may request secret vote by ballots. Volunteers from organizations without a candidate will assist to count the ballots.
- Member(s) may direct the destruction of the ballots.

8.7 Steering Committee Vacancies (not including Community members)

Vacancies may occur between SC elections when a SC member resigns from the SC or is no longer a part of a Member organization. When a vacancy occurs the Steering Committee would do one of the following:

- 1) Approach the Member organization to discuss if a replacement with similar commitment is feasible.
- 2) Recruit a replacement from one of the Member organizations or
- 3) Leave vacancy until next Steering Committee election, depending upon how close the vacancy is to the next SC election, at a Members' Meeting.

Guiding consideration in both 1) and 2) will be the Composition of the Steering Committee (8.1).

9. Relationship between the Working Groups and Steering Committee

Working Groups report to the Steering Committee. Each Working Group will have a Terms of Reference to be clear on mandate and a workplan and will make decisions within that framework. New directions and priorities will involve consultation with the Steering Committee.

Terms of Reference will include:

- develop workplan (review annually or when activities are changing, to adjust as needed)
- provide reports (twice a year)
- how are you achieving the recommendations
- progress on workplan, challenges
- identify emerging issues and priorities
- coordinate any funding proposals with the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will:

- approve Terms of Reference, budget, and workplan (using the Plan and its Priorities/Recommendations as a flexible framework)
- receive reports
- look for synergy between Working Groups
- provide a mechanism for fast consultation with SC as needed

Working Groups representation:

- Seek cross-representation between Working Groups and Steering Committee.
- Working Group member on the Steering Committee does not have to be a Working Group Co-Chair (do not place an automatic double commitment on Working Group Co-Chairs)
- If a Working Group does not have a member on the Steering Committee, then a Steering Committee member may join the Working Group
- THN staff will assist in providing links between Working Groups and with the SC

Similar principles of composition for Working Groups:

- Working Groups are encouraged to discuss adaptation of similar principles of composition as the Steering Committee.

10. Other:

THN support for funding proposals:

Criteria for Co-Chairs to respond to requests for support letters (usually related to Working Groups).

Process:

1. Co-Chairs delegated to make decision if no conflict of interest, if proposed project has a clear link to THN, shares THN values, and addresses one of THN priorities.
2. Transparency – SC to be kept informed about each request and provided a synopsis of the project.
3. Where there is conflict of interest (real, potential or perceived), or concerns, including about funder requirements or about lack of connection to THN, its mission, values and priorities, the Co-Chairs will hold off decision for an SC discussion.

Letters on Advocacy Issues will follow a similar process.

Changes to the Governance Framework: The Steering Committee will bring forward issues to the Members for direction and decision on any changes/additions to the Governance Framework.



Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Overall role and responsibilities:

Oversee and monitor implementation of the Toronto HIV/AIDS Community Planning Initiative Plan* (2007) and facilitate ongoing planning and coordination.

Provide oversight, make decisions and represent the Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN) in keeping with the Plan, Recommendations, Mission, Values, Vision and Governance Framework. SC will bring strategic thinking and leadership, facilitate discussion on changes and additions to structure and priorities with the Members and may also bring forward recommendations to the Members. Part of the Steering Committee role is to look at the larger picture and breadth of perspectives to move priorities forward.

Specific areas of responsibility:

Planning and Coordination

- Identify issues to facilitate creation of a coordinated and integrated service delivery model, working with a number of HIV/AIDS and related services.
- Monitor emerging trends and facilitate identification of issues.
- Manage diverse interests in ongoing priority-setting.
- Develop Steering Committee workplan and THN workplan.
- Monitor progress of the TCPI Plan Recommendations.
- Integrate into the Steering Committee workplan, as delegated by the Members:
 - o Infrastructure Recommendation

Member Relations

- Ensure development and implementation of Governance Framework.
- Facilitate communications with Members, Working Groups, between Working Groups and from policy makers.
- Report to the Members on Steering Committee activities.
- Update the Members' list once a year. Ask Member organizations to explicitly confirm organizational Membership.
- Recruit new Members and Community Members to further Priorities; take suggestions for new Members from current Members, Working Groups and from the SC. Requests to become a Member may also be initiated by the organization. If any disputes arise regarding membership, SC will bring to the Members.
- Working Groups and SC:
 - o approve Terms of Reference, budget, and workplan (using the Plan and its Recommendations as a flexible framework)
 - o receive reports
 - o look for synergy and ensure coordination between Working Groups
 - o provide a mechanism for fast consultation with SC as needed

External relationships and advocacy

- Provide updates to relevant key stakeholders such as the AIDS Bureau and the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS (OACHA), and the City of Toronto, and advocate as needed.
- Advocate directly, promote priorities and provide coordination on issues as identified in the TCPI Plan and through Member consultation on emerging issues; act in a timely way, as needed, on emerging issues.
- Develop a relationship with the relevant Local Health Integrated Network (LHINs).

Administration:

- Finances – monitor budget and funding agreements; seek out and support, as appropriate, funding opportunities to deliver the Recommendations.
- Participate in hiring and evaluation of any staff, in conjunction with official employer (Toronto People With AIDS Foundation).

Size of Steering Committee:

Minimum of 9 and maximum of 11.

Steering Committee Members' Terms:

SC members' terms are three years and are staggered.

Co-Chairs:

- The Steering Committee will elect two Co-Chairs from among its members at the SC meeting after the annual SC election; one Co-Chair will be a declared PHA.
- Preference that Co-Chairs will be experienced in a leadership role, such as an Executive Director or senior manager.
- Preference that the trustee representative be a Co-Chair to facilitate communication, accountability for funding and act as a strong link between the trustee organization and the THN project.

Decision-making

The Committee will strive to reach agreement by discussion and consensus. Where agreement is not achieved, issues will be taken to the Members for broader discussion.

Committee Accountability

The SC members are accountable to one another, to the larger HIV/AIDS community planning group – the Members, and the AIDS Bureau as funder. SC members are expected to attend and participate in SC and Members' meetings.

Note * Toronto HIV/AIDS Community Planning Initiative (TCPI) name changed to the Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN) Spring 2009 to reflect its development into an ongoing network. TCPI name continues to be used to refer to the original TCPI process, plan and report.