

INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES' CIRCLE TERMS OF REFERENCE



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Employment and
Social Development Canada

Emploi et
Développement social Canada

Canada

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Part I – Organizational Direction

a) Name

The name of this entity shall be the Indigenous Employees' Circle (IEC) of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Within this document ESDC includes Employment and Social Development Canada, Service Canada (SC) and Labour Canada.

b) Vision

- i) The Indigenous Employees' Circle is a strong voice for Indigenous employees. The IEC is a trusted and respected voice for ESDC employees and all levels of management.

c) Values

- i) As Indigenous peoples we are grounded in our cultural values. We appreciate the uniqueness and interconnectedness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis values and world views (Annex A). We will practice and incorporate these values in our daily business interactions with each other and with our fellow employees and partners.
- ii) In order to create a culturally safe environment, all representatives on the National Council agree to the following operating principles:
 - a) Respect for ourselves and for each others' beliefs, ideas, innovations, opinions, perspectives; listen with an open mind; a safe place to share; engage in respectful debate.
 - b) Consensus decision-making is achieved through respectful discussion.
 - c) Courage to give advice with a "fearless heart" while remaining respectful.
 - d) Work together while recognizing and honouring the strengths, knowledge and experience of others; collaborate with internal and external partners in a way that advances reconciliation and seek help from others; "many hands make light work".
 - e) Openness to learn and share; learn from each other; share what we know; share our cultures.
 - f) Honor the Path of discovery: acknowledge and respect that each member is on their own personal journey of self-discovery, overcoming the impacts of colonization; we support each other on our individual paths.

d) Mission

- i) To create a comfortable sense of community for Indigenous employees that is supportive, responsive, and provides a forum for professional development, information sharing, networking and solidarity among members and allies;
- ii) To promote awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures, history, contemporary issues and present day realities facing Indigenous people;
- iii) To work collaboratively with and support ESDC in its efforts to increase recruitment, retention and advancement of Indigenous employees;
- iv) To provide a forum for departmental consultation on issues and policies that impact Indigenous employees;
- v) To provide ESDC with strategic advice on its Indigenous commitments and objectives in the business areas of: human resources policies; training and awareness; strategic policy development; and programs and services delivery;
- vi) To support ESDC to be: a culturally sensitive, inclusive and representative work environment, where Indigenous employees and their cultures are acknowledged and respected, and they can realize their professional and career aspirations in a fair, respectful, inclusive manner; recognized as an employer of first choice by Indigenous employees and people.

Part II – Organizational Structure

a) Governance Structure

- i) The structure of the National Council is comprised of up to 15 elected positions.
- ii) Members of the National Council are self-identified Indigenous employees.
- iii) National Council structure:
Executive Committee (4) - Chair, Vice Chair, Administrative Officer and Financial Officer, who are elected at large and the remaining 11 positions come from the five regions and one National Youth Representative. Each region can elect up to two representatives.
 - Western Canada and Territories Region (≤ 2)
 - Ontario Region (≤ 2)
 - Quebec Region (≤ 2)
 - Atlantic Region (≤ 2)
 - National Capital Region (≤ 2)

Part III – Organizational Governance

a) National Council Member Terms

The term of the National Council will be determined by elections with varying staggered election terms. Staggered terms help to ensure the retention of corporate memory in the IEC.

- i) All IEC positions will be for three (3) years. The Chair, the Administrative Officer positions and one representative position from each region will be elected in the same year. The Vice Chair, Financial Officer and Youth Representative positions and the remaining co-representative position from each region will be elected in the following 18 months. Therefore, elections for positions will occur every year and a half (18 months). Currently elections occur in March and September.
- ii) If a member resigns during their term they will be replaced at the discretion of the Council. Preference will be given to an existing council member stepping up to fill an executive position in the interim if and when possible.

b) Vacancy

- i) Any member who wishes to withdraw from the National Council by advising the IEC Executive in writing.
- ii) The vacancy, however caused, may be filled at the discretion of the Council for the remaining term.

c) Meetings

- i) The IEC National Council will meet, at a minimum, on a quarterly basis, two in-person meeting per fiscal year if and when budget permits, and three by video/audio conference meetings or other electronic means of communication. The meetings will be scheduled in advance for the year at the annual in-person meeting held by the elected IEC National Council. Additional meetings can be scheduled on an as needed basis. IEC members are welcome to attend meetings as observers. Though if they chose to attend a face to face meeting There will be no funding to IEC members at large for travel and other expenses related to attending a meeting.

d) Quorum

- i) Fifty percent (50%) plus one (+1) of the IEC National Council will be required to maintain quorum.

e) Decision making

- i) The National Council will honour the traditional values of Indigenous Peoples by using consensus in its decision-making process.

- ii) In the case of time-sensitive issues, the Chair and/or Vice Chair may not be afforded the luxury of time to achieve consensus and may opt to use a majority decision-making process, the percentage of which shall be determined by the type of decision being made, but shall minimally be fifty percent (50%) plus one (+1). This process may be of electronic means.
- iii) Should there be a tie; the vote of the Chair is the deciding vote.
- iv) At the discretion of the IEC National Council, alternate voting methods may be used, such as email; depending on the circumstances and only by decision of the Council.

f) Attendance

- i) Attendance at the IEC National Council meetings is expected for all Council members.
- ii) If any member must be absent from a meeting they are required to inform the executive, specifically the Administrative Officer (If the AO is away the must inform remaining executive) as soon as possible
- iii) If a member misses three meetings without informing the executive and or without valid reason, the member may be requested to step down and their position may be open for replacement. Exceptions will be made for extenuating circumstances and health reasons. The Administrative Officer (or alternate) will track attendance and the executive will make any decision regarding removal.

g) Minutes

- i) All material issues, directives and decisions addressed by the IEC National Council will be recorded in the form of minutes of the meeting by the IEC Administrative Officer. The Administrative Officer will ensure the minutes are verified, approved and shared as appropriate.

h) Accountability

- i) The IEC National Council will be accountable to the General Membership by conducting the following:
 - (1) Develop, implement and update the IEC's Terms of Reference, financial plans and work plans;
- ii) The IEC executive must produce an Annual Report to be shared with IEC members, the Department and partners. The Annual Report will be made available no later than 60 days from the end of a fiscal year.
- iii) The IEC Executive Committee will ensure funds are expended in alignment with the approved budget(s) and that all budget actions are carried out in an accountable and transparent manner.

Part IV – Roles and Responsibilities

a) Elder

- i) The Circle will honour traditional customs and values by inviting an Elder that is recognized and recommended by its respective Indigenous community (First Nation, Inuit, Métis) to be present at meetings or gatherings of the membership or National Council whenever possible.
- ii) Guided by ESDC's *First Nations, Inuit and Métis Elders Protocol Guide*, the Elder will be asked to perform a variety of tasks which may include conducting traditional opening and closing ceremonies of meetings and gatherings, offering guidance and wisdom when necessary, providing insight through knowledge and experiences when appropriate and offering ceremonial activities on an as needed basis.

b) Chair

Provide leadership to/for the National Council. The chair will:

- i. Chair meetings of the National Council.
- ii. Conducts meetings in accordance with the values and principles as established by the National Council.
- iii. Ensures that the mandate of the IEC is met.
- iv. Ensures that the IEC is accountable to the membership.
- v. The Chair should be the voice of the National Council and take into consideration their perspective and guidance when acting as the representative and spokesperson of the IEC
- vi. As a key partner, works closely with HRSB and Indigenous Coordination & Engagement Division to support the implementation of the ESDC Indigenous Reconciliation Integrated Workplan and will communicate or provide updates to the National Council;
- vii. Works closely with "Indigenous Champions" to advocate and support Indigenous employees and the work of the Indigenous Employees Circle, and will communicate or provide updates to the National Council;
- viii. Liaise with committee chairs, stakeholder group leaders and senior management and will communicate or provide updates to the National Council;
- ix. Provides direction and oversight for preparation of the Annual Report on the IEC activities, performance measures and results.
- x. Provides coordination and oversight of the IEC Work Plan;
- xi. Other duties as directed by the National Council.
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c) Vice Chair

- i. Assumes the duties of the Chair in their absence;
- ii. Support the Chair's role through participation on ESDC committees and working groups; as determined in collaboration with the chair.
- iii. Assist the Chair and Financial Officer on strategic planning, budget planning and corporate advice
- iv. Lead or co-lead a specific portfolio or project(s);
- v. Co-chair National Indigenous Awareness Working Group
- vi. Other duties as directed by the National Council.

d) Administrative Officer

- xiii. Receive and record all correspondence, or name an appropriate alternate. Eg. Managing the general delivery mailbox.
- xiv. Keep accurate records, minutes and attendance of National Council meetings and of other meetings in which the National Council takes part, or name an appropriate alternate.
- xv. Give notice of all meetings of the National Council with Council representatives or with members.
- xvi. Draft all National Council meeting agendas, in consultation with the Chair, or name an appropriate alternate.
- xvii. Oversight and management of the membership application process, including intake and assessment of applications; communication with new and existing members; liaison with regional representatives regarding newly recruited members; and Maintenance a database of all IEC members.

e) Financial Officer

- i. Prepare and submit to HRSB for approval, a consolidated budget (HRSB, College, other sources) aligned with the annual workplan for each fiscal year..
- ii. The budget will be reviewed and approved by the National Council at its first meeting of the fiscal year.
- iii. Monitors and reports on all expenditures and activities
- iv. Prepares THCEE for annual in-person meeting;
- v. Liaison and work closely with HRSB and the College to manage funds in support of IEC National Council activities.

f) Regional Representatives

- i. Represent the voices of Indigenous ESDC employees as directed by their respective Provincial or Territorial membership by actively participating on all National Councils meetings and calls;
- ii. Provide leadership and oversight of various portfolios and initiatives as determined yearly.
- iii. Provide regular updates to the National Council on any regional issues or activities identified by its members.
- iv. Network and promote the IEC and recruit Indigenous ESDC employees in their region and keep members abreast of IEC National Council activities.
- v. Work closely with the regional Indigenous Perspective Champions, Learning Centre & College and other internal partners representatives to organize and/or support Indigenous learning and awareness activities;
- vi. Identified by the IEC Work Plan portfolios, participate on ESDC or interdepartmental regional and/or national level working groups related to Indigenous awareness, learning, diversity & employment equity, etc.
- vii. Create a sense of community with its members by organizing social and learning events/activities. This may include developing learning tools and resources for its members.
- viii. Collaborate and support regional Indigenous Perspective Champions, as needed.
- ix. Work with the Indigenous Recruitment, Retention and Advancement unit (recruitment) and Indigenous Coordination and Engagement Directorate CE (i.e. elders) as required.

g) Youth Representative

- i. Represent and advocate for young Indigenous ESDC employees as directed by their respective youth membership (aged 18-30).
- ii. Prepare and provide regular updates and quarterly reports to the National Council on any youth issues or activities.
- iii. Network and promote the IEC and recruit Indigenous youth into the IEC and keep them abreast of IEC activities.
- iv. Participate actively and or co-lead on at least one national Portfolio activity.
- v. May be asked to act as the representative and spokesperson of the IEC for specified meetings. (FYN and YMAGIN)
- vi. Provide guidance and work closely with College/Learning Centre and the regional/NHQ senior management (Service Canada, ESDC) to plan awareness and training activities related to Indigenous Awareness Week, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Indigenous History Month (June), other awareness and learning activities as identified.

- vii. Engage/consult with and seek advice from IEC youth members nationally regarding: learning & cultural activities directed to the IEC members.
- viii. Develop and maintain a network of youth member list within the department to facilitate the achievement of the IEC and ESDC Integrated Indigenous Work Plan.
- ix. Coordinate one virtual national event with youth membership

h) Ex-Officio

Representatives from various business lines of the department may attend on an as needed basis, to act as a resource person, to provide relevant information, depending on the topics at hand. Ex-officio members do not have voting privileges.

Part V – IEC Committees

The IEC Executive Council members may initiate special committees or working groups to support the goals of the IEC and Department. The Executive Council may call upon the IEC members to establish committees to perform specific tasks and responsibilities for a specified period of time.

Part VI- Membership

a) Membership

Membership is open to all employees of ESDC. This includes indeterminate, term, casual and student employees.

- i. Indigenous members are those employees who self-identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit.
- ii. Non-Indigenous members will be referred to as allies.
 - i) IEC membership is approved through the completion of an IEC Membership Form and submission to the IEC Administrative Officer.
 - ii) A member of the IEC shall cease to be a member thereof upon termination of employment except in the following cases:
 - (1) When granted alumni membership in the IEC within the authority of these Terms of Reference.
 - (2) When on extended sick leave or when granted leave of absence with the approval of the appropriate authority.
 - (3) The National Council also recognizes the special status for Elder and Youth members.

b) Membership Rights and Responsibilities

- i) Upon being accepted for regular membership in the IEC, and for the duration of such membership, each member has the opportunity to participate in the activities of the IEC.
- ii) Only Indigenous ESDC employees who self-identify as being First Nation, Inuit or Métis are eligible to run for, vote for, or hold National Council and Executive positions.
- iii) Members can identify issues or concerns affecting Indigenous employees and bring those to the attention of IEC National Council members.
- iv) Members may volunteer to assist with events or activities organized by the regional IEC representatives.

Every member has the right:

- (1) To be nominated for and hold office in the IEC, subject to any qualifications stipulated elsewhere in these Terms of Reference.
- (2) To participate in the IEC's business at any level and to participate in the IEC.
- (3) To attend any meeting of the IEC National Council and/or regional meetings.

c) Alumni Membership

- i) Alumni membership may be granted to previous Indigenous employee alumni who have retired from government service or transferred to another department. Alumni members have no voting rights although they are encouraged to continue to participate and can work to support any of the IEC committees, attend events, activities and receive correspondence.

d) Friends, Partners, and Affiliates

- i) The IEC National Council encourages all colleagues in the department to participate in events and activities.
- ii) The IEC will develop partnerships with other existing Indigenous and non-Indigenous federal employee based networks.
- iii) Affiliations are open to the following non self-identified Indigenous individuals and/or organizations:
 - (1) Colleagues with Employment Equity and Diversity portfolios within ESDC, Service Canada and Labour Canada.

Part VII- Election Process

Individual Indigenous members are allowed to self-nominate. Members can run for any executive or a regional position(s) in which they reside/work.

The notice for the position of an Electoral Officer will be posted on the IEC website and shared among membership with at least 30 days prior to date required for the position to carry out their required duties. The election process needs to be announced at a minimum of 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year.

a) Roles of Electoral Officer

i) Eligibility

- (1) Any IEC member may be the electoral officer for the election as long as they are not running for any of the eligible positions
- (2) If no IEC member has been identified to carry out the duties of this position, then the National Council may open the position to any employee of the Department.
- (3) The IEC member or ESDC employee must submit proof of their immediate supervisor or manager's support with submitting their letter of interest for the position of Electoral Officer.

ii) Duties of the Electoral Officer

- (1) Establish reasonable timelines for nomination process and voting
- (2) Ensure a neutral position during the election process
- (3) Answer any questions from IEC membership regarding the election process
- (4) Ensure the integrity of the election process at all times
- (5) Provide reports and updates to current National Council during the election process
- (6) Verify the eligibility of members during the nomination and voting process

b) National Council Nomination Process

- i) Call for nominations will be sent out by the Electoral Officer
- ii) Nominations indicating their position they are running for and their region must be sent to the Electoral Officer
- iii) Self-nominations are allowed and must also be sent to the Electoral Officer
- iv) Candidates running for the Regional Representative positions must be from the indicated region
- v) Nominations closing deadline date will be determined by the Electoral Officer.
- vi) Eligible members must be verified by the Electoral Officer before officially accepting nomination

- vii) Candidates will have 14 days after the nominations deadline to officially accept their nominations
- viii) Eligible candidates can only accept one position if they have been nominated for more than one position.

c) Eligible Candidates

- i) Candidates that have been verified by the Electoral Officer and officially accepted their nomination must submit a biography of no more than 100 words and include a picture
- i) Candidates must also include a short answer to, “ Why they are the best candidate for the position.”

b) IEC Voting Process

- i) An electronic voting system will be used and designed at the discretion of the Electoral Officer
- ii) The Electoral officer will establish election date and deadline time being mindful of timezone considerations.
- iii) The Electoral Officer must verify that the member is registered and eligible to submit a vote

c) Acclamation

- i) Acclamation is possible when there is no opposition to the candidates nominated for any of the IEC positions

d) Election Results

- i) After Election date, the Election Officer(s) must fill-out an Election Report to be completed, verified and submitted by next day at 5 pm to the National Council. Must contain names, votes cast, ballots cast, and spoiled cast.
- ii) Election Report verified by National Council and release of election results announced by Election Officer(s) to winners, candidates and voters with information on appeal process by next day 5 pm.
- iii) Nominees have a 14 day appeal period. Election Officer(s) have 7 days to review and provide decision to National Council and the National Council has 7 days to render decision.
- iv) Post final election results on IEC website.

Part VIII- Terms of Reference Review

a) Terms of Reference Review

These terms of reference will be reviewed by the IEC Executive Council on an annual basis.

Annex A

Indigenous Values

Inuit Societal Values "Inuit Qaujimajatuqanit"	First Nations Values Seven Grandfather Sacred Teachings	Métis Values *Great Giving Tree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respecting others - Being Open – Fostering good spirits - Serving/Providing for family and community - Decision making - Development of skills - Working together - Being innovative and resourceful - Respect and care for the land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wisdom - Love - Respet - Bravery - Honesty - Humility - Truth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Honesty - Respect - Love - Caring - Courage - Balance - Mother Earth - Patience - Strength - Kindness - Tolerance