

Final Revised Terms of Reference
Child Welfare Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Services with Black African Caribbean Canadian
Families, Children, Youth (September 15, 2016)

PURPOSE:

The Community Advisory Committee will provide perspectives, knowledge, expertise and advice to the CAS of Toronto regarding services to the diversity of Black African Caribbean Canadian children, youth, families, and caregivers, and communities to assist the Agency to move towards their desired outcomes:

- **Disproportionality, disparity, anti-Black racism and discrimination towards Black families receiving services decrease while child safety is ensured**
- **Safety, permanency, support to overall well-being are attained in a timely manner for each child and youth served in and out of care, irrespective of race**

MISSION:

- To provide community influence and expertise from within the diverse Black community /and services serving Black families, children, youth and caregivers to CAST regarding potential solutions to specific problems identified regarding disproportionality, disparity or discrimination including helping the CAS of Toronto find solutions such as:
 - To assist CAST to achieve goals to reduce the over-representation of Black families involved with CAS To reunify, and return Black children home faster, while ensuring safety, support and overall well-being
 - To find alternatives to care, when necessary, when a child/youth is at risk of admission to care.
 - To help families connect to culturally appropriate and quality supports at all points in child protection services
 - To connect CAS of Toronto to culturally appropriate expertise, assessment tools, and supports
 - To help CAST to promote and identify Black foster/kin homes in Toronto
 - Other issues/problems that CAST identifies through looking at data, service trends, and/or feedback from CAS Consultations.
- To share community knowledge and skills, and experiences to improve outcomes for Black children and youth in the community (prevention) and those in child welfare care, or transitioning out of care
- To provide advice or feedback on CAST efforts to address systemic anti-Black racism and other barriers of discrimination as they affect Black children, youth and their families who come into contact with the agency.
- To provide advice and feedback to advance an agenda of inclusion, equity, anti-oppression and anti-Black racism
- To recommend potential data gathering, or share research or promising practices to improve equitable services and outcomes

GOALS

The intention is that the Community Advisory Committee's influence and expert advice to the CAS of Toronto will enhance:

- reciprocal knowledge and understanding between the community and child welfare (CAS of Toronto)
- understanding and awareness of issues experienced by children, youth families and caregivers & communities across the diversity within the Black community.
- Current activities/programs and appropriate resources to meet the needs of Black families and children or community, or collaborations/partnerships, with equity in allocations of resources
- range of knowledge, skills, and assets in the community to improve outcomes for children, families and youth
- strategies for enhancing all staff knowledge of community assets and issues and greater awareness of how to engage positively and equitably with Black children youth and their families
- capacity to improve services to Black families, children and youth, for example to prevent child welfare involvement, during child welfare involvement, or for youth/children in care, to assist youth to return home from care more quickly, to support culturally appropriate services.
- community education to increase awareness and understanding of the child welfare system
- participate with CAS of Toronto in providing information and reporting back to the community

ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Co-Chairs: CAS of Toronto Senior Diversity Manager (COO- Mahesh in interim) and Community Co-Chair; Nominated by the Committee members and Community Member
- The Senior Manager is accountable to senior management and Board of CAST.
- Committee members are also accountable in their unique contexts (to their communities, and/or organizations)
- Senior Manager (or Diversity Manager) at CAS of Toronto will work with the Community Advisory Committee, with support from other CAST staff teams, and departments as needed (e.g. Community Development & Prevention, Quality Assurance, Client Services, Intake, Resources for Children and Youth, Community Based Branches).

OPERATING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES:

- Understand that the CAS of Toronto operates within provincial law (The Child and Family Services Act and Child Protection Standards) and that is a legal boundary so any advice or changes have to be within that context
- Declare conflicts of interest where relevant and required

- Respect for the confidentiality and dignity of children, youth and families served by CAST and in the community
- Commitment to working in a collaborative, consensual, supportive, respectful, responsive, inclusive manner while working towards the Committees purpose, mission and goals
- Respect the appropriate confidentiality of matters brought to the Committee.
- Transparency and honesty in communication and decision-making
- Mutual accountability to develop the work plan and goals of the committee with supports from CAS of Toronto and community
- Seek input from guests (CAST and the Community) where that information and knowledge is needed to move the work forward
- Value of shared learning between CAS staff and the community
- Clarify if speaking as individual or behalf of organizations
- Ensure all voices are heard
- Recognize, value and respect differing views, experiences, orientations, and cultures reflective of the diversity of the Committee members
- Commitment to addressing, in a respectful manner difficult and contentious issues as they arise
- Actively reach out to include and welcome stakeholders from the diversity across the Black community in the membership
- Members will commit to attending Advisory Committee meetings on a regular basis to ensure continuity to implement the work plan

FUNCTIONS/RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provide leadership, expertise and advice and recommendations to CAST on issues related to services to Black children, youth, families and communities.
- Provide support if requested to any ad hoc work groups and sub-committees responsible for planning and executing equity-related special events and initiatives at CAST
- Make appropriate and timely recommendations for action to the CAS of Toronto (through the Senior Management delegate)
- Provide advice on principles of partnership and collaboration to strengthen engagement with community organizations serving Black children, families and communities.
- Potential joint advocacy with CAS of Toronto on issues of common concern.

MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION:

The Community Advisory Committee is a partnership between members from CAST and the Community.

CAST members: Director of Diversity, and other Directors, staff as required. Support as required from Community Development and Prevention Program and other staff departments.

The Advisory Committee will have an inclusive, representative membership that reflects the diverse makeup of the African Caribbean Canadian community in Toronto and the skills and experience to advise on key issues and assist with the Committee's Work Plan.

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA:

- Community Agency participation and community members who identify from the Black African Caribbean Canadian Community who are familiar with child welfare services/sector.
- Members to identify if they are on the Committee as an individual or representing an organization.
- Organizations can have one alternative representative
- Co-Chairs and Committee members can ratify approval for new members by email

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

- Guidelines to be developed by the CAST and CAC

DECISION-MAKING/RECOMMENDATIONS:

The CAC is Advisory to CAST not decision making, however, within the Committee when making decisions on recommendations to bring forward to CAST the following guidelines are suggested:

- Decisions shall be made using a consensus model as much as possible.
- Voting on issues will happen if Committee Members cannot come to consensus in a timely way (Decision/Recommendation 50% +1)
- Committee members will have an equal voice and vote on all matters of the Committee.
- Community members will have one vote per organization
- Decision-making shall be a joint activity done with transparency and due reporting to all members. (e.g. reporting updates to those who did not attend the meeting)
- The Director or Senior Manager at CAS of Toronto co-chairing the committee shall take committee input or recommendations to appropriate levels within CAST where necessary or inform the Committee of issues that may be contrary to CFSA (legislation) and/or out of scope, beyond available resources.
- Unless explicitly agreed-on and approved by the Committee, no decision shall be made on behalf of the Committee solely by the Chair or co-chairs.

QUORUM

No final recommendations or plans will be made without a majority of Committee members present (50% +1). Communication with members can be done in meetings, by phone, email, or conference call.

CO-CHAIRS

- **Director/Manager from CAS of Toronto and Community member**
- Co-chair from Community to be nominated from the group (or self-nominated) outlining interest, skills and commitment.
- Co-Chairs to be selected for a one-year period.
- The co-chairs will be develop agendas with input from members of the committee, and facilitate the meeting, follow up on actions after the meeting, and develop and monitor work plans with the Committees.

AD HOC COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS:

Committees/Work Groups shall be struck from time to time to **implement the Work Plan and** manage specific initiatives under the direction of the full Committee with participation of community members/Committee members and CAST staff as needed.

LENGTH OF TERM:

A member's term consists of an initial commitment of one year (April 2016- April 2017). The term is renewable at the end of the year if the member is in good standing (see Membership Criteria). If a member wishes to renew the Committee will ensure that there is a process to provide a fair opportunity for others to participate.

MEETING SCHEDULE & SUPPORT:

Committee will meet four times a year.
CAS of Toronto will provide administrative support re: booking space for meetings, maintaining membership list, sending reminders, providing/or ordering refreshments.

LOCATION, TIME and LENGTH of MEETINGS:

Determined by Co-Chairs and members.

REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and reapproved (April 2017)

LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2016-2017

CAST and Co-Chairs to maintain list of Community and CAST Members