



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

Document	Métis Nation of Ontario Women's Council Roles & Responsibilities Guidelines*
Responsibility of	Métis Nation of Ontario Women's Council
Approving Authority	Métis Nation of Ontario Women's Council
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These guidelines inform councilors and the Council how the MNOWC functions.

History

The first Métis Nation of Ontario Women's Council (MNOWC) Roles & Responsibilities document was finalized in July 2020. They are based on the Terms of Reference of the MNOWC. They will evolve as the MNOWC and MNO governmental structure evolves. If there is a contradiction between the MNOWC Roles & Responsibilities, the Terms of Reference will supercede.

Introduction

The Métis Nation of Ontario Women's Council (MNOWC) is an advisory council of and for the Métis Nation of Ontario. As such we are the democratic representatives for those who identify as women of the MNO. The MNOWC is comprised by nine regional councilor representatives, a president and an appointed elder. There are nine regions in the MNO and a woman councilor is elected for a four-year term by the women of the region they live in. The president is elected by all women citizens of the MNO. An elder is appointed by the MNOWC after each election. The councilors are accountable for the effective governance of the MNOWC as detailed in the MNOWC Terms of Reference.

Métis Women

Métis women have played a foundational role in the history, culture and leadership of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Their contributions, often characterized by resilience, strength and leadership, have been crucial in shaping the identity and governance of our Métis communities.

When the Métis people emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries, Métis women were pivotal in the formation of this new culture, serving as cultural mediators, community leaders and the matriarchal backbone of our Métis society. Women's roles were not only confined to the domestic sphere but extended into economic, social and political realms.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

Politically, Métis women have been instrumental in the fight for Métis rights and recognition. Their leadership in political organizations, advocacy and community mobilization is key in advancing the cause of our Métis Nation. The MNO has seen significant contributions from Métis women in its formation and ongoing efforts to secure rights and recognition for Métis people in Ontario.

The role of Métis women in education and community health is invaluable. They are the forefront of initiatives to improve access to education and healthcare for our communities, advocating for culturally appropriate services that recognize the unique identity and needs of our Métis people.

The importance of Métis women to the MNO cannot be overstated. Métis women have been, and continue to be, central to the strength, resilience, and identity of our Métis Nation. Our legacy is a testament to the critical role of women in the survival and flourishing of Métis culture and Métis ways of doing.

MNOWC Responsibility: Mission Statement

The MNO Women's Council shall strive to reflect and act in accordance with traditional Métis values, principles and practices. The MNOWC has an inclusive understanding of woman. Women experience their lives differently based on their culture, home life, region, age, gender/gender identity, sexual identity, religion, education, and many other factors. The MNOWC values each woman's experience and seeks to create a respectful space that includes Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer and Inter-Sex (2SLGBTQI+) women.

Councilor's Commitment to Roles and Responsibilities

All MNOWC councilors are expected to fulfil the duties of their positions as described below. If they are unable to do so, a councilor may be removed from office by a **two-thirds vote** of a Special Closed meeting of the MNOWC under the following circumstances: where two thirds of the Métis Nation of Ontario Women's Council determines that a councilor:

1. Concurrently holds a position in another aboriginal organization and where by reason of holding the two positions the councilor is placed in a conflict of interest.
2. By an ongoing and serious act of omission or commission, is in direct contravention of an express direction from the MNOWC or an Annual General Meeting of the MNOWC.
3. Has committed a serious act or breach of duty in relation to their role as a member of the Council.

More specifically, a councilor of the MNOWC may be removed with a **two-thirds vote** from office for such reasons as:

1. Duties are not being adequately performed.
2. They are found by a court to be of unsound mind.
3. Upon their death.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

4. After missing three (3) consecutive Women's Council meetings without good reason.
5. Where the MNO Registrar determines that the councilor is not a verified citizen of the MNO.
6. Where the councilor has had their rights and privileges as an MNO citizen suspended by written notice of the PCMNO's Secretary-Treasurer pursuant to the MNO By-Laws.
7. If convicted of an indictable offence.
8. Has been found guilty, in connection with an election, of corrupt practice, accepting a bribe, dishonesty or malfeasance.

POSITIONS OF MNOWC

REGIONAL WOMEN'S REPRESENTATIVE (RWR)

Requirements

1. Must be elected through the proper MNO electoral processes.
2. Must be a citizen of the MNO who identifies as a woman and is living within the region they represent.
3. Must be willing to fulfill RWR duties.

Term

Regional Women Representatives (RWRs) are elected every 4 years at the Annual General Assembly. If a RWR leaves before the 4-year term, the process of appointing a new RWR will follow the MNOWC Terms of Reference.

General Duties

As a member of the MNOWC, the RWRs occupy a position of trust for the women of the region they represent and are committed to follow the direction of MNOWC and honour the Statement of Purpose. RWRs should be fully informed on MNOWC matters and participate in the Council's deliberations and decisions in matters of policy, finance, communication, committee recommendations, fundraising, proposal writing, public education and advocacy.

Responsibilities

1. Be willing to work collaboratively with all members of the MNOWC, within the MNO in general, and adhere to the MNOWC Code of Conduct. However, the MNO Code of Conduct will supercede.
2. Be committed to working on behalf of all Métis women of Ontario.
3. Attend regularly scheduled MNOWC meetings in person or virtually.
4. Meet and nurture relationships with the Community Council Women Representatives (CCWRs). Compile issues to bring to MNOWC with possible recommendations on



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

moving forward in addressing them. Attend, support and assist CCWRs in their region with any activities being organized in their communities, as the MNOWC budgeting allows.

5. Communicate with CCWRs on a regular basis or whenever important information needs to be disseminated.
6. Distribute minutes of regular MNOWC meetings to the CCWRs.
7. Develop and maintain positive relations within the MNO organization and leadership, provincial and national organizations such as Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO) in order to strengthen the MNOWC mandate.
8. Disburse MNOWC assigned funding in accordance with MNOWC directions.
9. Submit receipts and complete reports for reimbursement of expenditures for approved MNOWC business, using MNO templates.
10. Responding to MNOWC Emails/Texts/Telephone/Zoom Calls, in a timely manner such as 1-2 business days.
11. Attend each of their CCWRs Council's Annual General Meeting when funding permits and request to be put on the agenda of these AGMs.
12. Be willing to sit on committees in one or more areas such as policy and governance, finance, communication, fundraising, proposal and grant writing, public education and advocacy.
13. Participate in council discussions on all matters of business.
14. Support and participate in fundraising events.
15. Re-evaluate the MNOWC Strategic Plan when funding and time permits.
16. Attend the MNO Annual General Assembly and MNOWC Annual General Meetings when funding permits.

Estimated Time Commitment

1. Monthly MNOWC Meetings – 2-3 hours per month for a minimum of ten monthly meetings (20-30 hours annually).
2. Yearly MNOWC Annual General Meeting (3 hours) takes place during AGA in person if funding permits.
3. Yearly MNO Annual General Assembly meeting (2-3 days).
4. MNOWC committee meetings – 20-40 hours annually per committee depending on the committee.
5. Fundraising – 4-5 hours annually for such events as the AGM craft table.
6. Responding to Emails/Texts/Telephone/Zoom Calls – 2-4 hours weekly.
7. Public education – as per MNOWC needs and each individual RWR's goals for their region.
8. Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO) Annual General Meeting (3 days) if funding permits.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

9. RWRs community visits CCWRs within their region as funding permits (3-5 days annually) and/or conducting virtual meetings CCWRs as needed (2-3 hours per meeting).

MNOWC PRESIDENT

General Description

The MNOWC President is an elected position chosen by all women citizens of the Métis Nation of Ontario. The President oversees and guides the MNOWC towards accomplishing MNOWC Statement of Purpose. The President is the chief executive officer and the chief spokesperson for the MNOWC. The President shall be responsible for the general and active management of the MNOWC affairs. When acting as Chair of an MNOWC meeting, the President shall not vote unless required to cast a tie-breaking vote. The President shall see that all orders and resolutions of MNOWC, the MNOWC Annual General Meeting, the MNO Annual General Assembly and the PCMNO are carried into effect.

Authority and Responsibility

Through the deployment of regular meetings, the President will maintain an ongoing internal communication strategy to ensure all MNOWC are kept fully informed. The MNOWC President shall provide leadership such as inspire and motivate, foster problem solving, embrace new ideas, build cohesion, encourage solidarity, unify, enable change, and team build.

Requirements

1. Must be elected through the proper MNO electoral process.
2. Must be a woman citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) living within the province of Ontario.
3. Must have the ability and time to fulfill MNOWC President duties.
4. Must be willing to meet these duties as a volunteer.

Term

MNOWC President will be elected every four years at the Annual General Meeting. If a President leaves before the four-year term is completed, the process within the Terms of Reference will be followed.

Responsibilities

1. Ensure the agenda is distributed by the Secretary one week before the MNOWC meeting.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

2. Work closely with the Elder when issues arise to ensure that the MNOWC Code of Conduct is adhered to.
3. When a complaint is received, ensure the complaint process is followed and that the MNOWC is informed.
4. Ensure bank statements are accessible to the Treasurer.
5. Ensure financial report is distributed by the Treasurer one week before regularly scheduled meetings.
6. Be a signing authority on the Annual General Meeting treasurer's report with the Treasurer and another designated MNOWC councilor.
7. Be a signing authority on contracts, documents or any instrument in writing requiring the signature of the MNOWC with another designated MNOWC councilor.
8. Develop and maintain relationships with the PCMNO, MNO Chief Operating Officer & MNO Chief Strategic Officer.
9. Attend PCMNO meetings and report back or designate an alternate (RWR or CCWR).
10. Report to the PCMNO when requested.
11. Continue to lobby for a voting seat on the PCMNO.
12. Represent the MNOWC on the Board of Governors of Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO) and any other provincial/national groups. Report on these meetings regularly to MNOWC.
13. Stay updated on current Métis, First Nation and Inuit women's issues and government announcements. Report regularly to MNOWC.
14. Serve as ex-officio member on all MNOWC committees and attend their meetings when available.
15. Act on behalf of the MNOWC in case of emergency.
16. Represent the MNOWC to the media when directed by the MNOWC.
17. Prepare the President's written reports on all of the above and distribute one week before the regular MNOWC meetings.

Budget and Expenses

The MNOWC does not have an annual budget unless there is an approved funding source. MNOWC can apply for funding with the MNO and the assistance of designated staff. The President will notify the MNOWC of potential funding sources to augment our mandate. The President will notify the MNOWC on the status of submitted applications.

Estimated Time Commitment

1. Monthly MNOWC Meetings – 2-3 hours per month for a minimum of ten months (20-30 hours annually) including a minimum of 1 in person meeting (2-3 days).
2. Monthly LFMO Meetings – 3 hours per month (36 hours annually).
3. MNOWC Annual General Meeting in person meeting (3 hours).
4. MNO AGA in person 2-3 days.
5. PCMNO meetings 5-6 hours, about 6 yearly (30-36 hours annually).



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

6. MNOWC Committee Meetings – 20-30 hours as ex-officio of all committees.
7. Fundraising – 5 hours annually depending on fundraising activities.
8. Funding – 40 hours annually of researching, input and feedback into proposals.
9. Additional Emails/Texts/Facebook Member Verification/Telephone/ Zoom Calls – 160 hours annually.
10. Report Writing – 20 hours annually.
11. Spokeswoman at events – 10 hours annually.
12. Annual General Assembly – attend 2 to 5 days.
13. MNOWC Annual General Meeting – 3 hours.
14. In-Person Gatherings – annually attend 3-5 in-person meeting 2-3 days at a time.

CHAIR (approved July 2020)

In addition to the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Regional Women's Representative role description, this position:

1. Provide leadership to the Women's Council.
2. Ensuring the Women's Council adheres to its Terms of Reference and set policies, including the Code of Conduct.
3. Confirms there is a quorum at MNOWC meetings.
4. Chairs meetings of the MNOWC.
5. Signs MNOWC minutes to attest to their accuracy.
6. Encourages Regional Women Representatives to participate in meetings and activities.
7. Keeps the Women's Council discussion on topic by summarizing issues.
8. Keeps the MNOWC activities focused on the Council's mandate.
9. Ensure evaluation tools for the MNOWC are developed, approved and implemented.
10. Assumes the role of Acting President should the elected President be unable to, temporarily, perform her duties.
11. Assumes the role of Interim President should the President position become vacant, until the next MNOWC regularly scheduled election pursuant to MNO Electoral Code, Part A, Article 10.
12. Makes sure that committee chairwomen are appointed as required.
13. Orients new Regional Women's Representatives to their role and appoints a mentor (MNOWC Women's Rep), as needed.
14. Ensure smooth transition for new MNOWC Chair.

Vice Chair (approved July 2020)

In addition to the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Regional Women's Representative role description, this position also includes:

1. Acts in the absence of the Meeting Chair.
2. Learns the duties of the Meeting Chair and keeps informed on key issues.
3. Works closely and assists as consultant and advisor to the Meeting Chair.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

MNOWC SECRETARY (approved July 2020)

In addition to the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Regional Women's Representative role description, this position also includes:

1. Keeping copies of the current Terms of Reference with attached role descriptions, Code of Conduct and MNOWC policy statements.
2. Ensure MNOWC has current listings of Regional Women's Representatives and Community Council Women Representatives.
3. Ensure MNOWC maintains a file on each of the Regional Women's Representatives which will include but not limited to contact information, letters on file, Code of Conduct issues, awards/recognition etc.
4. Ensure that MNOWC is notified through email of meeting dates & times.
5. Prepare the MNOWC agenda for meetings with input from the Regional Women Representatives. Distribute the MNOWC agenda one week before the meeting.
6. Bring the official minute book to meeting.
7. Keep records of MNOWC attendance.
8. Keep accurate minutes of meetings, including recording all motions and decisions at meetings.
9. Sign MNOWC minutes to attest to their accuracy.
10. Record all corrections to minutes.
11. Keep copies of minutes with any attachments of both MNOWC and Committee meetings.
12. Distribute copies of minutes to MNOWC & Community Council Women's Representatives promptly (within 5 days) after meetings.
13. Conducts general MNOWC correspondence.
14. Ensure records of all MNOWC correspondence is kept.
15. Ensure the recording of motions for changes at General Meetings and Assemblies.
16. Ensure members are notified of General Meetings.
17. In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, she will chair MNOWC meetings until the election of an alternate Chair.
18. Ensure smooth transition for new MNOWC Secretary.

MNOWC TREASURER (approved July 2020)

In addition to the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Regional Women's Representative role description, this position also includes:

1. Give regular reports to the MNOWC on the financial status of the Council.
2. Keeps financial reports and bank statements on file and ensure a copy is placed in Minute Book.
3. Ensure that accurate accounts of MNOWC receipts and disbursements for MNOWC related expenditures are maintained.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

4. Ensure Regional Women's Representatives have submitted their budgets for any approved funding they receive. Copies of these budgets are placed in Minute Book.
5. Will provide an annual financial report to the Secretary and be a signing authority on the Annual General Meeting treasurer's report with the President or another designated MNOWC councilor. They will present the report at the AGM for the MNOWC.
6. Be a signing officer with the President or an assigned alternative councilor for contracts, documents or any instrument in writing requiring the signature of the MNOWC
7. Ensure smooth transition for new MNOWC Treasurer.

ELDER (approved June 2022)

General Description

The Elder is represented in the white threads of our MNOWC sash. White designates the knowledge, wisdom and maturity carried by our Metis Grandmothers and gifted to the next generations. The Elder is held in high regard and is respected for her wisdom and guidance. The Elder is appointed by the MNOWC after each election. This is a volunteer, non-voting position.

Requirements

1. An MNO woman (according to the MNOWC's definition of woman) citizen normally resident in Ontario.
2. A respected Metis woman, considered to be an Elder in her community, who exemplifies the attributes of wisdom, mentorship and guidance.
3. Has experience working within a consensus environment.
4. Has experience mediating conflict resolution.
5. Has experience creating positive relationships with women of the MNO by interacting and engaging with Metis women at a variety of events.
6. Has experience fostering an environment within the MNOWC that promotes thoughtful and respectful discussion and an exchange of ideas as well as welcoming the participation and expression of all MNO women citizens.

Responsibilities

1. Attend regularly scheduled meetings, committee meetings when requested, trainings, gatherings, etc.
2. Attend MNO AGAs & MNOWC AGMs when funding available.
3. Open and close at the above activities.
4. Bring teachings, history, culture and guidance to the MNOWC.
5. Role model the Code of Conduct at all times.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

6. Intervene as she sees appropriate during all meetings and gatherings of MNOWC during occurrences of stress or conflict, with words of wisdom and comfort in an effort to move forward in a positive way.
7. Support the MNOWC and its President as part of the defined MNOWC Complaint process.
8. Assist the MNOWC in preserving our story.
9. Offers guidance to the MNOWC when discussing Council decisions.

Term

The Elder will be chosen and appointed through a selection process after the MNOWC election. The term is for four years. If the Elder is unable to complete the four-year term, the selection process will be followed to fill the remainder of the term.

Estimated Time Commitment

1. Approximately 10 monthly MNOWC meetings – 2-3 hours/month (20-30 hours annually) including a minimum of one in-person cultural gathering/meeting (2-3 days).
2. Addressing situations as they arise (20 hours annually).
3. Attendance at the AGA and MNOWC AGM (2-5 days).

Selection Process

The process to appoint an Elder will be as follows:

1. A Nominations Committee will be formed at the first meeting following elections and will be comprised of a minimum of three Regional Women's Representatives and the MNOWC President.
2. MNOWC President will initiate a call-out (poster, social media and MNO communications) to all MNO women after the first meeting following the MNOWC elections for Letters of Interest.
3. Letter of Interest will be accompanied by 2 separate letters of support from MNO citizens familiar with the applicant.
4. The call-out will allow 45 days for receipt of Letters of Interest.
5. The Nominations Committee will confirm the eligibility of the applicants' Letters of Interest prior to a meeting of the MNOWC for consideration. The MNOWC President will assist in confirming citizenship.
6. After the closing date and eligibility confirmations, the Nominations Committee will distribute the Letters of Interest to the MNOWC members prior to the next council meeting for consideration. Discussion and voting will take place at a separate meeting which will take place at the end of the submission date. The successful applicant will be contacted by the President and announced by the MNOWC.



MNOWC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised:
26 May 2024

Application Form

1. Name, Address, Phone number, email address, MNO#.
2. Two MNO citizen Letters of Support.
3. Why do you want to be considered for this position?
4. What skills and knowledge and experience would you bring to this position?
5. Please provide your bio (include personal Métis story, involvement in MNO, community cultural events, ceremonies, etc.)
6. Have you received the MNOWC Roles and Responsibilities description for the Elder? If not, please contact the MNOWC President at mnowcpresident@gmail.com.
7. Please send application to Nomination Committee at mnowcnominationcommittee@gmail.com (MNOWC Chair manages this account).

MNOWC LIAISON ROLES (approved July 2020)

The liaison roles support the effectiveness of the MNOWC to be responsive to the issues that are arising in other parts of MNO and increase the ability of the MNOWC to apply a Métis gender-based analysis.

MNO Youth Council (approved July 2020)

MNOWC liaises with the MNOYC through their Women's Representative. The MNOWC Regional Representative where the MNOYC Women's Representative resides will liaise and include her in all normal communication with women's representatives.

MNO Veteran's Council (approved July 2020)

MNOWC liaises with the MNOVC through their Women's Representative. The MNOWC Regional Representative where the MNOVC Women's Representative resides will liaise and include her in all normal communication with women's representatives.

MNO 2SLGBTQ+ Working Group (approved July 2020)

MNOWC liaises with the MNO 2SLGBTQ+ through their Women's Representative. The MNOWC Regional Representative where the MNO 2SLGBTQ+ Women's Representative resides will liaise and include her in all normal communication with women's representatives.

PARTNERSHIP (approved July 2020)

Community Council Women's Representatives (CCWRs) have a key role to play in the effectiveness of the MNOWC. CCWRs inform their Regional Women Representatives (RWRs) about the needs and concerns of women in their Council area.