

**Faith-Based Advisory Committee
Terms of Reference**

(Last revised/updated September 2024)

Overview:

These Terms of Reference set out the purpose, mandate, and scope of work of the Faith-Based Advisory Committee (the Committee).

1. Purpose

- The Committee will provide advice to the CEO/Registrar and the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) Board of the Directors (the Board) on issues of faith as they relate to funeral and transfer services, cemeteries and crematoriums, or alternative dispositions in the province of Ontario.
- The Committee will provide for open communication between faith groups and the Board.
- The Committee will bring together faith representatives from the province of Ontario to discuss issues which affect the bereavement sector. Committee members may also be invited to:
 - Make recommendations regarding education requirements for the sector in consultation with the CEO/Registrar;
 - Support the Board by providing advice for proposed changes to legislation or regulation;
 - Work with other BAO Advisory Committees to provide advice as requested;
 - Participate in board stakeholder consultations; and,
 - Respond to any other Faith-Based issues or questions of the Board and/or the CEO/Registrar.

2. Membership

- The Committee will be comprised of up to nine (9) members. Best efforts will be made to appoint:
 - One (1) member from each of the following faith groups: Anglican; Hindu; Jewish; Muslim; Orthodox Christian; Roman Catholic; Sikh; United; and,
 - One (1) member from a faith or belief organization not included in the above list.
- The Board will review the qualifications of all Committee members and select one Committee member to sit as the next Chair of the Committee. This individual will also sit as a voting member of the Board.

3. Eligibility

- Members cannot sit on more than one BAO Advisory Committee at a time.
- No more than one (1) member can represent a single faith group.
- Members must reside in the province of Ontario.

- Faith groups that operate cemeteries, crematoriums, funeral establishments, or transfer services may nominate an individual to the Committee, provided that individual's primary job function does not relate to the day-to-day operation or provision of licensed bereavement sector services to the consumer. The Board may request a written statement from a nominee confirming this.
- Best efforts will be made to appoint individuals to the Committee based on the following criteria:
 - Representatives who have expertise in faith requirements for bereavement practices of the faith group they are representing; and,
 - Representatives who are nominated by a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, worship centre or organization for the faith being represented.
 - Some faiths may require approval for their participation on the Committee from a higher authority within their faith community.

4. Terms of Service

- Committee Members will be appointed to a three (3) year term, to a maximum of nine (9) years, with no eligibility to serve a further term.
- If a member of the Committee is appointed Chair and the length of the appointment extends beyond the nine (9) year maximum for Committee members, the member may continue as Chair until the expiry of the appointment at which time they cease to be a member of the Committee.
- Committee positions will be considered immediately vacated if:
 - The Committee member no longer resides in the province of Ontario;
 - the Committee member resigns by notice in writing to the Board Chair, in which case the resignation shall be effective at the time it is received or at the time specified in the notice, whichever is later;
 - The Committee member dies; or,
 - In the reasonable opinion of the Board, expressed by the resolution of a majority of the Directors, the Committee member consistently fails to perform the duties reasonably required of a Committee member.
- Each Committee member has one vote. Where there is a tied vote, the Chair of the Committee shall cast the deciding vote.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Committee is responsible for:
 - Providing advice to the Board, the CEO/Registrar, or other BAO Advisory Committees on such matters as:
 - Faith practices and needs of belief communities in relation to bereavement practices;
 - Recommending individuals to fill vacancies on the Committee;
 - Participating in Board stakeholder consultations as requested; and,
 - Working with other BAO Advisory Committees as appropriate.

- The membership of the Committee will commit to:
 - Attend all scheduled meetings to the best of their ability, and where attendance is not possible, advance notice be provided to the Chair;
 - Being prepared for meetings by reviewing materials in advance;
 - Notifying members of the Committee if a matter arises which may impact their sector;
 - When requested, provide information in a timely manner;
 - Making recommendations to help progress the work of the Committee;
 - Actively participating in Committee discussions;
 - Treat all information as confidential;
 - Disclosing any potential conflicts of interest in advance of Committee discussions, and refrain from discussion or voting on these items; and,
 - Abiding by any applicable policies as determined by the Board, including confidentiality, conflict of interest and expenses.

- Members of the Committee can expect that they will be:
 - Provided with complete, accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner;
 - Given reasonable time to make recommendations;
 - Alerted to potential risks which may impact the Committee; and,
 - Participating in open and honest discussions about the work of their Committee.

- The Chair of the Committee will:
 - Facilitate meetings by identifying the order of proceedings;
 - Promote active participation by all Committee members;
 - Encourage respectful and productive discussions of the Committee; and,
 - Provide updates to the Board on the activities of the Committee.

6. Meetings

- The Committee will strive to meet twice a year, or as required by the CEO/Registrar, Board or Committee Chair.
- A quorum of a majority of Committee members is required for executing the business of the Committee.
- Meetings can be held in person, by teleconference, virtually or other such communication method that allows all participants equal access to communicate with one another.
- The CEO/Registrar will normally attend meetings, but the Chair of the Committee may ask the CEO/Registrar not to attend at his/her discretion to facilitate open discussion on sensitive issues.

7. Deliverables

- The Chair of the Committee will report on the progress of the Committee as requested or as required by the Board.

8. Minutes

- The minutes of all meetings will be recorded and retained by a designated BAO staff member.
- Minutes will be shared with the CEO/Registrar, Board, and Committee members in a timely manner.

9. Communication Protocol

- The Chair of the Committee is responsible for all communications with the Board and the CEO/Registrar outside of Committee meetings.
- The Committee may conduct *in camera* sessions during meetings to discuss confidential matters.
- Unless approved by the Board Chair or the CEO/Registrar, neither the Committee Chair nor a Committee member may speak to the media on behalf of the Committee or as a representative of the BAO.

10. Procedures

- Designated BAO staff member(s) will assist the Committee to develop its Rules of Procedure for Committee meetings and also a Committee member's Code of Conduct.

11. Access to Bereavement Authority of Ontario Staff Resources

- The Committee will be supported by one or more designated BAO staff member(s) who are responsible for:
 - Providing administrative support to the Committee;
 - Advising the Committee on applicable BAO policies;
 - Remaining impartial to all Committee members;
 - Recording, retaining, and filing meeting minutes; and,
 - Booking meetings.

12. Expenses

- Other than the Committee Chair, Committee positions are voluntary and unpaid.
- Eligible expenses, related to travel and Committee attendance, will be reimbursed according to the BAO's Expense Policy.
- Requests for any additional resources required to support the Committee must be submitted to the Board in writing.

13. Amendment, Modification or Variation

- These Terms of Reference may be amended, modified, or varied in writing after consultation with Committee members, subject to the approval of the Board.
- The best efforts will be made to review these Terms of Reference on an annual basis, at the first Committee meeting of each calendar year.