



Council for Indigenous Relations

TERMS OF REFERENCE: How we work together

United Way Winnipeg is committed to strong and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit and Metis) peoples of Winnipeg. The Council for Indigenous Relations (CIR) was formed by the Board of Trustees of United Way of Winnipeg (UWW) in April 2005, together with the Aboriginal Relations Strategy. Since that time, the role of CIR has continually evolved, supporting key strategic partnerships, advising the Board of Trustees, guiding UWW relationships through the development of planning documents (e.g., PATH, CIR Strategic Plan). The Board of Trustees adopted an organizational Indigenous Relations Policy in February 2020. The policy weaves together recognition of the unique and important presence of Indigenous people in this place along with UWW's vision and mission. In 2020, the role of the Council was expanded through inviting Indigenous UWW volunteers on other committees to also participate as a part of CIR.

Role

The Council for Indigenous Relations provides guidance, input, and leadership in advancing UWW's relationships and reciprocities with Indigenous peoples, including supporting UWW in its journey of learning, growth and leadership in truth, reconciliation, and inclusion both as an organization and in Winnipeg.

Guiding Principles

The Seven Sacred Teachings of the Anishinaabe inform the principles of the Council for Indigenous Relations and will be upheld in CIR's function and activities. These teachings were gifted to us orally.

Respect

Reciprocal appreciation of each other's differences and the willingness to work together to affect change. In practice, we:

- Come prepared and participate actively
- Are mindful of language
- Treat people as people, not as their role
- One person speaks at a time

Inside the CIR logo are 7 points, representing the 7 sacred teachings of the Anishinaabe. The inner circle contains the 4 colours CIR, gifted to us by Elder Velma Orvis.

The red (East) represents Indigenous people and reminds us to respect the ways of others, green (South) is a symbol for our medicines and a reminder to care for Mother Earth. The blue (West) is for water and sky and the Grandfather teachings of the moon, and the white (North) stands for spirituality and respect. We include symbols that represent First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples in Winnipeg.

Humility

No one person in the group has the solution to all the issues. We can only be open to ideas and solutions to accomplish each task. It is important in the process, to include and honour the input and needs of the community at large. In practice, we:

- Don't try to do it all alone
- Recognize the value in others and help others achieve their value
- Ask for help

Love

In a professional sense, it is to have the ability to give, accept and share without judgment, conditions or bias. In practice, we:

- Celebrate
- Accept each other "unconditionally"
- Demonstrate passion for our mission to serve community
- Are kind to each other

Truth

Being sincere and straightforward with each other to achieve the goals and tasks of the Council. Being transparent in sharing information with all members that is relevant and reliable. In practice, we:

- Remember who we are working for
- Raise issues and finish discussions at the CIR table rather than outside the meetings
- Treat people as people, not as their role

Honesty

A partnership can only function when all parties are genuine in work and action, regardless of positive or negative situations. Confidentiality must also be honoured. In practice, we:

- Are clear or direct
- Say what we mean
- Mean what we say
- Practice what we preach

Courage

Having the ability to face adversity together and take chances with new ideas will certainly contribute to achieving a goal. In practice, we:

- Welcome different voices
- Do things differently
- Do the right thing
- Admit when we are wrong
- Say what we have to

Wisdom

Understanding that everything is a learning process. It is important to accept responsibility and to also be accountable to the community. The Council has shown us to be practical and to move forward in a good way. In practice, we:

- Are solution oriented
- Remember why we are all there, at every meeting (Seven Teachings/Guiding Principles)
- Explore new methods of improving effectiveness

Responsibilities

The Council for Indigenous Relations is responsible to carry out their participation in ways agreed to by Council members, which could include, but not be limited to;

- provide advice and input to the organization's strategic plan and review progress against the plan, relative to truth, reconciliation, and inclusion
- identify and support the engagement of Indigenous leaders in volunteer roles across the organization
- review and advise on goals and strategies relative to resource development, community investment (agency investments; systems change initiatives) and capacity building
- propose, review and/or advise on new community initiatives including those to advance truth, reconciliation, and inclusion
- review and advise on organizational policies and practices to embed Indigenous perspectives, build cultural knowledge and ensure progress toward being an inclusive organization
- actively support the building of relationships with Indigenous leaders across sectors
- propose, review and/or advise on efforts to advance truth, reconciliation, and inclusion within the United Way Canada movement

Council Members

The Council for Indigenous Relations will be comprised of Indigenous volunteers from United Way's volunteer committees and councils and Indigenous community leaders at large. The Council invites the valuable contributions and unique perspectives and wisdom of Indigenous Elders¹ and Indigenous Youth. The Council will strive to include voices from the diverse Indigenous Nations in Winnipeg.

The Council will be chaired by an Indigenous member of United Way's Board of Trustees.

Volunteers from the Board and UWW Committees play a critical role in communicating the Council's collective wisdom back to Committees and in sharing the work of the Board and Committees with the Council.

Meetings

The Council will meet at least seasonally (4 times/year) and/or at the call of the Chair.

Reporting

The Council will report to the Board of Trustees at least once a year.

Support

The Council is supported by the Indigenous Relations Director and other members of United Way's leadership team.

¹ United Way Winnipeg recognises that the term "Elder" is a complex concept that is integrally tied to important issues relating to leadership, traditional knowledge, life experiences, intergenerational societal teaching, change, and recent history. Although chronological age is not a factor in defining an "Elder" they are typically seen as a respected older member of their communities.