**OPIRG Toronto Action Group Application 2017-2018**

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) Toronto Action Group! Below you will find more information on what being an Action Group means, what OPIRG can do for you, the application process and the policies surrounding Action Groups.

OPIRG Toronto is a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization based at the University of Toronto. Fundamental to our operation are Action Groups. These Action Groups organize autonomously around various issues of social justice and environmental action. Some examples of past Action Groups include: Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA UofT), Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network (LACSN), No One is Illegal (NOII), and Anakbayan-Toronto.

**What role do working groups play at OPIRG?**

Action Groups are central to the functioning of OPIRG. They consist of a group of volunteers who work on a specific issue pertaining to anti-oppressive, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, social justice and environmental justice issues. The Action Groups are dedicated to enacting change across University of Toronto campuses and/or in the broader community. Action Groups receive funding from OPIRG and access to the OPIRG office. OPIRG Toronto is committed to change at University of Toronto but we ALSO envision larger community interaction. We work to blend student organizing with grassroots activism to ensure broad social and environmental change. Thus, we are encouraging applications for Action Groups with a broad vision, especially those who come from traditionally marginalized communities such as Indigenous, Racialized, Trans and/or Queer and DisAbled communities.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

To be considered for Action Group status, please fill out the application form that is attached below, and sign the Action Group policies form. This form allows the Action Group to concisely outline its goals and the way in which it embodies a particular issue. Once reviewed by the OPIRG Toronto board of directors, the contact person will be notified of the board’s decision. Approved Action Groups must follow the Action Group policies.

If you have any questions about applying to become an Action Group and/or what the benefits of becoming an Action Group are please contact us at 416-978-7770 or opirg.toronto@gmail.com.

We are also in the office located at 563 Spadina Crescent, unit 101 from 11am-5pm from Monday to Thursday. Please feel free to stop by anytime!

**ACTION GROUP INFORMATION**

**WHAT OPIRG CAN DO FOR YOU…**

All Action Groups are allocated a budget for projects and events they wish to organize. These might include a speaker series, movie nights, handbooks, outreach materials, trainings, etc.

In addition to a budget each Action Group also has access to OPIRG Toronto’s many resources:

\* Access to a phone, internet, printing services, mailbox, and photocopier.

\* Assistance with outreach and event planning

\* The OPIRG office can be used as a place to hold meetings for your Action Group.

\* Room booking

\* Information about your events and meetings can be sent out to the OPIRG listserv and promoted through our social media.

\* Space in our newsletter and website to write about your group and/or issues of importance that you would like the UofT community to know about.

\* Anti-oppression trainings, consensus/collective building and facilitation trainings for all Action Groups.

**WHAT OPIRG TORONTO EXPECTS IN RETURN…**

\* The contact person for the Action Group will keep us apprised and up-to-date on meetings, events, etc.

\* Information for the OPIRG Toronto website, including current contact person and links to affiliated organizations.

\* Action Groups are required to put the OPIRG Toronto logo on all posters and other advertisements.

\* The Action Groups will uphold OPIRG Toronto’s mandate at all times and avoid and address any and all racist, sexist, classist, ableist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic and/or any other oppressive language or actions in meetings, at events, and so on.

\* The Action Groups will use the OPIRG Toronto office respectfully and responsibly. This includes cleaning up after yourselves, keeping the office tidy and not removing/taking items from the office without asking permission, and returning borrowed items.

\* The Action Groups will be committed to fostering a cooperative environment that encourages open communication, is welcoming to newcomers, and based on consensus decision-making.

\* Action Group members will attend a mandatory Action Group meeting with the Volunteer and Programming Coordinator, once per term and an orientation meeting held at the beginning of the school year.

\* Every Action Group will present an overview of their work from the previous year at the Annual General Meeting at the end of April or early May of the year.

\* All Action Groups will provide a year-end report that will be published in the annual newsletter, and/or be put on the OPIRG Toronto website.

**ACTION GROUP/PROJECT APPLICATION**

**2017-2018**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Action Group**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Action Group Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Email:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Mode of Contact (optional) : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Second Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Email:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Mode of Contact (optional) : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Has this Action Group been funded by OPIRG Toronto in the past?**

YES NO

**Is this Action Group currently being funded by other sources?**

YES NO

**If Yes, by who?**

**Is this Action Group affiliated with other organizations and/or groups on campus, in the greater community or internationally?** YES NO

**If yes, which one(s)?**

**Please provide a description of your Action Group. Include a) vision and mandate, b) brief introduction to the main organizers, c) if applicable, any past work your group has done.**

**Outline some of the goals of this Action Group and how it relates to OPIRG Toronto. Please also outline two proposed events that your Action Group would like to organize.**

**Please include a draft budget for the year including: a) expenses/revenues for the events you plan on hosting and b) any other sources of funding.**

**How do you visualize OPIRG Toronto supporting your Action Group (beyond funding)?**

**What workshops and/or trainings would your Action Group be interested in attending, or helping OPIRG Toronto to organize? (Eg. We normally hold trainings and workshops such as Anti-Oppression training, consensus decision-making, facilitations, etc).**

**OPIRG Toronto cannot fund groups/organizations that are affiliated with political parties.** **If your Action Group is affiliated with one, in what capacity?**

**OPIRG Toronto supports work that is strictly anti-oppressive, anti-colonial and fights against ongoing displacement and occupation of Indigenous land. We cannot accept Action Groups who go against this mandate. What aspects of your work reflect this mandate?**

**What community is your Action Group’s work based in or around?**

**How does your Action Group connect your work with and/or work in Kensington/Chinatown or other communities in Toronto?**

**Please review the attached Action Group Policy. Does your group understand the policy and agree to abide by the rules set forth in it? (Please attach the Action Group policy form, completed).**

**How many members are currently part of your Action Group and what is your membership policy? Are there restrictions on who can or cannot become a member of your Action Group?**

**OPIRG TORONTO ACTION GROUP POLICIES**

Respecting OPIRG Toronto’s Office and Resources

* The OPIRG Toronto office is an open, public and accessible space. Please keep it tidy. Clean up after yourself and after your Action Group. Additionally, please be considerate of space and resources while others are conducting meetings in the office.
* Please keep the door code private. Please select no more than two (2) people from your Action Group to have access to the office and who will act as point people for the group.
* The Dr. Chun Resource Library is a resource centre that we share with the Centre for Women and Trans People at the University of Toronto. . We ask that all Action Groups respect both OPIRG and the Centre’s policies and space by keeping it clean and keeping their materials in an ordered fashion as people require regular access to the books and cabinets
* OPIRG Toronto is a Scent-free environment. Please do not use scented products while at OPIRG Toronto. Scented products such as hair spray, perfume, and deodorant can trigger reactions such as respiratory distress and headaches. Staff, board, volunteers and visitors are asked to not use these products when in the OPIRG Toronto office.
* Action Groups have access to a phone, internet, printing services, mailbox, and photocopier.

Adhering to OPIRG Toronto’s mandate

* OPIRG Toronto’s mandate can be found here: http://www.opirgtoronto.org/mandate/
* OPIRG Toronto is continuously working on being an inclusive and anti-oppressive space. We ask that you keep this in mind every time you enter the space and do your best to respect this mandate. This includes using respectful language, being aware of power dynamics and no personal attacks.
* We acknowledge that all Action Groups are working towards different goals but as part of OPIRG Toronto we ask that Groups be receptive to feedback in regards to adhering to the mandate.
* The Action Groups will maintain the OPIRG Toronto mandate at all times and avoid and address any and all racist, sexist, classist, ableist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, faith-based discrimination and/or any other oppressive language or actions in meetings, at events, and so on.
* Action Groups commit to working in a manner that is anti-oppressive, anti-colonial and fights against ongoing displacement and occupation of Indigenous land.

OPIRG Toronto’s Accountability to Action Groups

* OPIRG Toronto can provide Board Meeting time, location and agenda to Action Groups upon request.
* Assign a board liaison and meet once a month with Action Group.
* Board liaisons will attend a minimum of one event/meeting per term hosted by the Action Group
* The Board welcomes input from Action Groups for the mandatory anti-oppression training Action Groups must attend as well as requests for any other types of training Action Groups are interested in receiving.

Action Group’s Accountability to OPIRG Toronto

* Action Groups are strongly encouraged to attend one Board meeting per term to give a presentation on their work.
* Each Action Group will meet with the Board liaison assigned to their group once a month. These meetings can be one-on-one or part of your Group’s organizing meetings. This is up to this discretion of the Action Group and Board liaison.
* Your group will provide information for the OPIRG Toronto website, including group description, current contact person and links to affiliated organizations.
* Action Groups are required to put the OPIRG Toronto logo on all posters and other advertisements.
* The Action Groups will be committed to fostering a cooperative environment that encourages open communication and is welcoming to newcomers.
* Action Group’s a required to send one member to a mandatory meeting once per term with the Volunteer and Programming Coordinator and to an orientation meeting held at the beginning of the school year.
* A minimum of one action group member must attend a **mandatory** anti-oppression training which takes place at least once a year.
* Every Action Group are required to submit an overview of their work from the previous year at the Annual General Meeting which takes place at the end of that school year.
* All Action Groups will provide a year-end report that will be published in the annual newsletter and/or be put on the OPIRG Toronto website.
* Action Groups, once approved, are working groups of the **2017-2018** academic year, up until the end of the fiscal year on August 31st, 2018
* All Action Group funds must be used by the end of August 31st, 2018, with receipts for expenses submitted before that date.

Accountability to UofT students

* OPIRG Toronto acknowledges that some of the work that Action Groups do necessitates limiting membership to maintain safer spaces and build community consciousness and resistance but we require all Action Groups to host one open meeting/event during the year. This is to encourage allyship and to allow the University of Toronto student body, our main stakeholders, access to your group’s resources. If your group is opposed to hosting one open meeting/event you can submit a request to the board to opt out of this requirement.
* OPIRG Toronto is nonpartisan (not biased toward or part of any political party). This means that OPIRG Toronto cannot fund groups/organizations that are affiliated with political parties.

Funds

* Action groups will be allocated a minimum funding of $100, unless a lesser amount is requested. Additional funding can be allocated at the Board’s discretion.
* Funds cannot be used for:
  + Action Groups may not be reimbursed for purchases of alcohol, cigarettes or other recreational substances
  + Action Group funds may not be reimbursed or used for donations to other organizations
  + Action Groups may not be reimbursed for private or personal items or expenses not directly associated with Action Group operations; e.g. personal rent, vacation trips, purchase of things such as individual meals not related to an Action Group meeting or event
  + Funds cannot be used to campaign for or support a political party
  + Only costs whereby there is an original invoice or receipt can be reimbursed. Receipts and invoices cannot be handwritten and originals must be provided. In the case of an online receipt or invoice we ask that you forward us the original email. Please note that due to our legal responsibilities as an organization this is non-negotiable.

Board Decisions and Appeals Process

* It is up to the Board’s discretion to select which applicants will be accepted as Action Groups, to redistribute unused funds or allocate more funding, and to take disciplinary actions if your Group’s actions go against OPIRG Toronto’s mandate.
* OPIRG Toronto will contact your group via email with any decisions or rationale which affects your group.
* If your group would like to appeal the decision you may attend the next Board meeting after you have been notified via email to discuss grievances and request remedies which the Board has the discretion to accept or deny.

**Do you/your group understand the Action Group policies and will your group abide by them?**

**Name of either contact person: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Action Group’s Name[[1]](#footnote-1): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. If the Action Group wishes to change the name at a later date, please provide a short written rationale to the OPIRG Toronto Board of Directors explaining the reasons behind this change [↑](#footnote-ref-1)