

Fort Erie Coalition on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Terms of Reference

Approved September 19, 2024

PREAMBLE

A group of residents in the Town of Fort Erie representing their social profile has formed a coalition to assist the Mayor and Council by providing advice, practices and initiatives on anti-racism, anti-discrimination and anti-prejudice. The coalition shall be called “Fort Erie Coalition on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion” and referred to as “The Coalition”.

MANDATE

Using the lens of Anti-Racism, Anti-Discrimination, Anti-prejudice, this coalition will work with the community and the Mayor and Council of Fort Erie to build a better Fort Erie where Equity, Diversity and Inclusion exist for everyone. Using the Indigenous Principles of the original Two Row Wampum Treaty between Indigenous People and Settlers, there will be peace, friendship and mutual respect among the members of the Coalition, Council and the community of Fort Erie, through consultation, collaboration and education.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision Statement

The land on which we all live and prosper is a direct result of the friendship we have received from the Indigenous People of this land. In this vein of inclusion and friendship, we will create a safe, inclusive, and equitable community where equity, diversity and inclusion are strengths and enjoyed by every resident of and visitor to the Town of Fort Erie.

Group Values

- Equity
- Equality
- Safety for everyone
- Inclusion is a strength
- Respect for each other’s humanity
- Diversity is a strength
- Making a beneficial impact on our community
- Compassion and Understanding
- Creating Brave Spaces

DEFINITIONS

Coalition: A diverse group of people who have joined together for a common purpose.

Diversity: The variety of unique characteristics that exist within a group or community such as gender, gender identity/expression, ethnicity, nationality, age, race, differing abilities, sexual orientation, religion, work background, educational background, socio-economic status, marital status, etc.

Inclusion: The quality of experiencing and feeling a sense of belonging, being included and feeling valued within a group or community.

Equality: The state or quality of being equal and the same as others.

Equity: The quality of fairness (impartiality, without favouritism/nepotism) that is applied proportionately to eliminate barriers to equality and equal opportunity.

Marginalized: A person, group, idea, or concept that exists as peripheral, insignificant, and/or powerless to other (typically common or mainstream) groups or community structures.

Anti-Racism: Anti-Racism is the practice of opposing RACISM. Racism is defined as the belief that different or certain races possess characteristics, qualities, or abilities that are inferior or superior.

Anti-Prejudice: Anti-Prejudice is the practice of opposing PREJUDICE. Prejudice is defined as the opinion or feeling (both favorable and unfavorable) that is formed without knowledge, thought, reason, or actual experience about a person or group.

Anti-Discrimination: Anti-Discrimination is the practice of opposing discrimination.

Discrimination: is defined as the unjust or prejudicial treatment of the differences in people or things in these categories: citizenship, race, place of origin, ethnic origin, colour, ancestry, disability, age, creed, sex/pregnancy, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, receipt of public assistance i.e. Housing and record of offences, employment, etc.

Systemic Discrimination (Definition from Ontario Human rights): can be described as patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate disadvantage for racialized people and minorities.

MEMBERSHIP

Selection / Recruitment of Members

The coalition is a learning community composed of individuals interested in making positive contributions to achieve access and equality for all residents and to foster a harmonious environment.

Membership is open to all who share the Coalition's Mandate, Vision and Values. This may include but is not limited to, community members at large, community organizations, police services, hospitals, school boards, post-secondary institutions, high-school or post-secondary students, authorities or agencies.

The following organizations aim to keep representatives engaged in the Coalition:

- The Fort Erie Multicultural Centre
- The Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
- The Town of Fort Erie

Representatives may include but are not be limited to the LGBTQ2S+, all ages, genders and abilities; marginalized persons, persons of colour, all religions and ethnicities and other persons as diversity expands.

Community membership may be sought through a process of invitations to the community, agencies, groups, and organizations in the Town of Fort Erie. Community representation may be sought through specific contact with interested organizations or individuals.

Terms of Appointment / Transitions

Each person or organizational representative shall give a minimum of 1-year commitment to the Coalition. Member Organizations will continue to send representatives as long as the Coalition exists and commits to keeping engagement on-going.

Member Roles and Responsibilities

Members who miss three (3) consecutive meetings will result in a discussion of the member's position on the Coalition.

There will be two (2) Co-Chair positions that are elected by a majority vote of active members. These positions will be reviewed after a two (2) year cycle, or as needed.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Meetings

Members will aim to meet monthly. A special meeting may be called by one or both of the Co-chairs if there is pressing business to address.

At least half of the membership in attendance shall make quorum.

The maximum length of a meeting will be two (2) hours.

Meeting minutes will be taken by a designated member of the Coalition and aims to distribute those minutes through email to all members within one (1) week of the meeting.

- Meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Feedback and Reporting System

Questions may be directed through the Co-Chairs of the current Coalition.

Public questions can be directed through the [Let's Talk Fort Erie](http://Let'sTalkFortErie.ca) webpage or emailed to edicoalition@forterie.ca.

Protocol for Decision Making

Decisions are made by majority vote of all members present at a meeting.

Consensus Indicator: Everyone agrees they can live with the decision after every effort has been made to meet outstanding interests (Indigenous Decision-Making model). This model elevates every voice and is made from the concept of a “good mind”. A “good mind” is one that does not allow emotion to overrule rational thought to do what is in the best interest of the people.

Protocol for Group Conflict

Conflicts that arise are resolved within the group in a timely manner; everyone takes part in managing and/or working through group conflict.

Review of the Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference to be reviewed on an annual basis or as needed.

Approved as amended by the Coalition on September 19, 2024