



OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY
Policy Statement
Part I – Administrative Services



Subject:

OYA Employee Resource Groups

Section – Policy Number:

D: Personnel Management – 1.7

Supersedes:

None

Effective Date:

10/29/2021

Date of Last

Review/Revision:

None

**Related
Standards
and
References:**

- [OYA policy](#): 0-2.1 Professional Standards
- I-D-3.11 Political Activity


**Related
Procedures:**

- None

Policy Owner:

Diversity Equity and Inclusion
Manager

Approved:



Joseph O'Leary, Director

I. PURPOSE:

This policy delineates how OYA will develop and manage its Employee Resource Groups.

II. POLICY DEFINITIONS:

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Employee-led and self-directed voluntary groups for employees from underserved communities. These groups offer a chance for colleagues of a shared identity to collaborate across departments to work on professional development, develop a network of agency support, and raise awareness of any organizational issues for employees from each historically underserved community.

III. POLICY:

This policy applies to all OYA staff including full-time employees, part-time employees, employees on trial service, volunteers, interns, and contractors.

As keepers of the public trust, all OYA staff have a responsibility to comply with state and agency policies, administrative rule, and state and federal law. OYA takes this responsibility seriously and failure to fulfill this responsibility is not treated lightly. Staff who fail to comply with state or agency policy, administrative rule, or state and federal law may face progressive discipline, up to and including dismissal from state service.

Having diversity, equity, and inclusion as a priority is vital for OYA to meet its mission and ensure all staff have a voice in how agency initiatives are implemented. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are an integral component of OYA's commitment to drive change through diversity, equity, and inclusion.

ERGs allow OYA to capitalize on the extraordinary value of its historically underserved staff in a more meaningful way. Best practice indicates that when ERGs are established, staff become more engaged in identifying ways to leverage diversity and increase inclusion. ERGs also create environments where staff from historically underrepresented groups across all agency departments have an opportunity to continually collaborate with OYA executive team members, get more support, and have the opportunity for career and professional development.

OYA will establish ERGs for the following marginalized groups: women, veterans, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, and race/ethnicity groups. The racial and ethnic demographic breakdown includes:

- a) Black, African, African-American;
- b) Multiracial;
- c) Native American, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, American Indian, Alaska Native;
- d) Hispanic/Latino/a/x; and
- e) Asian and Pacific Islander.

IV. GENERAL STANDARDS:

A. Employee Resource Groups

- 1. Membership and ERG participation is voluntary. Any OYA staff person may join an ERG.
- 2. Each ERG must have a sponsor who is an OYA executive team member. The executive sponsor must commit to providing strategic guidance and serving as a liaison to other agency leadership, and the Human Resources Office.
- 3. Each ERG must have a charter that is approved by the OYA Executive Team in partnership with the DEI steering committee. The charter must document how the ERG will promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 4. Members of an ERG are responsible for selecting a chair to serve no more than a 24-month term. The chair is responsible for facilitating the below actions.
 - a) The determination of how the group will be organized.
 - b) The completion of an application process that includes having a formal charter, member roles, goals, and rules which establishes a sustainable structure and its relevance to the business of the agency. ERG charters must be reapproved yearly.

- c) The development of a membership recruitment strategy.
 - d) Setting meetings and activities including frequency, location, purpose, and content.
 - e) Developing and maintaining a contact list for members.
 - f) Facilitating communication among members.
- 5. ERGs that exceed 25 members may have co-chairs to share leadership duties and responsibilities.
 - 6. ERGs must meet at least once every calendar quarter.
 - 7. ERG chairs are permitted to take no more than eight hours a month of paid time to coordinate and schedule ERG meetings and activities. This time is in addition to the permitted two hours a month for ERG meeting time. This time must be preapproved by the chair's direct supervisor to ensure adequate staff coverage.
 - 8. ERGs may not enroll OYA interns or volunteers to its membership.
 - 9. ERGs must promote diversity, equity, and inclusion by –
 - a) Serving as a resource to OYA in their focus area when needed;
 - b) Sharing knowledge, raising cultural awareness, and acting as a bridge between cultural issues to improve OYA's cultural sensitivity by funneling knowledge upward directly to the executive sponsor;
 - c) Acting as a staff support system by providing education, personal growth, information, and idea sharing among ERG members and in the workplace;
 - d) Upon request, helping Human Resources and hiring managers with staff recruitment and retention efforts by speaking directly to the experiences of the group's identity and what is needed to create a welcoming and inclusive environment;
 - e) Supporting managerial effectiveness and leadership development by serving as a communication bridge between OYA leadership and the historically underserved;
 - f) Bringing new ideas to leadership; and
 - h) Sharing best practices, information, and knowledge with other ERGs.

- B. To be recognized by the OYA executive team, DEI strategic manager, and DEI steering committee, each ERG must:
1. Complete an application process;
 2. Agree to coordinate with the agency's efforts to promote diversity issues including, but not limited to, collaborating with the DEI strategic manager and DEI steering committee;
 3. Allow any OYA staff to participate in ERG meetings and activities, if they are supportive and an ally to the identity, mission, and vision of the group; and
 4. Submit an annual report to the DEI strategic manager by January 2 of every year.
 5. Annual reports must consist of at least the following:
 - a) Number of members year over year (Y/Y);
 - b) Number of meetings held throughout the year with a summary of each meeting and how the meetings support the agency's values and DEI initiative;
 - c) Number of events and activities and how the events and activities support the agency's values and DEI initiative; and
 - d) End of the year ERG member engagement survey results.
- C. The ERG chair must report any ERG participant who violates ERG rules, or demonstrates disruptive, disrespectful, or unprofessional behavior to the executive sponsor and participant's supervisor.
- D. ERG events and activities may be open to community members who are affiliated with OYA, including contractors, employees from other state agencies, and youth families.
- E. Executive sponsors and the DEI strategic manager must provide support to ERGs, including:
1. Providing technical assistance to officially recognized ERGs;
 2. Reviewing the annual report submitted by each ERG; and
 3. Identifying any deficiencies that preclude recertification for the following year.
- F. The OYA executive team may discontinue an ERG by describing in writing the reason(s) for ending the group's activities.
1. The ERG chair may accept the decision, or may request a meeting to discuss the matter further.

2. Reasons for discontinuation may include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Actions or conduct that reflect negatively on OYA;
 - b) Lack of an executive sponsor or executive committee structure;
 - c) Low membership (less than three) or inactivity for a prolonged period (six months or longer without meeting);
 - d) Discrimination against or exclusion of interested members;
 - e) Inability to demonstrate sufficient achievement of ERG group goals and how they align with OYA's mission and vision; or
 - f) Inability or unwillingness to comply with the ERG policy requirements.
3. The executive sponsor must notify by email each member of the discontinued ERG of the reasons for discontinuation.

G. Official ERG meetings and activities sanctioned by OYA must be considered paid work time. Supervisors are encouraged to include participation in an ERG as part of the staff person's employee development plan.

1. Full time and part-time employees must be allowed to use up to two hours per month of paid work time to attend ERG meetings and participate in ERG activities. This time may not be banked. ERG meeting hours must not be accrued.
2. Employees must request prior approval from their manager to attend ERG meetings and activities to allow managers time to ensure adequate staff coverage.
3. GLC staff may choose one ERG to participate in at a time to ensure adequate unit staff coverage.
4. Managers or agency point persons must work with volunteers, interns, and contractors interested in participating in ERGs to identify an appropriate way to participate in ERG activities, while meeting their employment and contract obligations.

H. Activity limits

1. State law and OYA policy restrict public employees from engaging in certain political activities while on the job during working hours (see OYA policy I-D-3.11 Political Activity).
2. Federal and state law prohibits government from the establishment of religion. Governments must pursue a course of neutrality,

favoring neither one religion over another nor religion generally to non-religion.

- a) ERGs may not be organized to advance or oppose any specific religion, religious viewpoint, or belief; or engage in religious or worship activity.
 - b) This section must not be interpreted to interfere with any individual staff right or religious accommodation that is permissible by law and policy.
3. ERGs may not be organized solely for general interest, recreation, sports, or hobby purposes (e.g., chess club, softball team); however, an ERG may include such activities if it can demonstrate how it relates to its larger mission and purpose.

V. LOCAL OPERATING PROTOCOL REQUIRED: NO