

Rule 3-75

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

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§ 3-75-010 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define authority, responsibility, accountability, and procedures for the formation and operations of county Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Multnomah County recognizes that ERGs are successful mechanisms for the county to improve the leadership development process as well as to help ensure alignment between the county's business and diversity strategies. It is the County's expectation that participation is supported by managers to the greatest extent possible.

§ 3-75-020 Overview

ERGs are county-sponsored, employee-run groups that promote diversity values and strategic efforts of the county while promoting personal and professional growth for county employees with shared lived experience around marginalized identities and improving retention by providing a stronger sense of community within the county.

§ 3-75-030 AUTHORITY

The Multnomah County Chief Diversity and Equity Officer or their designee in the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) has direct management, oversight authority, and responsibility for the policies, rules, and procedures for all county-sponsored ERGs.

§ 3-75-040 THE APPROVAL PROCESS

- A. The Chief Diversity and Equity Officer or their designee oversees both the initial and the annual approval process of ERGs. This process includes:
 - (1) Completion of charter application (available from ODE) filed with the ODE.
- B. ERG and charter approval will be based on an assessment of:
 - (1) Stated mission and values having a clear and direct connection to the County's mission and values; and
 - (2) A work plan that describes activities listed in Multnomah County Personnel Rule (MCPR) § 3-75-060.

- C. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and will be submitted to the County Chair by the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer, with recommendation for approval or denial in consultation with the ERG Leadership Team.

§ 3-75-050 Annual Review and Approval

- A. The ODE will conduct an annual review of all ERGs to ensure that the goals and objectives of each ERG continue to contribute to the county's mission, core values, and organizational outcomes.
- B. The Office of Diversity and Equity will coordinate an annual retreat of ERG Leadership teams with the purpose of:
 - (1) Developing a summary of the previous year's accomplishments; and
 - (2) Developing a work plan for the coming year.
- C. The Chief Diversity and Equity Officer or their designee will publish on ODE's website and distribute to County employees the summary of accomplishments at the end of the fiscal year.

§ 3-75-060 ERG FORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

- A. Groups must meet an identified business purpose of Multnomah County and be in alignment with the values, business purpose, policies, and mission of the county.
- B. Groups are organized by employees who support the goals of the ERG and wish to participate in its activities.
- C. Membership may be defined, but meetings must be open to any county employee who wishes to attend.
- D. ERGs must not make proposals to management involving employment terms and conditions which would appear to fall within the scope of bargaining, which management then could accept or reject, or to which management could make a counterproposal. ERGs can provide brainstorming or information related to issues of concern.
- E. ERG activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Contributing to employees' professional development;
 - (2) Identifying workforce engagement barriers and solutions;
 - (3) Helping the county with strategic planning, recruitment, employee development, and diversity awareness;
 - (4) Hosting events that give members and employees the opportunity to network and develop skills, in such areas as career development, business education, investment strategies, resume writing, or stress management;
 - (5) Sponsoring events, seminars and conferences (with Chief Diversity and Equity Officer's or their designee's approval);

- (6) Taking on special initiatives and projects; and
 - (7) Celebrating cultural, educational, and other special events.
- F. ERGs must operate within the constraints of Multnomah County policies and procedures.
- (1) Groups are specifically forbidden to engage in political activity as described in MCPR § 3-10-020.
 - (2) Groups must conduct discussions and activities within the Multnomah County rules for workplace conduct.
 - (3) Groups must comply with MCPR 3-35, Use of Information Technology.
 - (4) Groups may not charge membership dues.
- G. Members of ERGs do not represent or speak for Multnomah County, nor do they represent policies or positions of Multnomah County.
- H. ERGs must have at least one member of their leadership attend the ERG Leadership meeting with the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer held on a quarterly basis.
- I. All Employee Resource Group time requires supervisor approval, and as long as it does not interfere with their regular work for the County.
- (1) Employees/general membership may spend a maximum of six (6) hours per month on paid release time for ERG business. This applies to meetings, travel to and from meetings, planning, leadership activities, writing newsletters, group retreats, work required between meetings, etc.
 - (2) Countywide workgroups and attendance at countywide sponsored events are not included in time allotted for ERG participation.
 - (3) Leadership positions may spend a maximum of eight (8) hours total per month on paid release time for ERG business. These positions, including treasurers, secretaries, communications, and other elected positions, must be reflected in ERG bylaws approved by the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer.
 - (4) Co-chairs of an ERG may spend a maximum of twelve (12) hours total per month on paid release time for ERG business.
 - (5) ERG members, leadership positions and co-chairs shall track all hours spent on ERG activity as outlined above.
 - (6) ERG members shall make every reasonable attempt to provide fifteen (15) calendar days notice of ERG participation to their manager or supervisor for approval.
 - (7) ERG participation may be denied or rescinded due to business needs or performance issues. To be considered in rescinding ERG involvement for performance issues, the employee must have been given prior notice and opportunity to correct a performance issue.

(8) Denial and recensions of ERG participation will be referred to the Department Director and shall be at the Director's sole discretion. Decisions will be shared, but not overturned by, the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer

- J. ERGs are asked to adhere to county values of sustainability by holding meetings in locations that require the least amount of travel by members.

§3-75-070 Communication

- A. Groups may use county communication systems (interoffice mail, email, telephone, etc.) pertaining to ERG business to notify members of meetings, events, meeting actions, or minutes per MCPR 3-35-050.
- B. ERGs wishing to use county communication systems for all-employee emails or mailings must have prior approval from the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer or their designee.

§3-75-080 Expenditures and Reimbursements

- A. The ODE is responsible for tracking the budgets and approving expenditures and payment for all ERGs and will maintain a line item in the program budget for ERG use.
- B. Groups may expend their budget according to the Administrative Guidelines for Miscellaneous Expense Reimbursement (FIN-4).
- C. Groups are responsible for ensuring that expenditures are within the allowable guidelines.
- D. When requesting purchases or reimbursements:
 - (1) ERGs must submit the request with complete details to ODE via email or interoffice mail;
 - (2) Requests will be forwarded to the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer for approval; and
 - (3) Status of the request and payment options, consistent with procurement rules, will be communicated to the requesting ERG within thirty (30) days following receipt of the request by the Chief Diversity and Equity Officer.