TERMS OF REFERENCE

EARN STEERING COMMITTEE

Designated Staff Position Liaison: Director of Community Initiatives with responsibility for the Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN), United Way East Ontario

Department: Community Impact

Revision Date: November 26, 2020

Context:
The Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN) is a community initiative, led by United Way East Ontario, that brings together employers, service providers and other stakeholders with the goal of increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and promoting inclusive and accessible workplaces.

The initiative is being expanded in East Ontario to now include Ottawa, Lanark County, Renfrew County and the United Counties of Prescott and Russell. In addition, EARN’s relationship with the Federal Government departments is being deepened to better support the implementation of the Accessible Canada Act.

The guiding principles of the Steering Committee are to address the inclusion of people with disabilities, to reduce the barriers and gaps related to accommodation and accessibility, and to build and sustain partnerships for the success of this initiative in Ottawa, Lanark County, Renfrew County and the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.

Purpose and Role of the Steering Committee:
The Steering Committee provides strategic advice and guidance in the development and communication of this initiative and is supported by the EARN Leadership Group. Inherent in membership is the commitment to:

- Model best practices and be champions of United Way East Ontario’s priority goal “to improve employment and labour market outcomes for people with disabilities”.
- Adhere to EARN’s Guiding Principles.
Responsibilities:
The Steering Committee will:
1. Provide direction and leadership to EARN and United Way East Ontario’s stakeholders to develop and implement a framework and work plan for the integration of people with disabilities into the labour markets of the relevant areas;
2. Be informed of labour market trends, barriers and gaps in accommodation and accessibility in the workplace, share knowledge of employment practices and programs, and provide insight into employers’ and service providers’ needs;
3. Provide feedback and input regarding EARN’s work plan and review the plan on an annual basis;
4. Provide guidance, support and advice to the Leadership Group concerning the definition of its role, recruitment of new members, strategic plans, partnership proposals, and funding requests;
5. Support the development of membership by having and participating in a continual referral system;
6. Champion the inclusion of people with disabilities within the labour market by acting as an EARN representative at events in Ottawa and outlying areas when requested;
7. Advocate for EARN and its mandate by engaging executives/leaders within each member’s own networks and associations. Ensure that your organization is represented at functions and events; and
8. Report your respective workplace data based on the hiring of persons with disabilities, if tracked and disclosed, as requested and solicit and provide success stories from respective workplaces to EARN.

Steering Committee Core Principles for Member Organizations:
• Work together and negotiate with trust, good will, integrity and mutual respect;
• Support each other and strive to not duplicate efforts; and
• Commit to the development of EARN and its members by acting as a collective voice through sharing experiences and best practices with one another.

Membership:
It is recommended to have 8 to 12 members representing the following sectors: education, government, employers, City of Ottawa, funders, service providers (ODSP and non-ODSP), human resource consultants/firms, research/data and other sectors as appropriate.

Representation should include members from East Ontario: Ottawa, Lanark County, Renfrew County and the United Counties of Prescott and Russell.
The Steering Committee will include the Chairs, representing employers and service providers, from the Leadership Group. Other stakeholders may also be invited to be represented on the Committee. For more information on the position of the Steering Committee Chair, see appendix A.

Each member will hold a position for three years from their date of joining, including the Chair and Vice-Chair positions, with the possibility of renewal or extension.

Upon completion of the term, the organization/representative may be invited to continue their involvement in the Leadership Group, or the Champion Group, as appropriate.

Committee members, including the Chair and Vice-Chair positions, may let their name stand for subsequent years for a maximum of 2 terms (6 years), with the approval of the Steering Committee by way of a vote.

Committee members wishing to resign from the Steering Committee are asked to provide 60 days’ notice, whenever possible.

**Decision Making Process:**
Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible, with the understanding that lead organizations will have the decision-making responsibilities for specific initiatives.

A partner organization may opt out of participating in the consensus decision-making process if it determines that it is not in the interest of their organization. This decision would be recorded in the minutes.

Where consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be called and 50% plus one of those present at the meeting will be required for a vote to move forward.

**Conflict of Interest:**
Steering Committee members will be required to declare a conflict of interest in discussions if their organization stands to benefit from a decision. After declaring the conflict, the organization in conflict will have the right to continue with the discussion but not be able to vote.

**New Members:**
When there is a need to recruit for the Steering Committee, EARN will advertise the position through its members and broadly through various channels such as the newsletter, website,
United Way East Ontario’s contacts, social media, local networks and other methods as required.
Candidates will be vetted through a defined selection process and selected candidates will be invited for an interview.

Selection and membership will be with the confirmation of the Chairs of the Steering Committee, the Leadership Groups and the United Way East Ontario’s EARN representative.

Members of the working groups will be consulted during regular monthly meetings and a reply will be provided to the applicant within 30 days of the request, whenever possible.

From time to time, other stakeholder representatives will be invited to attend meetings, particularly when matters specifically pertinent to their interests are being addressed.

It is strongly encouraged that a member does not miss more than two meetings. If a member is unable to attend, they should ensure they read the minutes from the missed meeting to make sure no action items are missed.

A Vice Chair will also be included in the membership of this participatory group in order to shadow the Chair and be available to replace the Chair when required.

Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required to align with the work plan.

**Accountability:**
Decisions and work plan directions must align with the EARN mandate and be approved by the Steering Committee and United Way East Ontario. Reporting will also be provided to funders.

**Meeting schedule:**
Monthly meetings will take place between September 1 and June 30. Additional meetings may be called as required.

**Communications:**
The Steering Committee will determine who will act as its spokesperson(s) at specific events. Media requests should be directed to the Director of Community Initiatives (with responsibility for EARN), for United Way East Ontario.
**Evaluation:**
The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed as required to align with EARN’s work plan. They may be altered to meet the current needs of all committee members, by agreement of the majority.
Appendix A

The Steering Committee Chair
The Chair of the Steering Committee will provide leadership in building a shared vision and community commitment for moving forward and developing an action plan. The Chair will have the following additional responsibilities, to be shared with EARN/United Way East Ontario representatives:

- Acting as primary spokesperson for EARN at public and official functions;
- Presiding over committee meetings, setting the agenda and ensuring draft minutes are recorded and reviewed;
- Ensuring that the nomination and appointment of members occur through an effective process and in a timely manner;
- Facilitating progress on EARN initiatives in collaboration with project group chairs;
- Achieving expected outcomes; and
- Representing the Steering Committee at EARN meetings and events.