



POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

Elgin St. Thomas Coalition to End Poverty – Terms of Reference 2023

1.0 Background

The **Elgin St. Thomas Coalition to End Poverty** formed as a result of conversations within Bridges out of Poverty St. Thomas Elgin. Bridges Out of Poverty St. Thomas Elgin is a group of committed community leaders and volunteers whose mission is to eliminate poverty by uniting the strengths and passions of those living in St. Thomas & Elgin County. Since 2010, this group had been passionate about reducing poverty in St. Thomas & Elgin County through the tools set out in Bridges Out of Poverty. In 2015, Bridges out of Poverty St. Thomas Elgin appointed a small working group to further investigate interest in a comprehensive poverty coalition to tackle the root causes of poverty and commit towards eliminating poverty entirely.

In October 2016, planning tables of community leaders across St. Thomas Elgin were invited to come together to talk further about what could be done. Subsequently, a group of about 25 agencies and community citizens met two additional times, December 2016 and January 2017 to establish and inform a Steering Committee. The local YWCA and Public Health Unit agreed to provide backbone services and the Steering Committee met for the first time officially on February 15th, 2017.

Currently, the coalition remains a collaborative group of organizations, decision makers and individuals dedicated to working together on the vision “no one in Elgin St. Thomas lives in poverty”.

2.0 Purpose of the coalition:

The overall purpose of the coalition is to address the root causes of poverty in Elgin St. Thomas and find solutions for long term sustainable change to achieve our vision. This means we:

- Identify and plan for opportunities to address system transformation by advocating for needed change at all three levels of government
- Work collaboratively with community partners to eliminate poverty
- Provide opportunity for coordination across community tables working on poverty reduction initiatives i.e. food security, housing, economic security, transportation, etc.

3.0 Membership of the coalition:

The coalition will be made up of community stakeholders with a diverse mix of leadership including those with lived and living experience. All members will have a thorough understanding and knowledge of the social determinants of health. All members are encouraged to have Re-think Poverty Training.

Ideally, local chairs of committees or groups encompassed under the coalition pillars are invited and attend and share updates from their area of work.

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities of General Members of the Coalition

- Attend meetings every other month as able

- Bring back information to their organization or community group to support awareness and communication across sectors
- Bring expertise and knowledge in one of the pillar areas (housing, food, income security)
- Share information relevant to the work of the coalition at meetings
- Where possible, coalition members will also be members of a pillar committee
- Actively support the work of the coalition in the community. Attend coalition events
- Support coalition efforts over social media
- Participate in training

4.0 Purpose of the Steering Committee

1. Establish and monitor the effectiveness of Coalition governance structure and procedures.
2. Establish and, at least annually, review, in the fall of every calendar year the strategic direction of the Coalition. This will include a review of the coalition's online presence (i.e., website, social media) to ensure alignment.
3. Annually determine, approve, manage and review quarterly the annual Coalition budget and SC work plan.
4. Anticipate opportunities and challenges, with a specific emphasis on securing resources to address Coalition sustainability.
5. Embrace a collaborative role for the coalition to bring awareness of action areas for each pillar and share at coalition meetings as appropriate.
6. Provide leadership to the Coalition meetings by developing the Agenda and Chairing the meetings.
7. Regularly review the proceedings of the Coalition in order to support its coordination and to monitor progress towards work plan goals and objectives.
8. Regularly identify and plan for opportunities to address system transformation by advocating for needed change at all three levels of government in Elgin St. Thomas.
9. Produce and circulate documents on an as-needed basis to support the work of the Coalition.
10. Be the official voice of the Coalition, in conjunction with other Coalition members, as needed.

4.1 Roles & Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

- SC members will be liaisons to the Coalition sub-groups/pillars.
- Prepare for and attend Steering Committee meetings and provide advance notice to a Co-Chair if unable to attend
- Identify, recruit, appoint, select, elect sub- group representatives as necessary
- Lead or support the process to secure Coalition funds (e.g., grant writing, "Making the Case" to potential sponsors)
- Participate in the development and implementation of an accountability framework for the Coalition's strategic plan
- Actively support the work of the Coalition in the community
- Identify the training and development needs for the Coalition and support addressing these

4.2 Membership of the Steering Committee

Ideally, the steering committee will consist of approximately 30% of the larger coalition. Ideally the steering committee will consist of persons with lived or living experience, as well as membership from a variety of agencies invested in ending poverty.

Steering Committee Roles Include:

Persons with Lived/Living Experience (Open Membership)

- Someone who currently or has ever identified as living in poverty
- Financial poverty is not the only form of poverty. Persons are able to self-identify as they are comfortable.
- Honourariums will be provided as funds allow (examples may include transportation, childcare and time).

Co-Chairs (2)

The co-chairs will hold shared responsibility and determine individual tasks. Roles and responsibilities include:

- Provide Backbone support for the steering committee and coalition
- Chair coalition and steering committee meetings.
- Point of contact for the coalition and steering committee for public and media inquiries.
- Manage coalition correspondence
- Develop steering committee and coalition agendas and distribute one week in advance of meetings along with the previous meeting's minutes for review.
- Liaise with coalition pillars
- Lead on the connection to the relevant research and work of other communities through participation on Tamarack's Communities Ending Poverty Community of Practice, or identify a coalition representative
- Liaison for System Transformation lens to all Coalition work
- Liaison to the Affordable Transportation sector as appropriate and provide support as needed.
- Liaise with Southwestern Public Health to obtain and review data as requested.

Treasurer (1)

The treasurer will provide financial management and reporting. They will track membership fees and expenses. They will provide annual invoices to coalition members.

Communications Officer (1)

The communications officer will manage social media accounts and website for the steering committee and coalition and liaise with professionals to support this work. They will:

- Design the annual report
- Take minutes for steering committee meetings
- Maintain website and edit as required
- Maintain Coalition Facebook page and edit as required, post coalition content as directed
- Share appropriate content on Coalition's Facebook page

5.0 Terms of Office

5.1 Coalition Co-Chairs will serve a three-year term that can be renewed. Ideally, terms of co-chairs will be staggered or overlap to ensure continuity and mentorship.

5.2 All other SC members will serve two-year terms that can be renewed.

Within 6 months of the anticipated end of a member's term, the member will be consulted to determine if they wish to remain in their role.

5.3 General coalition members are welcome for indefinite years of service

6.0 Accountability

The Steering Committee is accountable to the Coalition and will bring forward recommendations to them.

7.0 Membership Fees:

- The fiscal year for the coalition will run from January 1 through December 31
- Each involved organization or individual member is required to pay an annual membership fee in accordance with the approved fee scale.
- Membership fees will be set annually

8.0 Funding

The fiscal year for the Coalition will run from January 1 through December 31.

As outlined in the purpose statements in Section 2.0, the SC will anticipate opportunities and challenges, with a specific emphasis on securing resources to address Coalition sustainability.

9.0 Meetings

The SC will meet monthly or at the call of one of the Co-Chairs as needed.

Members may join by teleconference or in person.

The SC members will also attend the full Coalition meetings, which are every other month.

The location of SC meetings will be based on available and accessible spaces.

9.1 Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes inclusive of action items will be sent to members (steering committee and or regular coalition meetings) after initial draft approval by the co-chairs. This will be sent to the larger group via the Communications Officer.

Meeting minutes will also be circulated along with the following meeting's agenda for review and approval at the next meeting. Once approved, meeting minutes are saved in the ESTCEP SharePoint Site.

10. Decision Making

The SC and the coalition will endeavor to have consensus through discussion in advance of decision making. The coalition will create opportunity for discussion and question/answers. When ample opportunity has been provided for discussion and members feel their questions or concerns have been adequately addressed, a vote will be called with the members in attendance. Members can decide to hold a vote at the next meeting if there is low attendance.

If a time-sensitive decision is required in-between SC meetings, input will be solicited by electronic or telephone means within a specified time frame.

11.0 Conflict of Interest Guidelines

Coalition members have a duty to declare being in conflict between the committee and or coalition's interests and their agencies or personal interests. Whenever a coalition member has a personal or pecuniary interest in the same subject matter of the coalition, a conflict of interest arises. Conflict of

Interest must be disclosed to the coalition co-chairs in advance or as soon after it first becomes known. Co-Chairs will discuss conflict of interest and determine next steps. This may result in the members refraining from participating or voting on related items.

12.0 Confidentiality

Due to the nature of coalition meetings, information of a personal or private nature may be disclosed by participants. It is understood that personal disclosures are to remain confidential. Members who are bound by reporting requirements (i.e., teachers, health care workers) will comply with their legal duty to report requirements as directed by their profession and the law.

13.0 Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually in the fall of each year.

Updated: May 2023