

# OCASI ANTI-RACISM ANTI-OPPRESSION (ARAO) POLICY

| Policy                             | Revised        | Approved By | Effective     |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Policy |                | OCASI       | June 14, 2013 |
| Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Policy | September 2023 |             |               |

## Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Policy Overview

- 1. Organizational Accountability**
  - 1.1. Organizational Commitment
- 2. Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy**
  - 2.1. Purpose of Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy
  - 2.2. Anti-Racism-Anti-Oppression Policy Statement
- 3. Application of Policy**
  - 3.1. Implementation and Oversight Responsibility
- 4. Use of Policy**
  - 4.1. Accessibility of Policy
  - 4.2. Organizational Implementation Guide: Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Policy (Please see attached)
- 5. Supporting Resources**
  - 5.1. Glossary of Terms
  - 5.2. **NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** related policies
  - 5.3. Legislation and Declarations that Support the Implementation of an ARAO Policy
  - 5.4. Other Supporting Resources

# 1. Organizational Accountability

## 1.1. Organizational Commitment

We, **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)**, are committed to addressing racism and oppression in our values and mission. We recognize that racism, oppression, and social, systemic, and institutional barriers exist in Canada, including in the immigrant and refugee-serving sector<sup>1</sup>. These barriers can impact and limit im/migrants’, refugees’ people without immigration status’, and racialized peoples’ contributions and potential to engage in organizations, their communities and Canada at all levels, particularly at the levels of leadership and decision-making.

To uphold **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION’s (“ORGANIZATION’s”)** commitment, we understand and will actively practice the required work to address racism and other oppressions by:

- Removing oppressive barriers that prevent individuals from fully engaging, participating, and contributing in ways that reflect their abilities, experiences, and knowledge.
- Challenging pervasive forms of racism and oppression systemically embedded in Canada's dominant culture and social institutions.
- Confronting the unique ways in which historic and ongoing settler-colonialism and ongoing injustices continue to harm First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and racialized peoples.
- Understanding that human beings are multi-dimensional, are at the intersection of various identities, and often experience intersectional oppression that cannot be addressed in isolation.
- Asserting that racial, religious, ethnocultural/ethnic, cultural diversity and/or identities of staff, members, affiliates, people, and communities are sources of enrichment and strength, including within **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)**.
- Ensuring that **NAME OF ORGANIZATION’s (“ORGANIZATION”)** operations, structure, and systems<sup>2</sup> reflect anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices and procedures.
- Going beyond the protected grounds<sup>3</sup> set out in Canadian human rights legislation, as it does not consistently nor explicitly offer protection for im/migrants and refugees, racialized people, and people without immigration status.
- Working towards equitable outcomes for im/migrants and refugees, racialized people, and people without immigration status, and confronting and redressing their exploitation and devaluation of their contributions and participation.

---

<sup>1</sup> im/migrant and refugees will replace immigrant, migrant and refugee and used throughout the document.

<sup>2</sup> Includes governance, administration and programs, and relationship with members, employees, board members, communities served, and volunteers.

<sup>3</sup> Vis/invisible and personal characteristics are identified under Canadian federal, provincial, and territorial legislation that protects groups against discrimination. [The Canadian Human Rights Act prohibited grounds](#) including race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex (including pregnancy and childbirth), sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity and expression, family status, disability, genetic characteristics, and a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspension ordered. Along with these, The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) protects people from discrimination in specific situations on 17 grounds: citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), family status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, receipt of public assistance (in housing) and record of offences (in employment). The ARAO Policy also moves to recognize, support, advocate and protect such or any characteristics not yet identified under Canadian legislation.

## 2. Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy

### 2.1. Purpose of the Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Policy

The purpose of this policy is to foster anti-racism and anti-oppression values and attitudes and to develop anti-racism-anti-oppression knowledge and practices within **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** among the Board, employees, volunteers, placement students, members, associates, contractors<sup>7</sup>.

- **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** recognizes that compliance with this policy may require, on an ongoing basis, new learning, unlearning deeply held beliefs and attitudes, and being open to navigating new experiences, and that the process may be complex, may include navigating tension and conflict and may include making and redressing mistakes.
- **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** is committed to fostering an environment that supports new learning, unlearning, evolution and change through increased personal awareness and self-reflection.
- **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** will prioritize ensuring that no one endures disrespectful or oppressive treatment in this process.
- **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** will support genuine efforts for facilitated learning through feedback, education, conflict mediation and resolution.
- **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** encourages a supportive learning environment for transformation and assumes goodwill unless otherwise demonstrated through persistent and/or deliberate failure to comply with related organizational expectations.

This ARAO works harmoniously with **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** Violence Prevention and Harassment Prevention policies.

### 2.2. Anti-Racism-Anti-Oppression Policy Statement

This ARAO policy is consistent with **NAME OF ORGANIZATION’s (“ORGANIZATION”)** mission and vision to create a society of equity and social justice. To this end:

1. **NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** champions “equity and human rights for im/migrants and refugees, racialized people and people without immigration status through advocacy, collective action, collaborative planning, research, capacity-building, and information and knowledge transfer”<sup>4</sup> to create a healthy and respectful environment.
2. **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** commits itself to confronting how our structural roots are rooted in settler-colonial and racist practices and work toward developing consistent commitments, measures, and actions to ensure that we actively work to combat all forms of racism and oppression at **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)**.

---

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from OCASI’s Vision and Mission from <https://ocasi.org/mission-statement>.

3. **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** in and through our work, confronts racism and oppression that prevents im/migrants and refugees, racialized people, people without immigration status and other marginalized groups from participating fully in Canadian society.

To this, **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION (“ORGANIZATION”)** will act on:

### **Identifying, Naming, and Addressing Racism, Inequity and Oppression**

- Identifying and challenging inequities within the immigrant and refugee-serving sector on an ongoing basis
- Proactively engaging in anti-racism and anti-oppression education and knowledge building for our Board, employees, management, volunteers, and members to foster anti-racism and anti-oppression values, attitudes, behaviours, and practices on an ongoing basis.
- Facilitating dialogue to identify and eliminate barriers embedded within systems such as health care, social and settlement services, immigration, and the criminal justice system that disproportionately impact im/migrants and refugees, racialized people, people without immigration status and First Nations, Metis & Inuit peoples.
- Working in solidarity with other groups and movements, committed to confronting and combating racism and oppression.
- Increasing awareness and facilitating the proactive creation of open and affirming environments for the participation of Indigenous peoples, racialized peoples, peoples with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ peoples;

### **Policy, Practices, and Procedures**

- Understanding that any related violations of this policy will be resolved through the organization's complaints protocols<sup>5</sup> and members' complaints policy<sup>6</sup> and bylaws;<sup>7</sup>
- Examining and improving all organizational interactions, practices, policies, protocols, and programs on an ongoing basis to ensure consistent compliance and accountability with this policy.
- Creating equitable opportunities to ensure the participation of diverse interested persons at all levels of the organization, including leadership and decision-making.
- Recognizing that interested persons may need accommodations and ensuring they are met related to dis/ability or protected grounds<sup>8</sup>
- Upholding a zero-tolerance position to proactively address and remedy any intentional or unintentional acts of racism and oppression towards an individual or a group of people that create barriers to access or participation.

---

<sup>5</sup> See OCASI Personnel Policy Manual # 32 - Workplace Violence Prevention Policy, # 33 - Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy, # 45 - Complaints Policy

<sup>6</sup> Members Complaint Policy (It is understood that while member agencies may have varied accountability policies, protocols and mechanisms that may be inconsistent with this policy, they will be held accountable to this policy in their work and interactions with and on behalf of OCASI.)

<sup>7</sup> See Bylaw 7.8 a – Revocation of Membership

<sup>8</sup> Vis/invisible and personal characteristics are identified under Canadian federal, provincial, and territorial legislation that protects groups against discrimination. [The Canadian Human Rights Act prohibited grounds](#) including race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex (including pregnancy and childbirth), sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity and expression, family status, disability, genetic

characteristics, and a conviction for which a pardon has been granted or a record suspension ordered. Along with these, The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) protects people from discrimination in specific situations on 17 grounds: citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), family status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, receipt of public assistance (in housing) and record of offences (in employment). The ARAO Policy also moves to recognize, support, advocate and protect such or any characteristics not yet identified under Canadian legislation.

## Improving Relations with Indigenous Peoples

- Implementing respective policies, practices, procedures, and relationships to advance solidarity with First Nations, Metis & Inuit peoples.

## 3. Application of Policy

### 3.1 Implementation and Oversight Responsibility

The ARAO policy supports **NAME OF ORGANIZATION's ("ORGANIZATION")** efforts to meet our commitments regarding confronting and combating racism and other oppressions in the organization's internal systems and external work. To appropriately enforce this ARAO Policy, the Board, Executive Director/CEO, and Senior Leadership must acknowledge the influence and presence of settler-colonialism within the organization's structures, processes and practices and be willing to identify and dismantle them and build their knowledge and understanding of structural and systemic anti-racism and anti-oppression to ensure appropriate restorative approaches, equitable outcomes, and risk analysis are considered or performed in any decision-making. The Board, Executive Director/CEO, and Senior Leadership thereby:

- i. Oversee the implementation of this policy;
- ii. Are accountable for upholding the ARAO policy;
- iii. Hold that all **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION ("ORGANIZATION")** employees, members and stakeholders are responsible for organizationally adhering to the ARAO policy, and provide them with the support needed to fully implement the policy.

## 4. Use of Policy

### 4.1. Accessibility of Policy

It is the responsibility of **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION ("ORGANIZATION")** to ensure this ARAO Policy is accessible, including accessible delivery/information sharing formats, to all individuals whom it governs concerning any activities, correspondence or engagement with **INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION ("ORGANIZATION")**.

**NAME OF ORGANIZATION ("ORGANIZATION")** will provide those responsible for enforcing this policy with appropriate knowledge and support to fulfill their responsibilities. The organization will also ensure it has the necessary resources and structural procedures in place. To this end, information about the policy should be available and accessible to those it governs.

### 4.2. Organizational Implementation Guide: Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Policy (Please see attached)

## 5. Supporting Resources

### 5.1. Please see Glossary of Terms

### 5.2. Related organizational policies:

1. OCASI Personnel Policy Manual # 32 - Workplace Violence Prevention & Policy
2. OCASI Personnel Policy Manual # 33 - Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy
3. OCASI Personnel Policy Manual # 45 - Complaints Policy
4. Members' Complaint Policy
5. Bylaw 7.8 a – Revocation of Membership

### 5.3. Legislation and Declarations that Support the Implementation of an ARAO Policy

The Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression (ARAO) policy ensures consistency with the principles enshrined in:

- The United Nations [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- The aims and objectives of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- The [Canadian Human Rights Act](#)
- The [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- The [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and related Violence Prevention Policies under [Bill 168](#) amendment to the Occupational Health & Safety Act
- Evolving Human Rights case law
- The [Ontario Anti-Racism Act \(2017\)](#), [Ontario Anti-Black Racism Strategy](#) (2017), the [Ontario Anti-Racism Strategic Plan](#) (2017), and the collective work of the [Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate](#)
- The work guided under the [City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit \(CABR\)](#)
- [Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism](#)
- The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission [Policy on preventing discrimination because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression](#)
- [Employment Standards](#)
- Other relevant labour laws and statutes.

### 5.4 Other Supporting Resources

1. Implementation Guide
2. [Indigenous Peoples in Toronto: An Introduction for Newcomers](#)
3. [Facilitator's Guide: Indigenous Peoples in Toronto: An Introduction for Newcomers](#)

## References

Canadian Human Rights Act, 1985. Retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/page-1.html>

Dill, B. T., & Zambrana, R. E. (2019). *Emerging Intersections: Race, Class, and Gender in Theory, Policy, and Practice*. Rutgers University Press.

Leach, K. A., & Crichlow, W. (2020). CRT intersectionality and non-profit collaboration: a critical reflection. *Community Development Journal*, 55(1), 121–138. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsz028>

Patricia Hill Collins (2022) Black Women and Wellness, *Women & Therapy*, 45:4, 354-368, DOI: [10.1080/02703149.2022.2125620](https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2022.2125620)

Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

A policy primer: Guideline to developing human rights policies and procedures, Ontario Human Rights Commission, Revised December 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-primer-guide-developing-human-rights-policies-and-procedures>

*Vision and mission*. OCASI. (n.d.). Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://ocasi.org/mission-statement>.