



# Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce

## Terms of Reference

March 2024

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### 1. Context and Introduction

- 1.1 In Canada, the disparities that exist in racialized communities are well documented. Systemic barriers based on race have been created over our long and storied shared Canadian history.
- 1.2 Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices and is rooted in the history and legacy of the North American Trans-Atlantic slave trade. For many Black Durham residents, anti-Black racism is a part of daily life and negatively impacts their economic, social and overall well-being.
- 1.3 Systemic anti-Indigenous racism is another area where targeted intervention should be prioritized. The actions and inactions across all levels of government are not consistent with the core principles of truth and reconciliation and have exacerbated the conditions that negatively impact the health, opportunities, and well-being of Indigenous communities in Durham.
- 1.4 In 2020, Durham Regional Council endorsed its first Anti-Black Racism Town Hall and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Follow-Up [report](#). The report called for the establishment of an Anti-Racism Taskforce as a Committee of Council to ensure a consistent approach to addressing systemic racism. This taskforce will adopt a 'hub and spoke' model where working groups will be identified to address disparities in racialized (Indigenous, Black, Asian, etc.) communities. Given the deep and pervasive inequities resulting from anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, these areas have been the initial focus for the taskforce whose inaugural cohort of members served from 2021-2022.
- 1.5 The Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce (DRART) connects with the following goals of the Region of Durham Strategic Plan (2020-2024):
  - Goal 2: Community Vitality: To foster an exceptional quality of life with services that contribute to strong neighborhoods, vibrant and diverse communities, and influence our safety and well-being.
  - Goal 4: Social Investment: To ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind.

## **2. Goal**

- 2.1 To work with community stakeholders, Regional staff, and other relevant partners to ensure that Durham Region successfully implements its anti-racism framework in a manner consistent with the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code and Durham's aim to demonstrate leadership in addressing systemic racism. Furthermore, to ensure that implementation plans are built on the lived experiences of racialized communities and centers their voices.

## **3. Mandate**

- 3.1 The Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce will act in an advisory role to Regional Council through the Finance and Administration Committee on issues related to racism – structural, systemic, and interpersonal.
- 3.2 The DRART is an Advisory Committee established by Regional Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. Committee members are guided by these Terms of Reference.

## **4. Scope of Activities**

- 4.1 The scope of activities that the DRART may undertake includes, but is not limited to:
- Providing advice, feedback and guidance to Regional staff and Council on implementation of Durham Region's Anti-Racism Framework and initiatives designed to advance equity;
  - supporting and enabling successful implementation of Durham Region's anti-racism plans by engaging and influencing relevant partners and networks;
  - providing accurate and transparent reports to Regional Council on progress in the implementation of Durham Region's anti-racism plans; and
  - hosting events and providing forums for residents to learn more about what the Region and its partners are doing to address racism.
- 4.2 Members can expect to participate in a taskforce subcommittee developed to address a specific trend, need, or systemic issue (education subcommittee, events subcommittee, etc.)

## **5. Composition**

- 5.1 The DRART will be composed of between 15 to 18 members as follows:
- Two members of Regional Council and a designated alternate;

- The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Region.
  - Ten (10) racialized community members with lived experience, specialized expertise, including those with intersectional social locations;
  - Three (3) to six (6) representatives from organizations such as:
    - Community and socially focused organizations (e.g. DurhamOne, Bawaajigewin Aboriginal Community Circle, Durham Black Educators Network, Women’s Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre, Durham Chinese Cultural Centre, Durham Tamil Association, Indo-Canadian Association, Congress of Black Women, etc.)
    - Professional Associations (e.g. Durham Black Business and Professional Association, ByBlacks, Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce – Durham Region, etc.)
    - Healthcare and non-profit organizations (e.g. Lakeridge Health, Carea Community Health Centre, John Howard Society, Ontario Shores Centre, AIDS Committee of Durham Region, Durham Harm Reduction Coalition, etc.)
    - Academia with a focus on anti-racism or anti-oppression (e.g. Ontario Tech University, Durham College, Trent Durham University, and/or local school boards)
- 5.2 Up to four (4) Regional staff who are directly connected to community DEI initiatives and activities may be invited to attend DRART meetings as ex-officio members in a non-voting capacity.
- 5.3 Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) representing Durham Region may be invited to attend DRART meetings on an as needed basis and as ex-officio members in a non-voting capacity.
- 5.4 The DRART may invite individuals with specialized expertise to attend meetings on an as needed basis in a non-voting capacity.
- 5.5 The term of membership shall correspond with the term of Regional Council. If a member chooses to resign the Region will seek a replacement in accordance with Section 6.
- 5.6 At the discretion of the DRART chair and Region’s Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, non-attendance of three consecutive meetings may be sufficient grounds for replacement.
- 6. Membership Selection**
- 6.1 For the selection of members, a call for interest will be facilitated through the Region’s website, social media, and other communications channels. Interested

individuals will be required to complete an application form outlining their interest and qualifications.

- 6.2 The CAO's Office shall contact community, academic and professional leaders and invite them to apply for the DRART.
- 6.3 In nominating members to the DRART, regard shall be given to the aim of achieving a diversity in intersecting social identities. Regard shall also be given to previous community and/or professional involvement, knowledge of race and related issues, lived experience, residency within the Region and availability to attend meetings.
- 6.4 All members of the DRART will be appointed by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.
- 6.5 Regional Council shall appoint a representative and an alternate to the DRART.
- 6.6 Regional Council shall appoint the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and a Regional staff member as an alternate for the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to the DRART.
- 6.7 In the case of a community or organizational member vacancy, the approach described in Section 6.1 will generally be followed.

## **7. Officers**

- 7.1 A chair and a vice-chair will be elected by the DRART at the beginning of each term of Council. The Region's Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion shall chair the inaugural DRART meeting of each term.

## **8. Support Services**

- 8.1 Staff from the Region's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion division will provide administrative, procedural, and technical support to the DRART.
- 8.2 A Regional Staff Working Group, consisting of appropriate staff from all Regional departments shall be established to develop an Anti-Racism Framework which would detail actions that the Region as a corporation and as a community service provider will take to address systemic racism. The Regional Staff Working Group will also provide advice and expertise to the DRART and the staff liaison as needed.
- 8.3 The Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion shall keep the Region's Department Heads apprised of the activities of the DRART and the Regional Staff Working Group.
- 8.4 The Legislative Services Division of the Corporate Services Department will provide secretarial and other support services. Regional Council will provide a

budget to cover the operational expenses of the DRART, and this budget will be administered by the Office of the CAO.

## **9. Meetings**

- 9.1 The DRART will establish a meeting schedule at its inaugural meeting, taking into account the business needs and schedule of Regional Committees/Council. Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair.
- 9.2 Community and organizational members of the DRART will be compensated for their time and work. Each member will be paid \$75.00 per meeting (attendance is a requirement for this compensation) and an hourly rate of \$25.00 for travel time and work outside of the scheduled meetings that has been pre-approved by Durham's Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Reimbursement will occur twice a year, in June and in December, up to a maximum of \$1,800 per member per year.
- 9.3 Meetings will be held in a hybrid meeting format with electronic and in-person participation. Committee members may participate electronically using Microsoft Teams or other approved platform. Members choosing to attend meetings in person will be compensated for their travel time.
- 9.4 Unless otherwise determined, all meetings will be open to the public. As an Advisory Committee to the Region, the DRART is subject to the Regional Procedural By-law, unless otherwise specified in these Terms of Reference.
- 9.5 A quorum for DRART meetings shall be a majority of the sitting members.

## **10. Minutes and Agenda**

- 10.1 The minutes of each DRART meeting will be approved at the following meeting. The unapproved minutes will be circulated to members of Council as part of the Council Information Package prepared by the Regional Clerk.
- 10.2 The DRART agendas will be prepared by the Staff Liaison, along with the DRART Chair or Vice Chair, with input from other DRART members.

## **11. Delegations and Presentations**

- 11.1 Any person(s) wishing to appear before the DRART as a delegation must submit a request to [delegations@durham.ca](mailto:delegations@durham.ca), advising of the topic or item to which they wish to speak, which will then be forwarded to the staff liaison in the Office of the CAO. All requests for delegations must be received at least one week prior to the meeting to ensure the inclusion in the agenda. Any person wishing to address the DRART as a delegate, who has not previously arranged to do so, may be granted permission to do so only by Committee resolution.

11.2 When the DRART has requested a presentation on a particular topic, the time frame allotted will depend on the subject under discussion.

## **12. Committee Resolutions**

12.1 The DRART will seek to achieve consensus on decisions. Recommendations are “carried” if supported by a majority. Only resolutions as they appear in the adopted Minutes may be considered as officially representing the position of the DRART.

## **13. Annual Reports and Workplan**

13.1 An annual report summarizing the activities completed in the previous year shall be prepared by the DRART. The annual report shall be forwarded to the Finance and Administration Committee.

13.2 An annual workplan with an estimate of the resources necessary and any suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference for the coming year shall also be prepared by the DRART for consideration and approval by the Finance and Administration Committee and Regional Council.

## **14. Group Agreements**

14.1 At the beginning of each term, the DRART will develop and adopt a set of guidelines that express how the group will work together. The DRART has adopted the Group Agreements contained in Appendix 1 hereto, which form part of these Terms of Reference.



## Appendix 1

# Group Agreements

## Durham Region Anti-Racism Taskforce

Group agreements are a set of conditions that express what a group needs in order to feel brave, supported, and productive together. They help ensure everyone has positive and constructive experiences as taskforce members. These group agreements are applicable to interactions at taskforce meetings, subcommittee meetings, in-between meetings, consultations, and community events.

### Participatory Agreements:

1. During discussions, members may consider adopting the FLOOR method of engagement: **Focus, Listen, Offer, Opinion, Respect** (adopted from the Royal Canadian Air Cadets).
2. Members should consider being **quick to listen and slow to speak**. When members hear something that is different from their own thinking or analysis, they are encouraged to accept the speaker's description of their experiences as being real for them.
3. **Take space, make space**. Members who tend to talk early and often should challenge themselves to step back and make space for others. If a member tends to hold back, they are encouraged to challenge themselves to share more.
4. Be willing to be uncomfortable. **Lean into discomfort** to see what can be learned. It is important to ensure discomfort is not mistaken for a lack of safety. It's possible to be safe and uncomfortable at the same time.

### Relational and Ethical Agreements:

5. Taskforce members are asked to **respect the knowledge and experience** others share.
6. Members should **assume best intent** and not make negative assumptions about what someone shares or why they are sharing it.
7. **Intention does not negate impact**. Members are to be accountable for their words and actions. It is acceptable to call attention to a wrong-doing and attention should be made to "naming without blaming or shaming".

8. **Accept and expect lack of closure.** This taskforce **will not** solve racism in Durham. It **will** advance initiatives that address systemic oppression and inequities. It is important to acknowledge the progress being made and the impacts of our work within the Region.

**Care for each other.** Creating social change is not easy or quick and can be emotional; let's be kind to one another. The same way groups elect chairs, the taskforce may consider electing 1-2 designated peer-to-peer support leads who can be accessed before, during, and after meetings and events.

### **Functional Agreements:**

9. All group members will do their very best to **arrive on time** to meetings, **respond** to emails between meetings, and **arrive prepared** by reviewing the assigned materials.
10. Members should **bring ideas** and suggestions to meetings pertaining to the tasks and decisions to be made.
11. All members will be required to participate in a project-related subcommittee and are expected to **contribute to subcommittee tasks** between formal monthly meetings.
12. If a member agrees to a task, they will be **expected to fulfill** it. Members are encouraged to communicate immediately if they are not to fulfill an agreement and seek help from other taskforce members in time to avoid delays.

These group agreements were drafted collaboratively and agreed upon by taskforce members and should be reviewed annually. Questions? Please contact the DEI Division at [diversity@durham.ca](mailto:diversity@durham.ca)