



TORONTO
DROP-IN
NETWORK

Strategic Plan

2022- 2025

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Message from Strategic Planning Committee

It is with deep appreciation that TDIN's Strategic Planning Committee receive this report and bring it back to our members, partners and allies.

All of us at TDIN embarked on this strategic planning process while we were still wrestling with the weight of the cumulative impact of the COVID pandemic, on top of the already overwhelming overdose and housing crises affecting community programs and the people and communities TDIN members work with every day. In this context, the engagement process that resulted in this report was remarkable for the time and energy members gave to it and the breadth of TDIN member participation.

It is now up to TDIN to draw on the strategic planning process and the learnings in this report for the inspiration, insight and concrete ideas we will need to guide us during what we anticipate will be challenging, at times heart-breaking and enraging, times.

It is critically important for a tiny organization like TDIN to be grounded in the shared values of our members.

We also must be responsive to the diversity in members' needs, strengths and capacities. This report comes at a time when clear priorities, both realistic and aspirational, and actionable implementation plans, are needed to do the work that needs to be done with the resources available to do it.

This strategic plan provides the framework and direction TDIN and its members will need in the exciting and challenging times ahead. Throughout the past 6 months, the strategic planning process was engaging, dynamic and accessible. A variety of stakeholders were able to provide their perspectives and participate in a way that honoured their lived experience. It's been a privilege to be part of this multifaceted process that offered a participatory approach across a diverse range of stakeholders. This plan reflects our commitment to those that we serve.

We will continue to rely on that commitment to bring this Strategic Plan to life. We will need all our members to do this. We're excited for you to join us.



Our Mission

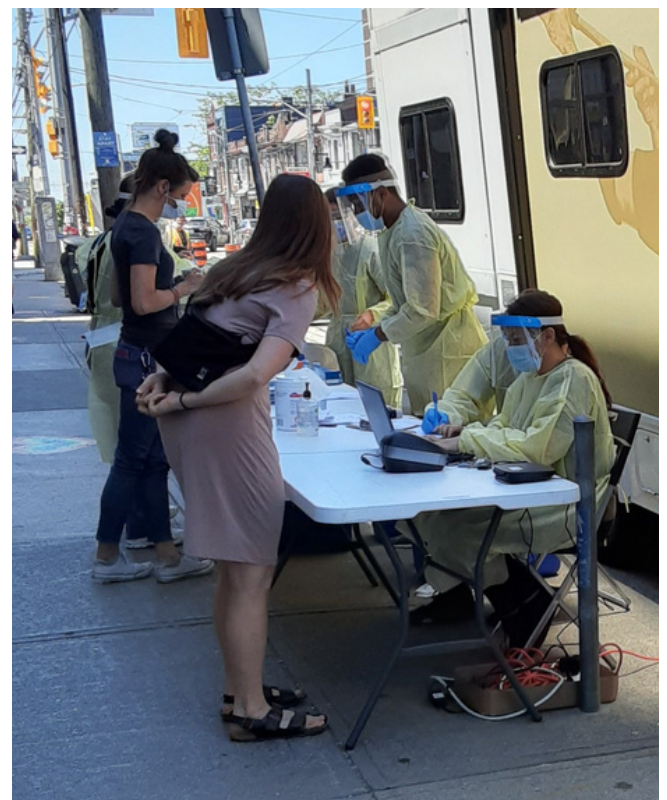


To enhance the capacity of Toronto's network of drop-in centres to improve the quality of life of people who participate.

The Toronto Drop-in Network, or TDIN, is a coalition of over 50 drop-in centres across the City of Toronto that work with people who are homeless, marginally housed, socially isolated, or experiencing poverty.

Drop-ins within Toronto are eligible to become members of the network to access TDIN supports. Members inform TDIN's directions and actions to address the needs of drop-ins and the people who use their services.

Aligned services that are not drop-ins can become associate members and individuals, such as drop-in participants, can also become members of the network.



Values & Purpose

Our Values

The Toronto Drop-In Network, and its members, strive to be:

- Community driven and responsive
- Adaptable, innovative and collaborative
- Respectful of equity and inclusion of its members and participants
- Active inclusion of participant engagement in program design and delivery support participant self-determination



Our Purpose



- Dedicated to practice expertise, service excellence
- To provide a voice for drop-ins to advocate for drop-in participants' and drop-in providers' issues using strategies that build participant engagement of drop-in communities and programs
- To ensure drop-in work increases participants' access to community services and supports
- To promote standards of best practice for drop-in services
- To provide a forum for discussion of issues from the perspective of participants and from both front line and management staff
- To support drop-in workers through training and resource sharing
- To support organizational capacity

Our Programs



Training

Training programs to support frontline staff and leaders



Toolkits & Resources

Good Practices Toolkit, Measuring Success, Wise Practice documents (e.g. Bathroom Protocols)



Advocacy

Championing change in the sector and issues affecting our communities



Service Coordination

Connecting drop-ins, organizing resources, systems planning and project tables



Financial Support for Members

Grow grants and training allocation



Information Sharing

Newsletters, members forums, website



TDIN at Work

“ I've had transformational experiences at their trainings and conferences and cannot stress enough how much I appreciate their work. ”

The Toronto Drop-In Network is a trusted leader and supporter among member Drop-Ins and within the sector at large. TDIN's strengths lie in having a deep knowledge base about the sector, the ability to pivot and be responsive to changing contexts, employing a sector-wide lens, and centering member relationships. TDIN works hard to ensure that the network is driven by the membership and the interest, needs, skills, and the issues they are collectively facing.

This work has been done in the face of the ongoing overdose crisis, and the increasing crisis of poverty and homelessness, and the reduction of funding to drop-in services when they are needed most.

COVID-19

The ability to pivot has been put to the test since 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. TDIN become the collective voice of drop-ins as essential services who otherwise do not have a regulatory body and therefore a space at the table to advocate for participant needs and ensure that workers had access to resources

“ TDIN has been where this drop-in has found the most support before and during the pandemic. It has provided vital information such as ventilation needs for indoor spaces, who to contact to set up COVID vaccination clinics, important items that we could never afford such as PPE, take out containers, and hand sanitizer, and up to date information about COVID, all the variations, how to prevent passing the virus ”

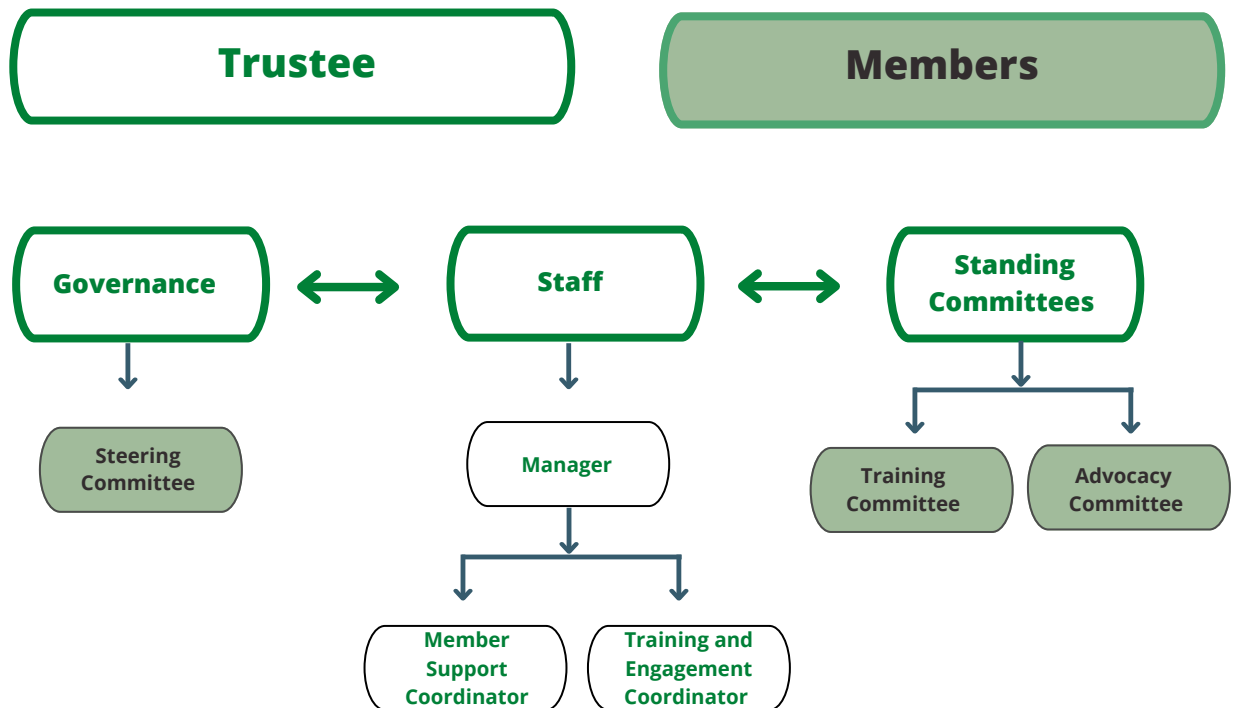
STRAT PLAN

As government mandated COVID-19 restrictions lift, the pandemic and concurrent crisis of a poisoned drug supply and increasing poverty remain. TDIN is in a vital position to grow in our success, while building clarity and stability by focusing activities for impact.



TDIN Structure

Current Structure



Updating the Structure

Members drive the Toronto Drop-In Network and are central to the vision, strategy, activities and accountability of TDIN through the governance body (Steering Committee) and standing committees.

As TDIN continues to centre members, the current TDIN model will work towards the following adaptations:

- Create a standing Fundraising Committee consisting of members, staff, and representatives of the trustee organization. This committee will lead the creation of a fundraising strategy
- Review and update staff titles and ensure the job descriptions are aligned with the position needs and responsibilities
- Review committee descriptions and shift from an advising role, to an active strategizing and decision making role

Member Engagement Spotlight



Pamela Chynn

TDIN MEMBER AND
FORMER STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Participating on the TDIN Steering Committee has been a very empowering experience. I have learned a lot about the complexity of issues involving the social system, and the dynamics and politics facing social advocacy. As a social advocate, and as a marginalized, disenfranchised individual who has had to self-advocate when dealing with the system, knowledge is power has always been one of my favourite mottos to live by. I have definitely gained knowledge from participating in the discussions on the Advocacy and Steering Committees of TDIN.

As a representative of the participants of Sistering, I have to some degree been able to contribute to the 'cause' of Sistering and help further its progress. When I talk about how issues impact people who go to Sistering and on Sistering as a member drop in, TDIN has a strong analysis of the challenges facing its members and ideas about how to meet these challenges.

The more I understand the system and what an oppressive mess it is, the less I blame myself for my circumstances. Less self blame helps me have a more proactive perspective about how to solve at least a few of the problems affecting our social safety net. Being on the TDIN steering committee has supported me to better understand this system.

Pamela Chynn

The Strategic Planning Process

With the guidance of a Strategic Planning Committee, Shoreline Collaboratives led an engagement process that was highly collaborative, ensuring that the entire membership had input. The Strategic Planning Committee consisted of the Steering Committee and a few additional members. This Committee met monthly from April to August 2022 and worked at each stage to assess the feedback from the membership and define priorities.

1

WORKSHOP WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

- get to know TDIN and the organizations strengths
- collect high level data to identify themes
- learn about current barriers

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

- hosted 60 -90 minute interviews with individuals who have sector knowledge or have heavily impacted TDIN to date

2

3

ONLINE SURVEY

- survey to the member network exploring key strengths and assets of TDIN, areas for focus for next three years
- received 75 responses
- 33% of responses were frontline staff

FOCUS GROUPS

- Hosted 3 focus groups of key areas indicated in survey: Advocacy, Service Coordination and Data Collection, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

4

Our Strategic Priorities

2022-2025 Strategic Planning

Throughout the 2022 Strategic Planning process, every stage of data collection consistently highlighted 5 areas of priorities. Listed in no particular order, the 5 areas of strategic priorities are:

- Re-engage the Network
- Increase Staffing and Financial Capacity
- Create Structured Advocacy Program
- Maintain and Enhance Training Program
- Redefine Contributions to Sector Coordination

With the guidance of the Steering Committee, we have created a breakdown of the goals along with indicators of success.



Our Strategic Priorities

Re-engage the Network

After disruptions and changes due to COVID, along with high turnover in the sector, member agencies and their staff will be re-engaged around the benefits of membership, and through meaningful avenues to contribute to the Network

We will do this by:

- Hosting regular TDIN orientation sessions and providing members accessible information (i.e. how to use forums, check training balances, sign up for listserv)
- Introducing a Member Rep program with a designated rep from each member supporting communication, current events, and relationship building
- Reinvigorating committees: renew outreach and participation in Steering Committee, Advocacy and Training Committees, and re-engaging Finance and Fundraising committee. Move away from being advisory and accountability bodies and increase the leadership and decision-making power of these committees (see box)
- Upholding member requirement to allocate staff time to TDIN (i.e. participation in a committee or other engagement)

Success looks like:

- Member Reps are engaged and quickly relay information between member staff teams and TDIN
- More front line staff are actively engaged with TDIN and accessing resources
- Members have increased leadership in the network and are supporting and organizing together

REINVIGORATING COMMITTEES

The committee structure is an important way that members engage with and contribute to the network. Committee members give direction, feedback, and approval which allows TDIN to thrive as a member network.

Reinvigorating the Committees will help build member participation in a meaningful way while ensuring TDIN's focus and activities reflect their members' needs and interests.

Our Strategic Priorities

Increase Staffing & Financial Capacity

TDIN will leverage untapped funding opportunities to increase financial resources, and build and retain staffing to achieve the organization's goals

We will do this by:

- Creating a Funding Strategy identifying needs, gaps, and funding opportunities beyond City funding. Include funds for short and long term special projects and/or roles (i.e. advocacy strategy development; social enterprise business development)
- Rewriting and reclassifying all job descriptions to align descriptions and titles with role needs and increase wages
- Creating and implementing a clear business strategy for income generation through training services (led by Training Manager)
- Exploring an increase in membership fees that is equitable across the tiered system based on Drop-In budget, and has impact on TDIN's funding shortfalls

Success looks like:

- Additional FTE is added to TDIN's staffing
- Vacant positions are filled and staff retained
- TDIN is able to start and complete more projects
- Reduced TDIN staff burnout

“
There is so much that needs to be done (TDIN) can't do it all. You need to have more staff if you plan on continuing at the pace you have been or we need to look at what the drop-ins need the most support with an focus on that. The staff will become burnt out if this does not change..

”

Our Strategic Priorities

Create Structured Advocacy Program

Increase advocacy structure and focus with clearly defined priorities that create boundaries around the amount of time that is committed to advocacy among the Network's other priorities. Increase the role of the Advocacy Committee to support more leadership from members in setting the direction of TDIN

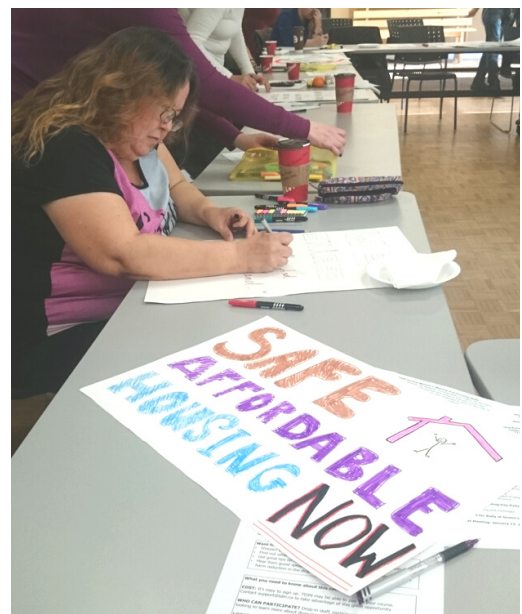
We will do this by:

Having an engaged, collaborative Advocacy Committee leading the process of creating an advocacy strategy with the following key aspects -

- Creating two different advocacy pillars: Proactive (longer-term, predicted issues) and Responsive (shorter-term, rapid response and episodic issues)
- Determining the data required to enhance advocacy work, and creating data strategy around collection, management, and sharing
- Clearly defining 1-2 annual Proactive advocacy goals and foci
- Defining the time to be allocated to both Proactive and Responsive issues and process of engagement for each
- Documenting the 'degrees' of engagement that TDIN can participate in for different advocacy issues
- Holding boundaries around advocacy issues that are not on the annual goals by offering 'lesser' degrees of support rather than leadership

Success looks like:

- More consistent and reliable advocacy engagement
- TDIN has clear advocacy goals and focus; spends less time responding to actions or requests that don't fit in goals
- Responsive Advocacy issues are limited to those that the team has capacity to support
- TDIN focuses on Proactive Advocacy issues; committee meets regularly and leads the process



Our Strategic Priorities

Maintain and Enhance Training Program

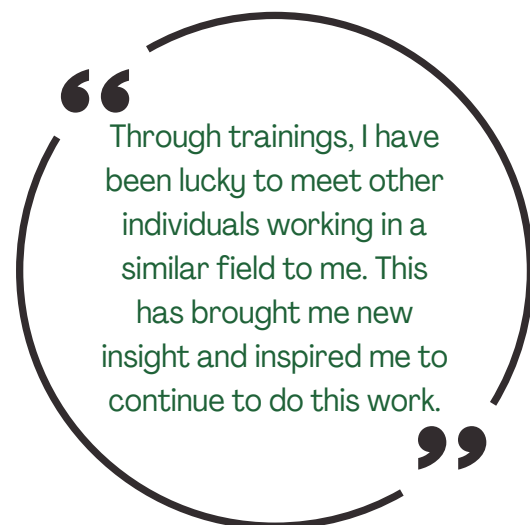
The training program will be maintained, with enhancements made thoughtfully and carefully in years 2 & 3 of the strategic plan

We will do this by:

- Applying Anti-Oppression, Anti-Racism and Anti-Colonial practices to existing trainings and offer space for gathering, discussing, skill and resource sharing related to AR/AO/AC
- Liaising and partnering around pre-existing training programs that complement TDIN's trainings; developing a Training Resource for members to pull from for their training needs outside of TDIN's offerings
- Developing new workshop(s) around de-escalation and restorative justice based in AR/AO principles
- Increasing involvement of drop-in participants in trainings to have a "lived experience" voice and build skill and opportunities (i.e. co-facilitation and co-creation, employment social enterprise)
- Promoting the value of TDIN Drop-In Foundation Certificate Series

Success looks like:

- Members have more opportunities to use training allocations fully each year; less training allocations remain unused
- TDIN is filling training & knowledge gaps by providing trainings that are specific to the drop-in sector and can't be accessed otherwise
- Drop-ins increase Anti-oppression, anti-racist, and anti-colonial principles and actions
- Increased completion of the three workshops that comprise Drop-in Foundation Series Certificate
- Increased training participation and completion from drop-in participants and Ontario Works recipients



Our Strategic Priorities

Redefine Contributions to Sector Coordination

Transition out of time-limited sector coordination activities such as redistributing material resources that were implemented during COVID-19 program restrictions

We will do this by:

- Shifting away from gathering and redistributing resources and towards advocating for resources; ensuring the shift is a slow transition with sustainable supports to fill gaps
- Creating support systems for members to organize collectively around needed material resources (rather than TDIN procuring those resources)
- Defining and prioritizing pressing and novel sector coordination issues (e.g. increasing appropriate and effective access to health services for Drop-In participants)
- Continuing to focus on coordinating advocacy, communicating across the sector, bringing together people to share experience and expertise, collecting and sharing data, and other sector coordination supports

Success looks like:

- TDIN reclaims staff capacity by moving away from service provision
- Network is strengthened as drop-ins collectively organize to gather and redistribute resources without TDIN's facilitation
- Increase in new sector coordination areas that respond to pressing issues and emerging opportunities



Implementation

The strategic plan can be implemented using a phase approach, supporting TDIN to progress towards reaching these goals over the next 3 years.

PHASE ONE

01

Focus on Re-engaging the Network and Increasing Staffing and Financial Capacity. This will build the operational foundations that will allow and support future actions.

PHASE TWO

02

Build from these foundations to create a structured Advocacy Program and Redefine Sector Coordination.

PHASE THREE

03

Focus on the growth and expansion of all programs including Training Programs.

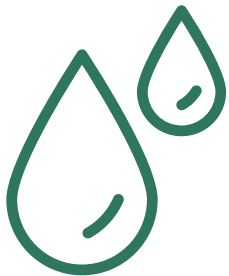
Implementation

Phase 1: Seed

- Re-engage the network through orientations, how-to sessions and information sharing
- Build Fundraising Strategy
- Redefine roles and engage in hiring and retention
- Build transition plans for service coordination changes



Phase 2: Water



- Renew Committee engagement, structures, and ToR
- Build Advocacy Strategy
- Shift away from gathering and redistributing materials and focus on in-scope service-coordination priorities
- Review training programs; build out income generating stream

Phase 3: Grow

- Create new and improve trainings
- Continue to implement Advocacy Strategy
- Continue to develop programs and initiatives through new funding sources



Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this Strategic Plan!

The Steering Committee was joined by one additional member to support the Strategic Planning process:

Jacqueline McKernan, *Mustard Seed Drop-In*

Sharmini Fernando, *Jane's Place Drop-In*

Josie Ricciardi, *Regent Park CHC*

Peter Martin, *PARC*

Lorie Steer, *The Neighbourhood Group (TDIN trustee)*

Lorraine Lam, *Sanctuary Drop-In*

Hyacinth Olbino, *Teesdale Drop-In, Warden Woods*

Anne Marie DiCenso, *Breakaway Community Services*

TDIN Staff:

Susan Bender, *Manager*

Anne Ndirangu, *Member Support Coordinator*

All of the members who responded to the strategic planning survey and attended focus groups

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Shoreline Collaboratives