



Toronto Neighbourhood Centres (TNC)

Relationships, Belonging & Anti-Oppression Charter

- June 19 2021 (a work in progress)

Preamble – Acknowledging the Land and the Commitments of TNC

TNC gratefully acknowledges that the land on which it operates has been from time immemorial the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat Peoples. This land is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. Tkaranto (or Toronto) is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit Nation. For Indigenous Peoples colonialism has never ended. Their rights as Sovereign Nations, as enshrined in Treaties, are being violated. Their inherent connection to land and other all-life-sustaining resources have been dismantled over the last five hundred years.

The City of Toronto estimates that currently there are 70,000 Indigenous persons living in Toronto^[1]. For generations, they have been facing multiple and systemic issues – racism, homelessness, poverty, to name a few – that stem from on-going settler-colonialism. In many Indigenous languages there aren't words to name these issues because historically they faced none of them^[2]. Thus, settler-resettlement is inescapably implicated in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous Peoples.

In this context, TNC's commitments should begin with the unlearning of many things learned about North America, and re-learning the rich and diverse Indigenous cultures and worldviews, Indigenous Treaty rights and settler responsibilities, and seriously engaging in deconstructing settler-privilege. Advocating for justice and receiving advice from Indigenous Peoples in TNC operations are important measures of reconciliation on an ongoing basis. We recognize that dealings with Indigenous Peoples by the Canadian state should be done on a nations-to-nation basis [3].

TNC acknowledges that because of on-going settler-colonialism the impacts of oppressions on Indigenous Peoples are substantially different from those on oppressed settler populations. We are aware that other than Indigenous Peoples and descendants of Black people who were enslaved, all other communities are considered settlers. Settler privilege comes with settler-commitments and responsibilities for Indigenous Peoples. It is with this understanding that we work together to advocate for the systemic issues faced by Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC).

[1]

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/indigenous-affairs-office/torontos-indigenous-peoples/>

[2] <https://www.nccih.ca/docs/determinants/FS-TacklingPovertyCanada-SDOH-Wien-EN.pdf>

[3] see Nation to Nation and Why it Matters - <https://www.oktlaw.com/nation-nation-matters/>

I) Perspectives on Our Moment

[please note - these quotes at the start of this Charter are meant to provide inspiration and guidance - but we know that we all read these in very personal ways. We would encourage organizations to select any quotes that speak to them, and also to add new quotes that may help to express the aspirations your organization has with regard to promoting belonging and anti-oppression, and nurturing more whole relationships with ourselves, each other, and our natural world.]

- ❖ There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives. - *Audre Lorde*
- ❖ History isn't something you look back at and say it was inevitable; it happens because people make decisions that are sometimes impulsive and of the moment, but those moments are cumulative realities. — *Marsha P. Johnson*
- ❖ At its heart, racism is the great lie that denies our common humanity. The counter is building real, meaningful human relationships between communities... But just as we've learned from our fraught attempts at reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, creating right relations is not an event, but a process. It is the same with healing the scars of Canadian anti-Black racism. The question is, are you down to take part in the journey? - *Kofi Hope*
- ❖ Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love. - *Martin Luther King Jr.*
- ❖ To do our work, to come into deep knowing of who we are — that's the stuff that bringing down systems of oppression is made of. And so capitalism in its current form couldn't survive. Patriarchy couldn't survive. White supremacy couldn't survive if enough of us set about the work of reclaiming the human spirit, which includes reclaiming the sense of humanity of the people that are the current vehicles for those very forms of oppression. ... It is developing our own capacity for spaciousness within ourselves to allow others to be as they are — that is love. ... Simultaneously with our commitment to disrupting and dismantling structures that degrade humanity, a commitment to the practice of engaging the humanity of people wed to perpetuating those structures must co-exist. Whether by arrogance, ignorance, or fear, we must bear witness to their suffering as our own. Challenge what is unjust. Invest in their basic goodness. Always moving towards integration. Without this commitment and practice, we merely mirror the destructive forces of polarization and power. - *Rev angel Kyodo williams*
- ❖ There is, indeed, a fire burning over the earth, taking with it plants and animals, cultures, languages, ancient skills and visionary wisdom. Quelling this flame, and re-inventing the poetry of diversity is perhaps the most important challenge of our times. - *Wade Davis*
- ❖ I am because you are. - *African philosophy of ubuntu*
- ❖ ... there are no convenient others, no convenient enemies, ...we are the systems we oppose. It means admitting that we don't know the answers, and that's ok. The new politics of hope that we envision, and that we imagine, is not so much about the correct answers, it's not about a superior equation. It's about us. Us as aspects of our ecosystems, our cultures and our relationships. **Whatever you do, don't try to make the world a better place; instead, consider that the world might be trying to make you a better place. Listen.** - *Bayo Akomolafe*
- ❖ Whiteness is a state of mind that encourages inequality. - *Tessa McWatt.*

II) Charter Commitments - For Board & Management Adoption

As TNC member agencies we understand the central work of neighbourhood centres as being of service to others, striving to sustain positive relationships and program spaces that are welcoming, and generating an experience of belonging for all, across the great diversities of people in our communities.

In signing this Charter, and as a Toronto Neighbourhood Centres (TNC) member, we commit to implementing ongoing learning and action processes focusing on the question:

How can we be in better reciprocal relationships with each other, with the communities we support, and with the more-than-human world, in ways that will forge sustainable and systemic advancements in anti-oppression, equity and belonging?

We further commit to:

- ❖ Introducing or expanding ongoing learning practices in our organizations that enable us to conduct this relationship-building and belonging work well.
- ❖ Aligning our voices and organizational capacities to speak out against policies and practices in our communities and societies that seek to exploit our healthy differences in ways that reinforce exclusion, discrimination, inequality and violence.
- ❖ Supporting personal reflection and growth necessary to centre anti-oppression work in our daily practices, integrating multiple and intersectional dimensions, and to making the space for this reflection in our workplaces and in our communities.
- ❖ Focusing more intentionally on our relationships to learn more about how we carry hidden assumptions, judgements and internalized norms of our society, and how we may work together to unlearn biases, and undo structures of privilege and power that underpin oppressive systems which diminish, devalue and claim lives.
- ❖ Gaining a deeper consciousness for how racism, sexism, ableism, colonialism, speciesism¹, homophobia, transphobia, fatphobia², classism and other power dynamics of control and oppression are sustained in our society, and act on this learning in ways that will subvert these corrosive dynamics, and broaden our capacity for accountability, reciprocity, and empathy in our workplaces, our communities and our world.

These Relationship, Belonging and Anti-Oppression objectives and commitments have been adopted by

the Board of Directors & Management of _____ on _____
(agency name) (date)

¹ While speciesism typically refers to the dominance of humans over other animals, we mean to indicate something broader - including human subjugation and dominance of all non-human nature and land, not just animals.

² for context please see Fat Phobia and Its Racist Past and Present: <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/893006538>

III) Next Steps for Boards of Directors

To advance your organization's commitments to the **Relationships, Belonging & Anti-Oppression Charter** we are requesting that your agency's board of directors take the following steps:

1. Direct your agency's leadership to implement the charter commitments in ways that will actively engage staff in the development of yearly action plans, with targets and timelines for change, and reporting processes that can be shared within your organization, and with other TNC member agencies, to advance our collective learning.
2. Ensure that there are mechanisms in place for staff and community feedback so that the Board can monitor your organization's progress and ongoing accountability to these charter commitments.

IV) Next Steps for ED/CEOs/Managers

1. Review and draw upon the appended TNC anti-Oppression Practice Guide and Tools to help shape your organization's anti-oppression workplans, intended outcomes, timelines and reporting/accountability processes.
2. Connect this planning and action to any existing anti-racism and anti-oppression policies and processes you already have in place.
3. Build upon any staff/management or union/management processes you have for collaboration, planning and mutual accountability.
4. Set up processes for engagement across the diversity of your staff roles/positions, and consider having all of your staff to sign onto the Relationships, Belonging and Anti-Oppression Charter.
5. Integrate these commitments with your organization's community advocacy and policy engagement efforts.

V) Intended Impacts of this Work for Your Organization

If we do this honestly, and in ways that successfully work against oppression (without wishing it away) - what would that change look like in our practice, our policies, our behaviour, our programs, and agencies' roles in the community?

We envision that our efforts will bring the following interrelated changes to our organizations, with increased capacity to:

- ❖ Integrate day-to-day practices that support staff to actively identify and address the ways in which racism, colonialism, sexism and other forms of oppression are reproduced in our relationships - with each other, and with the community members we work with.
- ❖ Work with community members in ways that build trust, foster understanding across differences, shape programs that are inclusive, and enable us to stand with, not for, the voices of the communities that we work in and serve.
- ❖ (Re)commit agency time and resources so that we can integrate this work into the DNA of our day to day practice in a manner that includes staff at various roles in the agency and in partnership with the

communities/community members we support.

- ❖ Take a more active stance as individual organizations and collectively as the TNC to speaking out and champion policy change that is needed to unravel the structures and practices that sustain oppressions in our community-agency sector, communities, governments and institutions.

We recognize that all forms of oppression, exclusion and inequity are systemic - sustained and perpetuated by collective patterns of behaviour and (in)action. However, the working assumption or theory of change underlying this charter, and associated 'practice guide and tools' is that our relationships with each other as staff, and with community members, across all of the complex dimensions of difference that we bring into our workplaces, are one of the most vital resources we have to draw upon, and learn from. Our relationships are not separate from the program and advocacy work our agencies do, they are the foundation of the work and learning we do together. Tending to these relationships is a central part of the work that will make us stronger agents for system change.

The change we seek is informed by the complex interplay of the personal and the structural. It assumes an ongoing effort to learn more about how these two realms that we often imagine to be distinct, are deeply intertwined. It will change the way we work, while holding onto the deeper reality that this is not something that will be easily fixed by the same social change tools we have been using. Something deeper is needed, and we invite people into this work as a continuous exploration, not just a series of tasks to be checked off.

V) Moving Forward: Resources for Staff

The appended "**TNC Anti-Oppression Practice Guide & Tools**" seeks to give some direction and concrete objectives for individual agencies to pursue and guide them in developing action plans to carry out these next steps. It has been assembled through in-depth work over the last two years, undertaken by over 150 agency staff engaged in our TNC affinity groups and other partner organizations.

Some of the practices and actions proposed in the guide are ones that your own organization will need to work on individually to advance. **Others are objectives that we will work on together as a network**, and in collaboration with other partners and groups.

We invite agencies to use the guide as a starting point - to help assess areas of strength and good practice that can be shared, and to identify areas where you would wish to do more work. Included in the guide are strategies for **creating action plans, measuring progress, creating a culture of accountability, along with promising examples shared from across our network.**

Additionally, we will continue to support and rely upon our **TNC inter-agency affinity groups** to support each other in an ongoing process of advancing and acting upon our learning together.

TNC Anti-Oppression Practice Guide & Tools

I) Using This Guide

As noted in the **TNC Relationships, Belonging and Anti-Oppression Charter**, member agency boards of directors are being asked to adopt the following structures to help guide this work:

- 1) Direct your agency's leadership to implement the charter commitments in ways that will actively engage staff in the development of yearly action plans, with targets and timelines for change, and reporting processes that can be shared within your organization, and with other TNC member agencies, to advance our collective learning.
- 2) Connect this work to any existing anti-racism and anti-oppression policies and processes you already have in place, and any staff/management or union/management processes you have for collaboration, planning and mutual accountability.
- 3) Integrate these commitments with your organization's community advocacy and policy engagement efforts.
- 4) Ensure that there are mechanisms for staff and community feedback in place so that you can monitor your organization's progress and ongoing accountability to these charter commitments.

All organizations are also encouraged to dedicate resources to this work. Ideally, all agencies would have a senior management position dedicated (in whole or in part) to diversity, equity and belonging. In the absence of this role/position, organizations are encouraged to develop in-house expertise that can guide the equity strategy, and identify who and how this agenda will be stewarded.

II) Organization of this Guide

Each of the sections of this Practice Guide will be summarized briefly in terms of the

- ❖ Key Goals
- ❖ Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes
- ❖ Tools, Resources (links to documents) & Next Steps

These "Tools and Resources" listed in this Guide are those that have been developed by and for TNC members, through the work of our TNC Affinity Groups. In addition to the attached Practice Guide and Tools TNC has also **assembled a folder of helpful guides and resources** from other sources to support members' work in advance these commitments and processes - see

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14nDpBlUXYKUljK2H5Om6JmXePvWsrwte>
to access these resources.

Please note that our **TNC Anti-Oppression Practice Guide and Tools is a work in progress**. Some segments listed below are more complete than others. Some will be developed more fully through the efforts of our TNC Affinity Groups. This is a living document that will change over time as we learn and contribute to it together.

A) Resources for Acting On Specific Dimensions of Oppression And Injustice

- 1) Acting On Our TNC BIPOC Check-List
- 2) Acting On An Anti-Black Racism Analysis and Interventions
- 3) Acting On the TNC Rainbow Affinity Group's recommendations for 2SLGBTQIA+
- 4) Acting On TNC's Agency/Board Commitments to Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation
- 5) Acting On Commitments and Obligations to Confront Ableism
- 6) Acting On Sexism/Patriarchy in Our Organizations/Sector
- 7) Acting On Environmental Justice
- 8) Other Sections To Be Added as Identified/Needed

B) Resources for Centering Anti-Oppression in Our Decent Work, Community Engagement and Social Policy Reform Efforts

- 9) Centering Anti-Oppression in Our Decent Work Commitments
- 10) Centering Anti-Oppression in Our Community Member and Program Participant Relationships
- 11) Championing Public Policy Reforms That Advance Our Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Commitments

III) A Note on Intersectionality

Much of this guide is organized by particular aspects of oppression and discrimination (colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-black racism, ableism and more). However, as we move this work forward we must do so in ways that reflect the ways in which people experience these dynamics in real life - as inter-acting phenomenon. As Audre Lorde notes “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives.”

As we pursue our anti-oppression work, TNC is committed to understanding and responding to these intersectional realities experienced by persons. Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that various dimensions of oppression and discrimination interact in ways that may amplify harm and disadvantage, and that different peoples have their own unique experiences of oppression and its related trauma, or privilege.

Intersectionality gives us a valuable tool for acknowledging and responding to the lived realities of each person, and to develop anti-oppression strategies that honour people’s unique perspectives and experiences. Through this frame, we can approach each other more genuinely and openly, and work to push aside assumptions, stereotypes and the dynamic of stigma that cloud our capacity for empathy, and seeing each other as individuals. For a description of the history of this concept, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality>

IV) Sustaining Our Momentum Together

Some of the practices and actions proposed in the guide and tools are ones that your own organization will need to work on individually to advance. **Others are objectives that we will work on together as a network**, and in collaboration with other partners and groups.

We invite agencies to use the guide as a starting point - to help assess areas of strength and good practice that can be shared, and to identify areas where you would wish to do more work. Included in the guide are strategies for creating action plans, measuring progress, creating a culture of accountability, along with promising examples shared from across our network.

Additionally, we will continue to support and rely upon our **TNC inter-agency affinity groups** to support each other in an ongoing process of advancing and acting upon our learning together.

VI) Summary Matrix for Organizational Implementation of Anti-Oppression Practice

A suggested matrix for relating/ordering your organization's anti-oppression action plan, with some examples of key actions drawn from the following sections/tools of our TNC Anti-Oppression Practice Guide.

<u>ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE EXAMPLES</u>						
	Governance - Ensure that there are mechanisms for staff and community feedback in place so that you can monitor your organization's progress and ongoing accountability to these charter commitments.	HR/Decent Work - integrate anti-oppression and decent work plans (see section 8)	Workplace Culture / Learning - Integrate day-to-day practices that support staff to actively identify and address the ways in which racism, colonialism, sexism and other forms of oppression are reproduced in our relationships - with each other, and with the community members we work with.	Program Development	Community Engagement - adopt our TNC people-centred civic engagement principles and practices (see section 9)	Public Policy Reform - Take a more active stance as individual organizations and collectively as the TNC to champion policy change that is needed to unravel the structures and practices that sustain oppressions in our communities, governments and institutions. (see section 10)
BIPOC Anti-Racism Checklist	- The Board of Directors should sign the Relationship and Belonging Charter	- Create a mentorship program which will enable BIPOC leaders within agencies to provide	- Create a mechanism to address experiences of micro-aggressions within the	- contribute to a roster of diverse facilitators, trainers, advisors and consultants to ensure that there is equity in		

	- ED/CEO responsible for reporting to the Board of Directors on the agency's equity agenda as part of their performance goals - mechanisms for staff and community feedback with Board in place	- mentorship and support to staff - Conduct an equity audit/survey bi-annually for staff - develop "Organizational Audit Tool for Equity" to provide quick and easy suggestions which can be integrated throughout the organization	organization; all staff, but particularly leadership. should be aware of their responsibilities and the organizational expectations with regards to addressing inequity and inappropriate actions/ comments	perspectives and experiences when hosting gatherings, events, workshops, trainings, etc.		
Anti-Black Racism Analysis	Does the initiative demonstrate accountability to staff and community members of African descent and to our internal commitments by maintaining a clear and legitimate decision-making process?	- Staff Recruitment & Advancement: Recruit staff from diverse Black communities - Race-Based Data: Collect and report on race-based data - Develop policy using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis	- Staff Learning: Train staff using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis	- Does the initiative engage with the diversity of our Black staff/communities, including geographic, income, and other social differences?	- Is the initiative building relationships between diverse Black communities and our Agency that are intentional and reciprocal?	- Advocate for system and policy change with all governments
RAG 2SLGBTIQ+ Actions	see June 2021 RAG Learning Exchange Recommendations	see June 2021 RAG Learning Exchange Recommendations	see June 2021 RAG Learning Exchange Recommendations			
Anti-Colonialism Truth & Recon						
Anti- Ableism						
Anti Sexism/ Patriarchy						

Other vectors of oppression						
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1) Acting on Our TNC BIPOC Check List

Our TNC BIPOC Check-List was developed through two-years of extensive engagement and planning activity led by our TNC BIPOC Affinity Group and our TNC BIPOC Leadership Group (2017-2019), and had additional implementation and action items added by our Allies Affinity Group (2020). A link to the full tool is below. Some of the key goals and intended outcomes are summarized here.

Key Goals

- ❖ Creating Pathways to BIPOC Leadership
- ❖ Implementing Checks and Balances
- ❖ Creating Opportunities for Training & Education
- ❖ Creating Spaces for Mutual Learning and Support

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

- Creating a mentorship program which will enable BIPOC leaders within agencies to provide mentorship and support to staff
- Creating processes that are open for hiring and promotion of BIPOC employees
- Creating networking structures to support the mobility of aspiring BIPOC leaders
- Providing coaching and support for aspiring BIPOC leaders, which includes the voices of folks with lived experience
- Providing training and opportunities to help leaders check their privilege and power
- Supporting trainings to build awareness and meaningful understanding of historical and current Indigenous Context, Anti-Black Racism and Unconscious Bias
- Assessing Board & Staff composition for equity
- Conducting agency audits, creating workplans with clearly articulated targets/timelines
- Ensuring board commitments and accountability
- Assessing HR policies to ensure that they support healthy workplaces and can facilitate support for BIPOC staff
- Creating space within organizations to confront bias and exclusion without repercussions
- Creating spaces and mechanisms for the release of trauma and for understanding our lifelong journey through trauma into organizational leadership

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- Use this [TNC BIPOC Check-List](#) to create your own organization's plan, identifying the strategies you already have in place, the ones you wish to develop, and associated timelines and accountability mechanisms needed to make change.
- Contribute to TNC's [BIPOC Resource List](#) - to create a roster of diverse facilitators, trainers, advisors and consultants to ensure that there is equity in perspectives and experiences when hosting gatherings, events, workshops, trainings, etc.

2) Acting On An Anti-Black Racism Analysis and Interventions

For this work, we have adapted the [City of Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism](#) (2017)

Anti-Black racism is defined as policies and practices embedded in Canadian institutions that reflect and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and colonization in Canada.

An Anti-Black Racism Analysis is the application of this understanding of anti- Black racism to the planning, development, operation, resource allocation and evaluation of policies, services, practices, and spaces, with the intent of achieving transformative change.

Key Goals

- ❖ Understanding and applying an anti-Black Racism Analysis in our work
- ❖ Connecting personal, group, organizational and societal change goals

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

- Staff Learning: Train staff using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis
- Staff Recruitment & Advancement: Recruit staff from diverse Black communities
- Race-Based Data: Collect and report on race-based data
- Collaborative Service Planning: Collaborate with people of African descent to improve systems
- Community Investment: Invest in community resources
- Youth Mentorship & Employment: Prioritize mentorship for youth of African descent
- Public Education: Provide civics and public education using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis
- Policy Development: Develop policy using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis
- Governmental Advocacy: Advocate for system and policy change with all governments

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- Use this [Implementing An Anti-Black Racism Strategy in Your Organization](#) tool to assess your agency's strengths and deficits in terms of actively confronting anti-Black racism, and integrate concrete objectives into your organization's anti-oppression plans and processes
- Use this [Anti-Black Racism Analysis Tool for Radically Equitable COVID-19 Response](#) to assess the degree to which your organization's specific responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are deepening or confronting the inequities caused by anti-Black racism. Developed by the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, 2020

3) Acting On Our TNC Rainbow Affinity Group's recommendations for 2SLGBTQIA+

TNC's Rainbow Affinity Group (RAG) came together in 2018 in order to amplify awareness and support integration of LGBTQ2S+ focus areas into member agency operations (staff policies, forms etc.); programming (developing/recommending inclusive content, etc.); activities (developing and recommending inclusive activities to pilot throughout the year, etc.) and organizing educational trainings and opportunities.

Key Goals

- Building Allyship Capacity
- Trans-inclusion
- Safer and more inclusive spaces
- Queering spaces with accountability

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

- Generating a list of shared values
- Generating a list of recommendations
- Photos and stories to profile existing programs to use in presentations
- Mapping challenges and barriers to building more inclusive environments
- Mining of existing resources

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- [June 2021 RAG Learning Exchange Recommendations](#)
- Recommendations for activities to integrate into programming
- [ACSA Positive Space Guidelines](#)
- [Media resources to build more inclusive content for programming and professional development trainings](#)
- [List of days of remembrance and celebration](#)
- [Presentation\(s\) and workshops that can be adapted and circulated through our centres](#)
- [Guidelines for Forms and Policies](#)
- [Samples of Inclusivity work/work plans at member agencies](#)
- [List of Toronto based 2SLGBTQIA+ agencies to build relationships with](#)
- Learning Exchange Zoom Series
- [Earning the Rainbow Workshops](#)

4) Acting On TNC's Agency/Board Commitments to Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation

As part of the ongoing process to shed light on the experiences of Indigenous Communities in Canada since European settlement, to unveil the Truth and to enable all communities to move forward toward meaningful Reconciliation, community based agencies have a responsibility to take action.

The Truth and Reconciliation Affinity Group is focused on developing a 'training journey' for TNC member agencies so we can do some of this work collectively and grow together. The group will organize network-wide opportunities for trainings, community forums with Indigenous partners and conversation circles to reflect on learnings and experiences throughout the journey.

Key Goals

- Strengthening relationships to Indigenous groups in Toronto
- Supporting the integration of Indigenous programming in a good way
- Active involvement in learning about Indigenous history and the current context

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

- Generating a list of shared values
- Generating a list of recommendations
- Create models for action plans that outline concrete steps to building relationships with Indigenous groups in our communities
- Getting commitments from boards at member agencies to allocate resources and time to do this work in a good way
- Continue Learning Exchange Series

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- Have your board of directors adopt this [TNC Truth and Reconciliation Board Commitment Statement](#)
- Use these [Work plan Samples from TNC Member Agencies](#) and develop your own change objectives and integrate concrete objectives into your organization's anti-oppression plans and processes
- integrate Land Acknowledgements into your work in meaningful ways using this [Land Acknowledgement Guideline](#) from Nativeland.ca and Allison Jones.
- [Indigenous Ally Toolkit](#) from [The Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network](#)
- [Key Learnings from the TASSC Decent Work report than can inform our sector](#)
- Use our TNC Learning Exchange Zoom Series to support your staff learning and engagement in the work of decolonizing our organizations and society.

5) Acting On Commitments and Obligations to Confront Ableism

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, “Ableism refers to attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities. Ableism is...analogous to racism, sexism or ageism, [and] sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value than others. Ableism may be conscious or unconscious, and may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society. It can limit the opportunities of persons with disabilities and reduce their inclusion in the life of their communities.”

Ableism is discriminating against someone because they are disabled. This can be through intentional refusal to make spaces accessible, or it can be more subtle discrimination, such as the assumption that there is only one authentic way to do things or the notion that people with disabilities lack inherent value.

Key Goals

- ❖ Identify and work to remove all forms of ableism in our work
- ❖ Adopt the “Social Model” - treating disability not as a collection of individual medical experiences, but as a social issue.
- ❖ Ensure our organizations’ compliance with the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act)

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

- Conduct agency accessibility audits to ensure your organization is working to achieve compliance with the AODA legislation. Use the audit to identify your organization’s strengths and deficiencies, and develop your own change objectives and integrate concrete objectives into your organization’s anti-oppression plans and processes.
- Additional Actions and Outcomes need to be developed for this area of our anti-oppression work.

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- TNC will be working in partnership with the Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT) to design a four-part training series around disability awareness and anti-ableism for TNC member agency staff - target for this resource to be made available is December 2020.
- Consult this City of Toronto website for [additional resources that discuss disability, intersectionality, and justice.](#)

6) Acting On Sexism/Patriarchy in Our Organizations/Sector

- to be developed -

7) Acting on Environmental Justice

- to be developed -

8) Other Sections To Be Added as Identified/Needed

9) Centering Anti-Oppression In Our Decent Work Commitments

To advance our Decent Work commitments, TNC developed our Decent Work Charter, and Decent Work Checklist in 2016 with the active contributions and direction of our members. These documents have helped to guide organizational commitments to decent work practices, and action planning to move decent work practices forward in our organizations, communities and in the arena of labour market policy reform.

Our decent work commitments are a central part of our anti-oppression commitments - **decent work is work that is situated within workplaces committed to modeling, and advancing anti-oppression.**

Key Goals

As our Decent Work Charter affirms: “TNC member agencies aim to support inclusive, healthy and equitable communities, and we know that the provision of decent work is central to creating the economic and social foundations that underpin individual and community well-being. Toronto Neighbourhood Centres' members are therefore committed to championing decent work conditions and practices in our society, our local communities, and within our own organizations.” And our Charter and Checklist have been designed to operationalize our commitments to three value statements:

- ❖ Decent work is complementary to our commitments to advance inclusion and diversity in our workplaces, and to renew and support our sector's future leadership.
- ❖ Decent work is a central source of personal dignity, family stability, community cohesion, civic inclusion, economic vibrancy, and societal well-being.
- ❖ Decent work is an essential means of furthering the mission and impacts of nonprofit organizations by attracting, developing and sustaining the passionate, dedicated and skilled people who work in our sector.

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

In pursuing our Decent Work Agenda, Toronto Neighbourhood Centres will act on three levels:

- **societal:** working in collaborations with our sector colleagues, local communities, unions, funders and other stakeholders, to create the conditions needed to support Decent Work
- **network:** using our TNC network to pursue collective innovations, and provide leadership
- **individual organizations:** supporting TNC members to identify and expand their decent work practices

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- Revisit or adopt your organization's [TNC Decent Work Charter](#) commitments, and identify the ways in which these objectives intersect with and amplify your anti-oppression objectives
- Revisit the [TNC Decent Work Checklist](#), and identify the ways in which it can amplify the workplan and actions related to your agency's anti-oppression work, particularly with regard to section 5 “**Decent Opportunities for Advancement**”, and section 7 “**Decent Workplace Culture of Participation**”.

10) Centering Anti-Oppression In Our Community Member and Program Participant Relationships

Civic engagement is a fundamental and integral part of non-profit organizations in the TNC network. Collective action to address issues of public or community concern is indeed the modus operandi of TNC agencies as our work is grounded in serving the needs of communities. These needs often arise from socioeconomic inequities that are systemic. Policies, colonial history, laws and practices are at the root of dynamics that marginalize or exclude people from equitable socio-economic participation.

A people-centered approach ensures that lived realities of this systemically-driven marginalization and exclusion are at the center of our work and it enables us to help ensure that all individuals in all sectors of society are able to participate fully in the processes that shape their communities. A people-centered approach supports civic engagement as a basic and fundamental right and strives to ensure that everyone has a say in decisions that affect their lives.

Key Goals

Through the Community Voices for System Change Initiative, our TNC Civic Engagement, Community Development and Program Director Affinity Groups will lead processes that are designed to support all member agencies to amplify their capacities to practice resident-led civic engagement, putting community voices at the centre of our efforts to support positive community change.

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

Working towards implementing people-centered civic engagement (PCCE) in our agencies and enabling agencies to amplify our capacities to practice people-centered civic engagement requires our organizations to:

- Acknowledge an inequality of power between our organizations and the people our organizations serve, recognizing many come from marginalized communities created by historical and current systemic oppressions in Canada;
- Make a fundamental shift from thinking of community as an object to thinking of community as subject;
- Think of our organizations as having power with people and not power over the people we serve and work with;
- Dismantle and interrogate power and understand that the people that our organizations serve and work with actually embody power, are community leaders and that organizations exist for the sake of the people they serve and work with;
- Understand that the realities and trauma experienced by the people and communities our organizations serve and work with.

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- Case Studies on People-Centred Practices at other agencies
- Board Presentation to help gain support at the governance level
- Work plan samples from member agencies
- [Professional Development Series: Agencies as Allies](#)
- [Civic Engagement tools](#)
- [TNC CD Renewal Project](#)
- [Working Definition to Guide People-centred civic engagement that is grounded in a shared set of values](#)
- Checklist and Charter to support agencies in assessing where they are at and setting goals for organizational culture change
- Working in Allyship with Mutual Aid Groups/Neighbourhood Pods

➤ Community of Practice

11) Championing Public Policy Reforms That Advance Our Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Commitments

Working to identify and champion social policy and system change that can advance our anti-oppression objectives is a central part of our work as individual organizations, of collective efforts via TNC, and our people-centred civic engagement work with the community members we work with and for.

Key Goals

As articulated in our “**TNC Values and The Neighbourhood Centre Model**”: “TNC members believe that well-being is a social achievement and not exclusively an individual one, and that every community needs a range of supports to flourish, including:

- ❖ government policies and programs that ensure equality of opportunity, income security, affordable housing, childcare, employment equity and human rights
- ❖ well-funded public education, healthcare and social services
- ❖ opportunities for civic engagement, celebration, expression, mutual support and democratic participation
- ❖ thriving local and regional economies
- ❖ sustainable relationships with the environment”

TNC members contribute to a world in which the “international community” is shaped by people working together from their local communities, a power and legitimacy from the base of society.

Sample of Intended Actions and Outcomes

TNC Members are currently advocating for greater public support and investment in:

- shelters, drop-ins, and after school programming in low-income, Black, and Indigenous neighbourhoods;
- providing permanent secure housing options for all people who need housing;
- civilian transportation safety service and better / safer road infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit;
- civilian conflict resolution service to replace policing of minor by-law infractions / noise complaints;
- crisis intervention and Mad co-led support teams that respond to mental health crises;
- police-free, community-led, trauma-informed emergency service for people experiencing mental health or psychiatric distress and other forms of crisis;
- street outreach services that support homeless and street involved people and connect them to appropriate services;
- youth outreach, youth diversion and constructive interventions for youth in conflict with educational institutions and legal systems;
- restorative services, mental health services, and community-run health centres;
- harm reduction, including safe supply, safe injection / inhalation sites, and harm reduction outreach workers; and
- community-based and trauma-informed emergency service for people who have experienced gender-based violence.

Tools, Resources & Next Steps

- TNC is collaborating with Black Lives Matter Toronto and other stakeholders to advance municipal policy reforms regarding policing and community safety, as articulated in our [letter to the Mayor and Council of June 2020](#). **Your organization can engage in and amplify this work.**
- TNC will work in partnerships with organizations and community members to advance the [anti-oppression policy framework that has been articulated by the Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change network](#)