Creating Terms of Reference for a Health Service Integration Initiative Working Group

Description:

This tool describes the key elements found in a Terms of Reference for a Health Service Integration Initiative Working Group.

How it can be used:

Effective Terms of Reference describe the purpose, structure, scope, membership, roles and deliverables of a group, committee or project. They provide direction to ensure that the Working Group functions with a common understanding and expectation and avoids getting off track. In essence, it is a road map that provides direction to the Working Group about what needs to be achieved, by whom and by when.

Elements required for an effective Terms of Reference are explained below. Productive working groups review and update their Terms of Reference annually.

Health Service Integration Initiative Working Group Terms of Reference

Name

Official name of the Working Group

Goals/Mandate

Primary Goal: What is your key mandate? What does this working group wish to accomplish?

Secondary Goal: Are there goals that support your primary goal?

History

The history is helpful to explain the reason the Working Group is in place and provide key background information. Explain or note if this is a revision of previous Terms of Reference.

Members

- Name
- Home organization
- Contact information
- Roles and responsibilities (e.g., chair, secretary, treasurer, secretariat, reporting to the Board, Health Committee, Health Councillor, etc.)
- Some Terms of Reference describe key attributes or functions of the members rather than the actual membership (e.g., representative from the education committee, representative from the housing committee, etc.)
- Are members allowed to send alternates? What is the protocol for alternates?
- How many meetings can members miss?
- How will members report back to their organizations?

Deliverables

What are the outputs required from the Working Group? Recommendations? Decisions? Describe these in as much detail as possible.

Scope/Jurisdiction

- What is the responsibility of the Working Group?
- What authority does the Working Group have?
- What is within the Working Group's purview and what is outside its mandate?
- What can the group make decisions about and upon what must they receive input?
- Are task-groups required to address specific elements? If so, what is the composition of the task-group(s)? Working Group members and/or subject experts? How and when do task-groups report to the Working Group?
- Are there any pre-existing conditions the Working Group must consider (e.g., organizational requirements for representation from specific community groups)? Are there related policies that have an impact on the Working Group's work?
- What are the relationships with other relevant committees?

Governance

- To whom does the Working Group report? Under which authority is the Working Group established?
- How are decisions made (e.g., consensus, majority vote, etc.)?
- Does the chair have a vote?
- Are there relationships of authority within the Working Group and/or larger organization that must be considered?

Resources and Budget

- Is there a budget for the Working Group?
- What equipment is required? What is available?
- Where will the Working Group meet?
- Where will shared information or resources be available?

Timelines

- How long will the Working Group be in existence? Is this an ongoing group or is it 'health service integration initiative-specific'?
- What is the schedule of meetings? How frequently will they be held?
- Are there deadlines for deliverables? Are there milestones?
- How long will each member sit on the Working Group? Is there a limit to the length of time a member can participate?
- When will meeting summaries/minutes be circulated to members?
- When will the Terms of Reference be revisited and updated?