

Anti-Black Racism Working Group: Terms of Reference

Preamble

The Anti-Black Racism Working Group (ABRWG) acknowledges the discrimination and racism faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities and are committed to working in solidarity with BIPOC communities.

1. Overview

This document outlines the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Pickering Public Library ABRWG. The TOR will capture the purpose, structure, and role of the ABRWG, and clearly identify the desired outcomes/outputs.

2. Mission

The ABRWG (given appropriate resources for outreach and relevant data collected) will review community feedback related to library matters and related identified priorities. The ABRWG will collaborate with library staff to create and implement action plans for improvements and enhancements of library services. Recommendations and staff action plans will focus on identified systemic discrimination impacting the library experience for community members who self-identify as Black.

The scope of this work will consider existing and future library users of all ages, community members at large, employees, volunteers, and community partners, with an emphasis on inclusion and intersectionality.

Appointed members of the ABRWG will contribute their individual voices, lived experiences, and insights to group discussions, and decision-making. They will co-assess and co-plan with library staff to develop decisions and decision-making processes.

3. Community Priorities

Key priorities were identified through a preliminary community survey and community partner consultations conducted in 2020. The Library and the ABRWG recognize additional community engagement will be required to further clarify the desired outcomes under each priority and as the work may evolve. The ABRWG will have access to and will review the survey results as a starting point and focus on the community priorities identified.

The top priorities that emerged from the initial community survey results (in demonstrated priority order based on frequency of shared comments):

Priority:	Percent of responses that mentioned the priority:
Staffing – Representation, hiring/recruitment	35%
Collections – Representation and availability	26%
Community Engagement – Initiatives to amplify and hear from Black voices	18%
Programs/Events – Promoting anti-discrimination and Black history/culture/heritage	18%
Staff Training	18%

In recognition of a lack of youth representation in the preliminary consultation data, a sub-committee was formed to create and carry out a follow up consultation centered on youth in 2022. The sub-committee consisted of active ABRWG members, two community teen volunteers, and library staff. The Youth Consultation sub-committee facilitated a youth engagement survey strategy beginning in late 2022, culminating in early 2023. A summary of the youth response results was presented to the ABRWG for review at the July 2023 meeting and the sub-committee recommendations were endorsed for library staff implementation (see [Appendix A](#) for an overview of the recommendations).

4. Goals, Objectives, and Member Responsibilities

4.1 Refine and Review Working Group TOR

The ABRWG will review the committee’s name and Terms of Reference annually and revise as deemed necessary. Revisions will be shared with the Library Leadership Team and the Library Board.

4.2 Meetings Operational Framework

- a) The ABRWG will schedule meetings, set agendas, review minutes, and if needed, organize sub-committees.
- b) Meetings will take place on the second Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm.
- c) The meeting’s duration will be two hours. Minutes will be recorded and shared publicly on the ABRWG landing page.
- d) Sub-committee and/or ad-hoc meetings outside of the regular meeting cycle may be discussed and determined on an as needed basis. Minutes will be recorded and shared publicly on the ABRWG landing page.
- e) Sub-committees can be proposed and created by the ABRWG. A proposed subcommittee may be granted by a majority vote and must include a minimum of two current ABRWG members. Additional individuals with relevant interests/expertise can be invited and included in a sub-committee.
 - o Where possible, sub-committee members will represent experiences and agencies that best match all the priorities outlined in [Section 3](#).

- Sub-committees should have a determined timeline and framework to guide the work, with minutes and reports shared as a standing agenda item during the monthly ABRWG meetings.
- For sub-committee and/or ad hoc meetings, any decision-making matters should be brought to the attention of ABRWG for consensus (and/or vote) at the next scheduled meeting.
- f) Members will review action plans and on-going updates provided by the Library Liaison(s) and/or library staff pertaining to priorities. This will include meeting with the Library Leadership Team and/or staff directly to discuss, collaborate and assess the library centered priorities.
- g) Members will meet with the Library Board a minimum of twice a year.
- h) Members will stay updated on federal, provincial, and local legislation related to anti-Black racism, equity and inclusion, and human rights. Provide advice, advocacy, and education to library staff to support the enhancement of library services. Relevant updates and information can be gathered and provided by Library Liaison(s) or designated library staff.
- i) Members will deliberate to reach consensus on decision-making matters. Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Chairperson will conduct a vote.
- j) The quorum is 50% of the total number of members plus one. When the quorum is not achieved, motions requiring an ABRWG consensus or majority vote cannot proceed and will be deferred to the next possible meeting date where quorum can be achieved.
- k) Special meetings can be called outside of the monthly meeting cycle to discuss urgent issues. Quorum would still need to be met for any decisions.

4.3 Community Priorities

The ABRWG will:

- a) Review top community identified priorities with the lens of library service and library user experience impacts.
- b) Provide context and recommendations to the library for addressing each priority.
- c) (During meetings) Share community knowledge, information, and additional detail into the priority and help define the gaps the community would like addressed.
- d) Meet with relevant library staff, for each of the priorities, to build a comprehensive understanding of existing library frameworks, policies, procedures, and/or practices.
- e) Provide recommendations for successful improvements, enhancements, and/or new library services that would significantly reduce the gaps identified.
- f) Bring forward recommendations for further community consultation opportunities that may help refine the shared understanding of the opportunities for improvement.

4.4 Advocacy, Research, and Community Involvement:

The ABRWG will:

- a) Maintain connections with and leverage the voices of residents of Pickering to identify systemic barriers that impact local Black community members (both existing library users/members and non-users/members) to provide recommendations for improvement.
- b) Share ABRWG updates with the community via the ABRWG public landing page on the library's website. This page is maintained by library staff.

- c) Review and respond to community residents that may email the group via abrwg@pickeringlibrary.ca (which will be monitored by library staff – see below for more information).
- d) Engage and foster connections with local community members, community organizations, businesses, and cultural organizations related to the work of the ABRWG.
- e) Provide input in staff-led consultation, research, review of report findings and make recommendations as necessary on matters of anti-Black racism and library services, internal initiatives and/or internal policies.
- f) Advocate and promote the value and benefit of the Anti-Black Racism Working Group to library users and interested groups (e.g., other public libraries, the Ontario Library Association, etc.) for the purpose of sharing learning opportunities and outcomes that other organizations may adopt and adapt.

4.5 Role of the Library Liaison(s):

The Library Liaison(s) and/or relevant library staff will:

- a) Provide data, research outcomes, and information as it pertains to and supports the discussions of the ABRWG.
- b) Facilitate consultation, research, and/or other related tasks as requested by the ABRWG, when there are knowledge or data gaps.
- c) Provide necessary updates on federal, provincial, and local legislation related to anti-Black racism, equity and inclusion, and human rights that impact library services.
- d) Share research or report findings and on-going community feedback, pertaining to the priorities.
- e) Create and maintain the public landing page on the library's website.
- f) Monitor the abrwg@pickeringlibrary.ca email account and bring forward all client inquiries to the group at the monthly meeting. For applicable inquiries, a response from the ABRWG may be required and in such situations, the Library Liaison(s) will seek the guidance of the ABRWG members to draft a response at the next scheduled meeting.
- g) Support the technical needs for monthly virtual meetings via the library's licensed online communication tools (e.g., Zoom)
- h) Review attendance and facilitate the necessary conversations with members when attendance and active participation terms are not met.

5. Working Group Composition and Commitment

5.1 Composition:

- a) Total 1 Library Liaison (with an optional designated secondary). A Library Liaison is not a voting member.
- b) Total 8 to 10 Community Members (appointed by a Volunteer Community Panel and Library Representatives).
- c) All members must be 16 years or older.
- d) All members are voting members.
- e) All members must demonstrate that they live in Pickering (or work for an agency/organization that is Pickering serving).

- f) An annual declaration must be completed by each member to confirm they still meet the above criteria. The annual declaration must be completed no later than November 30 of each year.
- g) In the event an active member changes their place of residence and therefore is no longer a Pickering resident (and does not work for an agency/organization that is Pickering serving), they may remain an active member for the remainder of the calendar year. Their position will be considered vacant for the subsequent calendar year and recruitment cycle.
- h) In the event an active member changes their place of employment and therefore is no longer working at an agency/organization that is Pickering serving (and they are not a Pickering resident), they may remain an active member for the remainder of the calendar year. Their position will be considered vacant for the subsequent calendar year and recruitment cycle.
- i) During a recruitment effort, should the Library receive an insufficient volume of expressions of interest from Pickering residents, the ABRWG may opt to temporarily expand membership recruitment outside of Pickering residents, while maintaining a priority to individuals residing and/or working in Pickering.

5.2 Working Group Member Roles:

While the ABRWG acknowledges that this is a collaborative group and that the work would be done as a collective, the following roles will be filled by active members through a self-directed volunteer nomination, followed by a group voting process.

- a) Co-Chairpersons
 - Two elected positions.
 - One year (12 months) term. Reviewed at the November annual review meeting.
 - Represent the group at Library Board meetings.
 - Control the flow of meetings with respect to time.
 - Ensure the Terms of Reference are honoured.
- b) Notetaker
 - One elected position (with an optional designated secondary).
 - One year (12 months) term. Reviewed at the November annual review meeting.
 - Effectively take minutes of meetings and share with the Library Liaison.
 - Control the flow of meetings with respect to time.
 - Note, this role can be delegated to/supported by library staff if it is decided by the Working Group.

5.3 Active Participation Commitment:

All ABRWG members are responsible for active participation. As determined by the ABRWG, active participation means all ABRWG members will:

- a) Attend at least 80% of monthly meetings in a calendar year. The Library Liaison will reach out to members experiencing low attendance and communicate with the Co-Chairs when a member is expected to miss the minimum calendar year requirement.
- b) For virtual meetings (or if attending an in-person meeting virtually), make every effort to be visible on camera where possible.

- c) Ensure they are up to date on minutes and previous discussions, prior to attending a meeting, and arrive at the meeting prepared to discuss the scheduled items.
- d) Advise the Library Liaison(s) in advance if absence anticipated.
- e) Participate in meetings and ABRWG engagements in accordance with the [Pickering Public Library Code of Conduct](#).

5.4 Annual Review and Reflection

The ABRWG will perform an annual self-assessment guided by library staff and make recommendations on the future of the ABRWG. The self-assessment should be completed no later than November 30 each year. After individual feedback is collected and shared, the ABRWG will discuss any necessary revisions and update the TOR.

5.5 Member Appointment Process

Group members are appointed by the Community Panel using the Anti-Black Racism Working Group: New Membership Appointment Framework.

- a) The Community Panel is tasked with the review of Expressions of Interests from eligible public members, facilitate interviews, and recommend ABRWG appointees, alongside two library staff or Board representatives.
- b) The Community Panel members are recalled when a recruitment cycle is activated. If an existing Community Panel member is no longer available, the Library Liaison(s) will seek a volunteer replacement.
- c) On an annual basis, active membership numbers will be reviewed. When the number of active members is below 6, a recruitment cycle will be activated.
- d) Appointed members should demonstrate experience or expertise with the community's stated priorities.
- e) All new members must submit a satisfactory vulnerable sector reference check as part of the on-boarding process, as the ABRWG may work directly with vulnerable members of the public, including youth and seniors.

5.6 Meeting Cycle Commitment

The ABRWG will meet a minimum of 10 times a year (and up to 12 times in one calendar year). The term commitment of each active ABRWG member is one calendar year.

5.7 Honorarium Program

The ABRWG honorarium program officially commenced on August 11, 2021. The ABRWG honorarium program:

- a) ABRWG members will be given the option to participate in the honorarium program. This 'opt-in' will be confirmed by submission of the required documentation during the on-boarding process. Honorariums will be issued from the Pickering Public Library via the City of Pickering.
- b) An honorarium of up to \$400 each six months will be given to members of the ABRWG for a total of up to \$800 in a calendar year. The rate set is \$66.67 per ABRWG member, for each two-hour monthly meeting. Attendance is required and will be recorded in the minutes. The Library Liaison(s) and Co-Chairs may seek clarification if an individual only

attends for a partial duration, and may exercise discretion based on the following breakdown:

- Two hours = Full remuneration
 - One hour = Half remuneration
 - 30 minutes or less = Remuneration not applicable
- c) All ABRWG members are expected to communicate in advance regarding any scheduling conflicts with the Library Liaison(s) or Co-Chairs.
- d) The honorarium will be processed twice a year, once at the end of June and once at the end of December (actual direct deposit payment dates may vary pending administrative processing timelines at the City of Pickering). Opt-in documentation must be received two weeks prior to June 30 for the calendar year. Any newly appointed members commencing after June 30 must submit opt-in documentation two weeks prior to December 31, for the respective calendar year.
- e) Maximum yearly income per ABRWG member is \$800.00. A T4 will be issued at the conclusion of the income tax year.
- f) An ABRWG member is not entitled to participate in the honorarium program following their last day of active service. Any appointed members exiting prior to June 30, will still be provided with the opt-in documentation and eligible for an honorarium covering the months they have attended in the current calendar year. Exiting members who have opted into the honorarium program, will receive the honorarium processed at the next interval in alignment with the rest of the group (either end June or end of December dependent on date of departure), regardless of the member's service end date. Once an appointed member ceases to be an active member, they will no longer be eligible for any retroactive payments or other payments including honorarium increases. Members will be informed of this at the time of their start date.

6. Conflict of Interest

- a) All meetings should begin with any declarations of conflict of interest.
- b) A conflict of interest exists when an ABRWG member has a material financial interest in a transaction or project under consideration by the library and/or Library Board or when that person proposes to act on any issue, matter, or transaction in which they or an affiliate association/business/agency has an interest, and in which the covered person may have an interest separate from that of the library.
- c) A conflict of interest exists when an ABRWG member has a material financial interest in a transaction or project under consideration by the library and/or Library Board or when that person proposes to act on any issue, matter, or transaction in which they or an affiliate association/business/agency has an interest, and in which the covered person may have an interest separate from that of the library.
- d) A conflict of interest may also exist in situations in which there is an appearance that an ABRWG member is utilizing, for their own benefit, inside information that is proprietary to the library, is acting in their own interests rather than the best interests of library, has the ability to exercise undue influence over the library's decisions, or is receiving favorable treatment by the library because of their status as an ABRWG volunteer.
- e) All ABRWG members are expected to report and declare any potential or confirmed conflict of interest to the Library Liaison(s).

- f) When a conflict of interest has been identified, the ABRWG member should be absent from discussions on any issue, matter or transaction involving a conflict of interest, unless requested by the Library Liaison(s), Library Leadership and/or Library Board to give information on the issue, matter, or transaction.
- g) When warranted by the nature and magnitude of the conflict of interest, and where a conflict of interest cannot be resolved, the ABRWG may request that a conflicted member terminate their commitment/membership.

7. Boundaries and Scope

- a) The ABRWG is a collection of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills which enrich the knowledge and skills of library staff and Library Board. Members of the ABRWG are volunteers who provide feedback, observations, insights, and recommendations exclusively on library related matters.
- b) ABRWG members may bring forward issues related to anti-Black racism from the wider community to the library to explore how the library may support advocacy efforts.
- c) The ABRWG does not have formal authority to govern the organization, that is, ABRWG members cannot issue directives which must be followed. The ABRWG is not responsible for actioning identified staff deliverables and does not hold operational oversight over recommendations.
- d) The ABRWG will participate in the evaluation process of programs or initiatives, serve as advocates for the community, and ensure anti-Black racism practices are carried out.

This document was last revised: November 8, 2023

Appendix

Appendix A: Youth Consultation 2022/2023

The Youth Survey Overview:

- Initial intent was to do a survey at 3 Pickering high schools, but we were only able to get into St. Mary's.
- Library staff set up a booth at St. Mary's library during their 3 lunch periods, provided a pizza lunch and a chance to win some prizes for completing the survey. 172 Teens completed the survey.
- To engage more teens, and given staff were unable to get approval to outreach in the other Pickering high school, staff then turned their attention to teen clients at the library for further feedback. 52 more surveys were completed by teens at the Central Library.
- In total 224 surveys were completed.
- Teen clients at the library were also provided with a complimentary snack for completing the survey and offered a chance to win some prizes.

Sub-committee Recommendations:

Based on the analysis of 224 survey responses, the following action items (grouped under key themes) were presented by the sub-committee and endorsed by the ABRWG.

- **Teen Experience with Library**
 - 91% of respondents reported a 'good' or 'excellent' experience at the library.
 - To maintain a positive experience and to continuously improve engagement with teens, the sub-committee recommends the library has weekly free programs for teens by staff and partners.
- **Staff Training for Teen Engagement**
 - To improve staff-to-teen client engagement, staff training should focus on how to develop positive relationships with teens and manage problematic behavior.
- **Improve Library Spaces for Teens**
 - To provide better experience with library spaces, the library needs to create a dedicated safe space for teens which allows for increased noise level, play, collaboration and learning opportunities.
- **Outreach/Marketing**
 - Survey results show that many teens are unaware of programs/initiatives the library currently offers. Increased targeted marketing is recommended to help increase awareness of library offerings specific for teens.
- **Teen Events**
 - Respondents demonstrated they are very interested in participating in library events. By offering a wider variety of events, higher youth engagement can be achieved. This should be reflected in the existing ABRWG events recommendations action plan.