



University of Toronto

OPEN ARMS

Provide. Advocate. Connect.

CONSTITUTION
Revised July 2025

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Mission Statement

Open Arms is an initiative based on a simple but powerful belief: no one should feel invisible.

We are a student-led organization committed to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness in our community. Our mission extends beyond distributing essential resources: we aim to build trust, foster meaningful relationships, and offer care that recognizes the dignity of every person we encounter. Through initiatives such as creating and distributing tailored care kits, community outreach, and advocacy efforts, we seek to provide immediate support and foster a sense of belonging for those impacted by homelessness.

Our organization recognizes that homelessness is a complex and multifaceted issue tied to mental health struggles, social stigma, and systemic barriers, interconnected factors that we at *Open Arms* are committed to addressing. Our primary goal is to foster a community that actively listens to the needs of those we serve and collaborates with shelters, local organizations, and volunteers to create thoughtful, community-driven, and multi-dimensional solutions. We envision *Open Arms* evolving into a larger organization that continues to expand its reach, deepen its impact, and foster a more compassionate, inclusive society.

Article One: Name and Purpose

1.1. The official name of the recognized student group is “Open Arms”

1.2. The official acronym or abbreviation of the group is “OA”

1.3. The purpose, objectives, mission and/or mandate of the organization are as follows:

Open Arms is a student-led organization which aims to directly support Toronto residents facing homelessness through needs-based outreach, advocacy, and community partnerships.

Our objectives include:

- Creating and distributing personalized care kits, which include but are not limited to harm reduction tools, hygiene products, first aid, and other essential supplies tailored to the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- Collaborating with local shelters, organizations, and healthcare providers to maximize impact.
- Developing and administering community-centered polls with the help of community partners to allow individuals affected by homelessness to communicate their specific needs, ensuring our services align with their priorities.
- Promoting awareness, education, and advocacy regarding homelessness and related social issues within the Toronto community.
- Providing an opportunity for individuals to get involved with volunteerism to foster a culture of compassion and civic responsibility within the University of Toronto community.

Article Two: Membership and Membership Fee

2.1. *Open Arms* is an open and inclusive organization that welcomes all individuals committed to its mission of service, advocacy, and community engagement. While the club is open to all interested members, an Executive Committee — composed of elected University of Toronto student members — oversees the leadership, operations, and decision-making of the organization.

2.2. Voting membership is open to all registered University of Toronto students.

Voting members can:

- Vote in club elections and decisions.
- Run for Executive Committee positions.
- Propose ideas and constitutional changes.

2.3. Voting membership is restricted to only registered students of the University of Toronto.

2.4. Non-voting membership is open to University of Toronto staff, faculty, alumni, and individuals from outside the University of Toronto community. Non-voting members are welcome to participate in events, volunteer activities, and initiatives, but do not hold voting privileges and cannot hold executive positions.

2.5. No membership fee shall be charged at this time. The Executive Committee reserves the right to propose a membership fee in future, subject to a vote by the general membership.

Article Three: Rights of Members

3.1. All general members and volunteers may withdraw from the organization at any time without penalty. Individuals holding an Executive Committee position are expected to fulfill their full term of service, as outlined in their position description at the time of election or appointment. Should an executive member be unable to continue their duties, they are required to notify the Executive Committee as soon as possible to allow for a transition process.

3.2. Voting members have the right to:

- Attend general meetings, which will be held every two weeks during the academic year.
- Vote on organizational matters, including constitutional amendments, elections, and major initiatives.
- Stand for election to any voting Executive Committee position.
- Propose initiatives, projects, or amendments to this constitution.

3.3. Non-voting members may:

- Attend events, volunteer activities, and initiatives.
- Serve in non-executive roles, such as volunteering, event committees, or outreach teams.

Article Four: Executive Committee

4.1. The executive term will run from September 2025 to March 2026.

4.2. The executive committee will consist of nine (9) voting members who are registered University of Toronto students.

4.3. Non-voting members may hold only non-voting positions. Non-voting members may not:

- Hold voting privileges on the Executive Committee.
- Serve as officers, financial authorities, or signing authorities.
- Hold the roles of primary or secondary contact for the organization.

4.4. The Executive Committee may appoint non-voting coordinators or directors to assist with specific projects, committees, or events. These positions serve in an advisory or operational capacity but do not have voting rights within the Executive Committee.

4.5. Any Executive Committee member who is unable to fulfill their duties may resign by providing written notice to the Co-Presidents and/or the Executive Committee, allowing reasonable time for transition or replacement.

Article Five: Executive Committee Composition and Duties

5.1. Co-Presidents (2):

- Lead the overall direction, operations, and strategy of the organization.
- Serve as the official representatives of the student organization.
- Hold financial and signing authority (alongside the Treasurers).
- Facilitate meetings and ensure smooth executive transitions.
- Oversee external partnerships and collaborations.

5.2. Vice President (1):

- Support Co-Presidents in club operations and leadership.
- Step in as acting President when necessary.
- Ensure compliance with University policies and procedures.
- Lead member recruitment efforts.

5.3. Secretary (1):

- Maintain accurate member lists and attendance records.
- Record minutes and decisions at executive and general meetings.
- Manage email communications and internal documentation.

5.4. Treasurers (2):

- Manage the organization's finances, including budgeting, fundraising oversight, and reporting.
- Hold signing and financial authority alongside the Co-Presidents.
- Maintain transparent financial records.
- Oversee the preparation of funding applications and event budgets.

5.5. Social Media Coordinator (1):

- Manage social media platforms, outreach, and public communications.
- Support promotional campaigns and event advertising.

5.6. Fundraising, Events, and Outreach Officers (2):

- Plan and execute fundraising initiatives and community events.
- Coordinate volunteering and outreach programs with shelters and community partners.

Article Six: Elections

6.1. Annual elections for Executive Committee positions for the following academic year shall be held during the end of the Winter term.

6.2. All voting members (currently registered University of Toronto students) are eligible to run for and vote on Executive Committee positions.

6.3. Elections must be administered in an unbiased manner. No candidate may participate in the planning or administration of the election process.

6.4. Voting shall be conducted through a secret ballot or an approved online voting platform.

6.5. Any unfilled Executive Committee positions may be filled through a by-election or by appointment through a majority vote of the current Executive Committee.

Article Seven: Finances

7.1. The Treasurers must keep accurate records of all financial transactions, which includes an active record of all income and expenses.

7.2. The Treasureses must present the organization's updates on all financial matters and overall financial position at executive meetings on a monthly basis.

7.3. The Executive Committee must approve all expenditures over \$100.00 through a majority vote at an executive meeting.

7.4. All funds shall be used solely for the organization's purposes and activities.

7.5. No member of the organization, including Executive Committee members and general members, shall receive financial compensation for their involvement or service. However, volunteers may be eligible to receive verified volunteer hours or formal recognition for their contributions, in accordance with University of Toronto policies and procedures.

7.6. No executives shall receive any form of financial compensation, such as a payment or salary, from the organization for performing their duties.

Article Eight: Meetings

8.1. The Executive Committee must meet at least once per month. A quorum for Executive Committee meetings shall be 50% + 1 of its voting members.

8.2. General meetings will be held at least twice per academic year to update all members on organizational activities, finances, and future plans. These meetings will also serve as a space for feedback for the organization and any ideas, thoughts, etc.

8.3. The Executive Committee will notify all members of general meetings at least two (2) weeks in advance.

Article Nine: Termination of Membership

9.1. The Executive Committee may revoke membership for actions that harm the organization's mission or community relationships, including but not limited to: harassment, discrimination, or significant misconduct.

9.2. Revocation of membership requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote by the Executive Committee.

9.3. The affected member may appeal the decision at a general meeting, requiring a simple majority vote of voting members for reinstatement.

Article Ten: Amendments

10.1. Amendments to this Constitution require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at a general meeting.

10.2. All voting members may propose constitutional amendments.

10.3. Any approved amendments must be submitted to the Division of Student Life within two (2) weeks for final review; amendments to the constitution shall take effect only once the revised constitution has been approved.