



Governance Framework

1. Introduction and Background

The Toronto HIV/AIDS Network (THN) 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. The organization emerged out of a planning process in 2007-2008 (Toronto Community Planning Initiative) and was guided by an initial report, priority recommendations and accountability structures. Since its inception, THN's activities have been guided by the initial **TCPI Report**, and have been instrumental in supporting many community planning projects, ongoing working groups, and information-sharing processes and projects. In 2015/2016, the THN completed a new **strategic plan** to guide the organizations work through 2020.

2. Mission Statement

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

3. Strategic Goals & Objectives

Ontario HIV/AIDS Strategy Goals supported by THN:

Goal 1: Improve the health and well-being of populations most affected by HIV.

Goal 4: Improve the health, longevity, and quality of life for people living with HIV

Goal 5: Ensure the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of all provincially funded HIV programs and services

THN Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives (2016-2020)

By end of March 2020:

Goal #1: THN will have taken a more strategic leadership role in facilitating member organizations/ programs to collaborate and share information for more consistent and effective programs and services;

Objective #1: THN will identify and implement one project at a time that our membership identifies as its priority to improve the engagement, health, longevity and quality of life of priority populations living with and most affected by HIV/AIDS.

Objective #2: THN will improve inter-agency and cross-sectoral engagement through activities that simplify the exchange and dissemination of relevant information.

Goal #2: THN will have improved its organizational capacity to address and prioritize needs, to manage workload and to create meaningful engagement opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs).

Objective #1: THN will develop and implement a framework for assessing and prioritizing current and new projects and initiatives.

Objective #2: THN will increase PHA engagement and will have met annual targets for PHA volunteer and mentorship opportunities in the office, in coordination activities, in deputations; and for PHA participation on the Steering Committee and in working groups.

4. Guiding Values

- Greater Involvement and Meaningful Engagement of People Living With and Affected by HIV/AIDS (GIPA/MEPA principles)
- Driven by documented and expressed needs
- Inclusion
- Harm reduction
- Respect and integrity
- A social justice and anti-oppression approach
- Integration of services
- Accountability

5. 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:

- Situated within the prevention, engagement and care cascade
- 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

6. Recommended Priorities

THN engages in regular strategic planning processes informed by the AIDS and Hepatitis C Programs, MOHLTC, to identify and set priorities and implementation activities. In addition, THN monitors and responds appropriately to emerging needs and opportunities within the sector.

7. Membership

THN is organization based and is open to new Member participation. The member organizations (Members) determine who from their organization participates.

Invitations to new Members may be initiated by individual organizations, through existing Working Group, Steering Committee (SC) or Member agency recommendations. Invitations will be linked to priorities and issues - to assist with gaps and implementation of current recommendations and new priorities established in future planning discussions and to increase diverse perspectives and lived experiences. New member organizations and programs will be relevant to the needs of people living with and most affected by HIV/AIDS and will support the Mission and

Values of THN. If any disputes arise regarding membership, SC will bring to the Members.

The Members' list will be updated annually by e-mail in conjunction with the spring Members' meeting. The e-mail invitation to the meeting will also reiterate the purpose of THN, its Mission and Values and organizations will be asked to explicitly confirm organizational Membership and review/update their organizational contact(s) and participation in any Working Groups or THN activities.

Working Groups may include organizational participants AND individuals who are not delegated by member organizations, at the discretion of the Working Groups' Co-Chairs and THN staff. 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 vote per organization.

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

9. Steering Committee

a. Composition:

The SC will be supported by the THN Director who reports to two co-chairs, one of whom will be from PWA who acts as the Trustee for the organization.

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 – *appointed by the SC*

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

b. Size:

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

c. Terms:

SC members' terms are three years and are staggered.

d. Terms of Reference (attached)

e. Community Members:

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

Criteria:

Recruitment and selection will be based on candidates ability to demonstrate alignment with the following:

- lived experience as a PHA (consistent with the THN's commitment to GIPA/MEPA principles),
- knowledge of HIV community and services,
- is currently or has in the past accessed services,
- the ability to contribute as an independent voice with a broad community perspective, regardless of any affiliation or connection with an ASO or HIV specific program,
- 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 the THN Mission and Values.

Recruitment process:

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:

An Ad hoc Governance Committee – made up of members of staff and SC will review applications, meet with candidates, discuss expected roles and responsibilities, review references and make recommendations to the Steering Committee.

f. Election process:

Recruitment and Selection:

- The THN Director will review terms, identify priorities and/or gaps in desired SC composition based on the desired composition outlined above and present for review to an Ad hoc Governance Committee made up of SC members who are not running for election
- The Governance Committee will promote any vacant positions to Member organizations including details of desired skills and perspectives.
- THN is organization based. Nominees must have support of the nominee's Member organization and be empowered to vote.
- The Governance Committee will review applications, meet with candidates, discuss expected roles and responsibilities and bring forward a recommended slate to the spring Members' meeting.

- Nominees in the recommended slate will be asked to provide information on how they hope to contribute to the THN mission and help fulfill the desired composition in a short bio and/or at the Members' meeting.
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Election at Members' Meeting

- Members may vote by a motion on a slate or by individual candidates.
- Voting can be done by a show of hands.
- 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.

g. 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 may do one of the following:

- 1) Approach the Member organization to discuss if a replacement with similar commitment is feasible to complete the term.
- 2) Recruit a replacement from one of the Member organizations.
- 3) Leave a vacancy until the 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 (9.a.).

10. Working Groups

The THN may use Standing or Ad hoc Working Groups as well as other appropriate community engagement structures and mechanisms to best support the work of the network,

- Identification of these groups and mechanisms and the related priorities will be determined by the SC and THN Director within the annual planning for the network and align with the THN strategic plans, funding deliverables and overall mission.
- Standing Working Groups will develop a Terms of Reference to identify clear mandate, scope, accountability, decision making and responsibilities.
- A workplan or other appropriate planning documentation will be developed and utilized to assist with the planning and accountability of all Working Groups.
- THN staff will provide leadership and support for Working Group activities, planning and communication.

The Steering Committee will:

- provide SC representation where possible,
- receive developed or updated Terms of Reference,
- review and approve activities on key priorities, where budget or staff workload implications exist,

- receive updates on priorities and activities,
- look for synergy between Working Groups.

Composition for Working Groups:

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

11. Other:

THN support for funding proposals:

Criteria for Co-Chairs to respond to requests for support letters.

Process:

- The THN Director and Co-Chairs are delegated to review requests for support letters and make a decision if no conflict of interest exists, if the requested letter has a clear link to the THN mission, shares THN values, and addresses THN priorities.
- Transparency – The THN Director will inform SC of requests and share letters of support through regular updates.
- Where there is a 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 full SC will discuss and determine if THN is able to provide a support letter.

Letters on Advocacy Issues will follow a similar process.

Changes to the Governance Framework: General updates to ensure current and accurate information may be completed by the THN Director and approved by the Steering Committee. Changes to structure and accountability may be recommended by the SC to the Membership for approval.