

Living Skies Regional Council Affirming Action Plan – April 2024

This is a living document and can/will change with the approval of the LSRC Executive.

The Living Skies Regional Affirming Committee is committed to following the Living Skies Regional Council Regional Affirming Statement, and will encourage the Region to be open to the Spirit as it lives into its Affirming commitment; the committee will use an anti-oppressive and intercultural lens in its work.

By Affirming, the Regional Council means:

Actively advocating for justice in issues of sexual orientation, gender and gender identity in particular, as well as: life experiences, disabilities, ethnicities, race, cultures, ages, geographic locations, economic circumstances, mental and physical health, and those we have yet to discern, both within the church and ministries of our Region, and in the wider community.

Committee members will be a diverse group with a minimum of 4 members, with the power to work with ad hoc groups on specific tasks. Members do not need to be part of an Affirming ministry. Term: three years, renewable once. Reports to the Living Skies Regional Council Executive.

Specific responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

For the committee

- Hold an in-person Regional Affirming Committee Gathering at a minimum of once per year and self-determine the number of on-line meetings as required.
- Implement and/ or continue to develop and update the Affirming Action Plan so that it is a living and relevant plan.
- Prepare an annual budget for the Regional Affirming Committee (to include the annual \$1000 fee for Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble and costs for one representative to attend the AUSE annual conference.)

Relationship with Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble

- Continue to work closely with Affirm United / S'affirmer Ensemble (AUSE) and follow their Summary Document for Regional Councils.
- Send a representative to the yearly AUSE annual conference.

- Promote the work of Affirm United/S' Affirmer Ensemble through education and engagement, by encouraging ministries to become Affirming Ministries, and by offering support to those that are. This includes promoting equal access to all rites and sacraments.

Support, connection, and education

- Encourage the creation of a network of the already-Affirming communities of faith and people, or those in discernment, for mutual support and sharing of resources. As one expression of this, connect people with public, intentional, and explicit online Affirming educational workshops within the Living Skies Regional Council.
- Develop resources and spaces to help governance, ministries, and individuals use an Affirming lens, and to celebrate the importance of Affirming commitments and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- Bear in mind that this Regional Council ministers on Indigenous lands, and shares responsibility for living out the Apologies and the TRC Calls to Action, and ensure that these responsibilities are reflected in our work. This includes but is not limited to ongoing work alongside Two Spirit communities and people.
- When it is necessary to speak truth to power (governments, police, and other institutions), create advocacy channels for the members of the Regional Council to participate in addressing major concerns related to a policy or incident.

Work with the Regional Council's structures and policies

- Review all existing and new policies and major Regional Council decisions through an Affirming lens, including inclusive language policies.
- Work with all Regional Council governing bodies to bring an Affirming approach to their work.
- Encourage the Regional Council and ministries within its bounds to remove barriers to participation in the life and work of Living Skies Regional Council.
- With the relevant planning committees, help ensure that major in-person and online meetings and gatherings of and within the Regional Council follow best practices for the full and safe participation of all the communities named in the Affirming Statement.
- Be a resource to the Region and its ministries for work toward accessible and fully inclusive properties, facilities, resources, and systems.