

RAINBOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL TERMS OF REFERENCE

March 11, 2015

BACKGROUND

In 2010, three community conversations were held that identified a strong need for a sustainable framework that would support the ongoing development of the Rainbow community in Waterloo Region. The organizers of these conversations took the feedback from the community to form the Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition (WRRRC), with a vision of “working together to build the Rainbow community voice in Waterloo Region”. WRRRC has been meeting regularly since January 2011 to set the foundation for the desired sustainable framework and for increasing inclusion in the community at large.

WRRRC has adopted a mission of being “a volunteer-based community organization that is committed to building a unified voice for gender and sexual diversity for people of all ages in Waterloo Region. We promote sustainable opportunities for advocacy, awareness, education and community-building that are respectful of the diverse interests within the Rainbow community. We work together with local allies to foster a strong and inclusive community.” WRRRC believes that partnering with existing community organizations to expand their services to be more inclusive of and/or better support the Rainbow Community. Without such an approach, there is a risk of duplication of these same services, increased competition for funding, and/or developing a support network segregated from the community at large.

The Rainbow Community Council (RCC) is an initiative of the WRRRC. It was desired to bring together existing community organizations – whether exclusively serving the Rainbow community or the community at large – who had indicated an interest in being allies of the Rainbow Community. RCC represents the first step in develop a truly community-wide, sustainable framework for supporting the Rainbow community as a whole.

OVERVIEW

1. Definitions

Affiliated Individual

Individuals that are staff members, board members, volunteers, or otherwise reasonably seen to represent, and/or provide direction for, an organization that is a Member of the RCC.

Allies

An individual who identifies as heterosexual and cis-gendered, but who is supportive of the Rainbow Community.

Anti-oppression

Anti-oppressive practices acknowledge oppression in societies, economies, cultures, and groups, and to remove or negate the influence of that oppression (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-oppressive_practice).

Cis-gendered

A description for a person whose gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex all align (e.g., man, masculine, and male) (<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/01/a-comprehensive-list-of-lgbtq-term-definitions/>)

Rainbow Community

The Rainbow (or LGBTQ) community includes people who may be marginalized based on sexual orientation, sexual identity, sexual behaviour, gender identity, gender expression, and/or sex assigned at birth. This definition is intended to guide, rather than limit the scope of, the Council's work. Given that rainbow identities can be complex and evolving, it is anticipated that this definition will change over time.

Unaffiliated Individuals

Members and Supporters of the Rainbow Community Council that sit as individuals and do not represent an organization.

2. Vision

The Rainbow Community Council is committed to fostering a connected, welcoming, integrated, and supportive community in Waterloo Region that is inclusive of members of the Rainbow Community.

3. Mission

To create a sustainable network of organizations, allies and community members, aligned with the mission, vision and values of the council and committed to initiatives that improve support for members of Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community. The council fosters open communication, project collaboration, information sharing, education, awareness, identification of gaps in existing services and setting community priorities.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 1) Participants in the RCC have the following roles and responsibilities:
 - a) Commit to active participation and collaboration with members of the council through:
 - i) Regular attendance at RCC meetings;
 - ii) Collaboration on grants and projects;
 - iii) Avoiding duplication of resources and services;
 - iv) Supporting other members in identifying gaps in their service provision, through the provision of feedback and/or support; and
 - v) Not just listening, and observing, but doing and contributing in what way you can.
 - b) Commit to learning about and developing an understanding of the unique challenges, barriers and identified needs of the Rainbow Community in Waterloo Region.
 - c) Think holistically about community, by acting in the interests of the community as a whole and avoiding a focus on individual or organizational interests.
 - d) Utilize their own networks and organizations to promote the work of the RCC.
 - e) Act in a spirit of collaboration rather than competition.
 - f) Be supportive of, and have a strong commitment to, anti-oppressive policies, practices and procedures, especially as they relate to the rainbow community.
- 2) Unaffiliated individuals have the additional roles and responsibilities:
 - a) Commit to represent the broader community rather than individual interests.

COUNCIL COMPOSITION

1. Eligibility Requirements

The RCC is open to any individual, agency, organization, or business that:

- a) serves or represents, wholly or partially, residents of Waterloo Region,
- b) who agree to meet the roles and responsibilities defined above, and
- c) regularly attends meetings.

2. Participation Fee

Participation in the RCC will be free, though Participants are asked to contribute what they can, as outlined in the *Roles and Responsibilities* section.

3. Levels of Participation

The Rainbow Community Council shall consist of two major categories of Participants:

- 1) Supporters
 - a) Supporters are any individuals, agencies, organizations or businesses that meet Eligibility Requirements and who inform the chairs of the RCC of their intention to be listed as Supporters of the RCC.
- 2) Members
 - a) Members are any individuals, agencies, organizations or businesses that meet Eligibility Requirements and have responsibility for governance of the RCC, in accordance with these Terms of Reference.
 - b) Members have decision-making authority for the RCC.
 - c) Members shall consist of the founding members of the RCC, with additional Members added by consensus or majority vote during a regularly scheduled meeting of the RCC.
 - d) When voting on adding new Members, the primary considerations will be as follows:
 - i) Each Member should represent distinct interests, constituencies, or sectors, with efforts made to avoid duplication.
 - ii) Efforts should be made to ensure that Members are representative of the demographics of Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community.
 - iii) No organization will have more than one affiliated individual as a Member.

4. Representation

Members and Supporters that are organizations must name an individual who will act as their official Representative at meetings of the RCC. Unaffiliated individual members are their own Representatives.

To avoid conflicts of interest, representatives appointed by a Member organization must not be formally affiliated with more than one Member organization.

Representatives may send a proxy to a scheduled meeting, though proxies may only vote on items that are on the meeting agenda. Representatives must provide the meeting Chair the name of their proxy prior to the scheduled meeting.

5. Ending Participation

Any Member or Supporter may voluntarily end their participation at any time.

Any Member or Supporter that ceases to meet Eligibility Requirements or who demonstrate a lack of willingness to adhere to the RCC's Roles and Responsibilities (as determined by consensus or vote of 75% of current Members), will be considered to have ended their participation in the RCC.

Any Member who does not attend or send a proxy to two consecutive meetings is considered to have ended their participation, unless notification of their absence is received by the Chairs prior to the scheduled meetings and approved by Members attending the scheduled meetings.

6. Inaugural Participants

The following is a list of the inaugural Members and Supporters of the Rainbow Community Council with a length of participation not to exceed eighteen months from the date of founding.

Members

- *[member list to be announced soon!]*

Supporters

- *[member list to be announced soon!]*

The Inaugural Participants have the responsibility of setting the Mandate and reviewing the criteria for Members of the RCC.

After the eighteen month terms have ended, Inaugural Participants may continue as Members or Supporters of the RCC, subject to confirmation that their participation as Members or Supporters is consistent with the Terms of Reference in effect at that time (including the revised Member criteria).

New Participants can be added to the RCC while the Inaugural Participants are serving their terms of office, though must undergo the same participation review as the Inaugural Participants at the end of their terms.

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

1. Co-Chairs

- 1) There shall be three co-chairs of the RCC:
 - a) One of the Co-Chairs shall be the current chair of the Waterloo Region Rainbow Coalition
 - b) The two remaining Co-Chairs shall be elected from amongst Members of the council
- 2) The duties of the Co-Chairs shall be as follows:
 - a) Responsible for jointly setting the agenda for each meeting.
 - b) Rotating responsibility for chairing individual meetings of the RCC.
 - c) Act as the public face of the council.
- 3) The term of office for an elected Co-Chair will be one year.

- 4) A Co-Chair shall be elected by consensus or a majority vote of current Members.

2. Administrator

- 1) The Administrator of the RCC shall be responsible for:
 - a) Distributing the agendas for all RCC meetings
 - b) Taking and distributing minutes for all RCC meetings.
- 2) The term of office for the Administrator will be one year.
- 3) The Administrator shall be elected by consensus or a majority vote of current Members.

MEETINGS

1. Frequency

Meetings will be held at least 5 times annually, generally every second month.

2. Notice

- 1) Meeting dates and times will be set six months in advance.
- 2) The meeting agenda shall be sent two weeks prior to the meeting.

3. Level of Participation

Meetings of the RCC can only occur if 50% of Members are in attendance. If less than 50% of Members are in attendance, discussion can occur and be minuted, but no council decisions can be made.

4. Decisions

It is anticipated that Members of the RCC will routinely make decisions related to:

- Setting strategic direction and priorities; and
- The structures and processes required to sustainably support the RCC's activities.

Every effort is made to arrive at decisions through consensus. When a formal decision is required on an item, the following process will be followed:

- Step 1: Discussion
- Step 2: Identify Emerging Proposal/Motion
- Step 3: Identify Any Unsatisfied Concerns
- Step 4: Collaboratively Modify the Proposal
- Step 5: Assess the Degree of Support
- Step 6: Finalize the Decision OR Circle Back to Step 1 or 3

If a decision cannot be arrived by consensus, a formal vote may be held provided all of the steps above have been attempted. Motions are passed if supported by 75% of Members attending the meeting in question, provided the item is on the meeting agenda. If the motion is not related to an item on the agenda, motions are considered passed if supported by 75% of the entire current list of Members.

The Co-Chair responsible for chairing the meeting in question does not vote at a meeting, except in the event of a tie.

5. Minutes

- 1) Minutes will be prepared and distributed within two weeks of a duly called meeting.
- 2) Minutes shall be considered draft and not intended for public distribution until approved at the next meeting.

6. Location

Members will host meetings of the RCC on a rotating basis. Virtual participation of Members at a meeting is permitted, provided such participation is requested of the Chair in advance of the meeting and virtual participation can be accommodated by the meeting host.

SUBCOMMITTEES

1. Proposal

- 1) Participants can propose subcommittees to work on special projects, as required.
- 2) Proposals for subcommittees must include a terms of reference, the name and contact information for the subcommittee chair(s) and the names of participating members.
- 3) The Chair of a Subcommittee must be a Member.
- 4) Terms of Reference must include the length of time the subcommittee will be in existence and the frequency of reports back to the RCC.

2. Approval

- 1) Subcommittees can be approved at any duly called meeting of the RCC, provided proposals are included in the meeting agenda.
- 2) Subcommittees can be approved for a maximum of one year, at which time the sub-committees terms of reference must be reviewed and renewed.

AMENDMENTS

1. Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed annually.

2. Notice

At least two months' notice must be provided to voting members of any proposed amendments to these terms of reference.

3. Approval

Amendments to these terms of reference can be made by consensus of all current Members, or, if consensus is not possible, by approval of 75% of Members.

SECTIONS TO BE ADDED/MODIFIED AT A LATER DATE

1. A Mandate Section
 - a. Some of the initial activities of the inaugural Rainbow Community Council will include:
 - i. Determining how the RCC will measure its success
 - ii. Conducting a community Needs Assessment
 - iii. Developing a Community Survey
2. The mission will need to be reviewed and expanded in the future.