

Employment, Occupation and Income Security (EOI) Working Group Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN)

Terms of Reference

Who We Are:

We are the Employment, Occupation and Income Security (EOI) Working Group of the Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN). We consist of a diverse group of service providers, including representatives from AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs), employment programs and other HIV-related services, and people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs)

Our Mission

To strengthen PHA and community capacity in the areas of employment, occupation and income security through coordination, advocacy and strategic engagement of stakeholders.

Our Vision

All People living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs) have a right to the following and we are committed to promote and contribute to:

- Quality of life through employment, occupation and income security
- Accessible services regardless of barriers including location, immigration status, and language
- Accommodation (in services and employment)
- Information on their rights
- Self-determination, empowerment and choice
- Privacy and control over health information
- Meaningful involvement
- Inclusive education opportunities
- Survival, and beyond survival, to a liveable income/wage and health benefits
- Human Rights as protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm (1990, c. H.19, note: s. 1 and s.5 (1)) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/1.html> (Part 1 of The Constitution Act, 1982)

EOI is guided by the following Values:

- Greater and Meaningful Involvement of People Living with and Affected by HIV/AIDS (GIPA and MIPA)
- An anti-oppression approach
- Collaboration
- Harm Reduction
- Accountability
- Inclusion & Access

Our Purpose:

Coordination & Engagement

- Engage a diverse range of ASOs, employment programs, PHAs and broader services, in the development of a coordinated network and accessible resources in employment, occupation and income security for PHAs.
- Facilitate information exchange to increase access to services and quality of services.
- Seek to influence a variety of research opportunities by highlighting needs and research questions.
- Engage in strategic alliances by coordinating strategies on related issues with other coalitions/networks (e.g. JOIN, ODSP Action Coalition) when possible
- Reinforce the importance of employment programs in HIV/AIDS organizations and programs because they are tailored to the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Educate general employment programs about the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS, with respect to securing and retaining employment (e.g., the importance of flexibility and supports).

Advocacy

- Advocate to sustain and increase access to employment, occupation and income security for PHAs regardless of barriers including location, immigration status, and language.
- Promote awareness of the barriers experienced by PHAs of diverse and multiple identities.
- Advocate for greater and meaningful involvement of PHAs in communities and workplaces and opportunities for choice.
- Promote the value and worth of individuals and communities.
- Participate in local, provincial and federal level advocacy initiatives on matters related to income and employment and bring forward issues of PHAs in Toronto as needed.
- Increase our capacities around service provision in all areas related to employment and income security for all people living with HIV/AIDS and people living with episodic disabilities.

Structure and Governance:

Membership:

- The Working Group will include both service providers and PHA community members.
- We will actively seek to engage and maintain a minimum of three PHAs participating in the Working Group.
- We are committed to conducting appropriate outreach to create access for community members and groups that are not typically represented.
- Efforts will also be made to include or consult with representatives of organizations involved in providing, coordinating, researching, advocating for employment, occupation and income security issues or programs.
- We encourage a commitment to membership of at least one year.
- Membership of the Working Group will be reviewed annually to identify gaps in experience and expertise related to the Working Group's priorities.

Co-Chairs

The Working Group will select Co-Chairs on an annual basis or when a vacancy occurs. Co-Chairs may serve more than one year. Preference for no more than one new Co-Chair a year for consistency.

Responsibilities of Co-Chairs

- Plan Meetings, Agendas and update these Terms of References with support of the THN Project Manager/Peer Coordinator.
- Chair Meetings
- Assist THN Project Manager/Peer Coordinator as needed.
- Help the Working Group move forward with the Working Group's agreed upon role, values, priorities and activities.
- Submit reports to the Steering Committee via the THN Project Manager
- Where meeting attendance consistently presents a challenge to voting members, or to maintaining quorum, one of the Co-chairs will follow up with members who are having difficulty with attendance.
- Provide support to sub-working groups as needed to help move work forward.

Decision-making

Wherever possible, EOI will work to achieve decisions by discussion and consensus. Consensus also means when total agreement is not achieved, but everyone, including dissenting member(s) agree to move forward. Where no consensus is achieved, a vote may be taken (at Co-Chairs discretion). Each organizational member and individual community member has one vote. Where a vote may be required, a simple majority of voting members present carries a motion, providing that the quorum has been met. Quorum consists of 50% of voting membership plus one.

Representatives will be explicit about their decision-making authority. When needed, time will be allowed for consultation back to their own decision-making structure to seek approval or input in a timely manner. Advance notice of key decision-making will be provided when possible. Confirmation of decisions will be provided to all Working Group Members.

Accountability and Reporting

The EOI Working Group members are accountable to one another, to the THN Steering Committee and ultimately to members of the THN Membership, and to their members and communities. EOI members are expected to attend and participate at meetings on a consistent basis as much as possible. Organizational members will try to arrange back-up participation when this is feasible for their agency/program. Succession: when an organization's representative leaves, the organization will be asked to assign another representative

EOI reports to the THN Steering Committee and will:

- Update the Steering Committee on Working Group activities through written reports twice a year.
- Submit Terms of Reference(s)
- Submit any budget requests
- Submit workplan(s)