



**OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY**  
**Policy Statement**  
**Part I – Administrative Services**



*Subject:*

**OYA Employee Resource Groups**

*Section – Policy Number:*

**D: Personnel Management – 1.7**

*Supersedes:*

**I-D-1.7 (10/21)**

*Effective Date:*

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*Date of Last*

*Review/Revision:*

**None**

**Related Standards and References:**

- [OYA policy](#): 0-2.1 Professional Standards  
0-3.0 Harassment-free Workplace

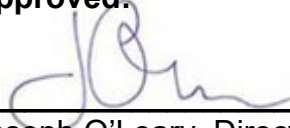
**Related Procedures:**

- 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 to support and include staff from marginalized and underrepresented groups across all agency departments. ERGs promote an inclusive environment where staff from marginalized and underrepresented groups across all agency departments have more equitable access to career and professional development; opportunities to participate in decision-making; and benefit from supportive affinity and allyship spaces.

**III. POLICY:**

Having diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as a priority is vital for OYA to meet its mission and ensure all staff are valued and supported and have equitable access to professional development opportunities. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are an integral component of OYA's commitment to drive change through diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The achievement of the agency's mission is dependent on the diverse skills, experiences, and backgrounds that our employees bring to the agency. ERGs by design create a structure where employees from marginalized groups can communicate with agency leadership and decision-makers by giving each group a united voice influencing agency decisions, policies, processes, and outcomes.

OYA may establish ERGs for the following marginalized groups: women, veterans, active service members, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities (seen and unseen), people with neurodiverse abilities, immigrants and refugees, DEI allies, and specific linguistic, racial/ethnic 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, Latine/x/a/o, Mexican, Chicano;
- E. Asian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander;
- F. Arab American, Arab, Middle Eastern;
- G. Leadership of color; and
- H. Allyship groups with the express purpose to uplift people from marginalized groups and develop practical ways to implement DEI within their members' spheres of influence.

#### **IV. GENERAL STANDARDS:**

##### **A. Employee Resource Group Standards**

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, agency leadership team member, or sponsor/designee approved by the executive team. The sponsor/designee must commit to providing ongoing strategic guidance and serve as a liaison to other agency leadership.
3. Each ERG must have a charter that is approved by the OYA Executive Team in partnership with the DEI committee. The charter must document how the ERG will promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and support its members.
4. Members of an ERG are responsible for selecting a chair to serve no more than a 12-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 reviewed and reapproved prior to changes of the formal charter.
  - c) The development of a membership recruitment and support strategy.

- d) Develop or recommit to a group agreements annually. Review this agreement with all new members.
  - e) Setting meetings and activities including frequency, location, purpose, and content.
  - f) Developing and maintaining a contact list for members.
  - g) Facilitating communication among members and opportunities for participation and community building agencywide.
5. ERGs that exceed 10 members may have co-chairs to share leadership duties and responsibilities.
  6. ERGs must meet at least once every calendar quarter. Meetings may take place online and in person.
  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. ERG member enrollment is for OYA employees.

OYA interns, volunteers, and contractors may attend ERG activities during their own time with prior approval from their OYA manager or supervisor. This serves to ensure there is no conflict of interest and employment and contract obligations are met.
  9. ERGs may have scheduled affinity meetings (i.e., specific meetings to hold space for members of the identity or community represented). There must be at least two meetings per year open to allies (i.e., people who support but do not share the marginalized identity represented by the ERG).
  10. ERGs must promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the ways listed below.
    - a) Fostering a supportive ERG community: Acting as an inclusive support system by creating opportunities for ERG members to share experiences, discuss strengths and access barriers, share information and ideas in the workplace.
    - b) Creating opportunities for inclusion and participation in ERG activities. OYA staff represent communities across Oregon, different departments, and 24/7 work shifts. Efforts must be made to promote access and involvement.

- c) Being heard at OYA: Giving voice to topics and issues relevant to the ERG's focus area. The ERG is to share resources, raise awareness, and advocate to improve opportunities for access and inclusion.
- d) Working with Human Resources Office: ERGs may help Human Resources and hiring managers with staff recruitment and retention efforts by providing feedback or ideas to address inequities. ERGs may approach HR to partner and develop initiatives or address topics relevant to the ERG's work and experiences at OYA. Any ERG partnership with HR is based on mutual agreement and shared desire to promote engagement with marginalized communities through meaningful outreach and recruitment efforts.
- e) Working with leadership: ERGs may bring new ideas, feedback, and issues/barriers to leadership to create and sustain a more supportive, accessible, and inclusive workplace.
- f) Fostering ERG partnerships: Sharing best practices, information, and knowledge with other ERGs to support collaboration and build community.

## B. OYA Leadership Responsibilities

OYA executive team and their designees must work collaboratively and provide support to ERGs through their efforts, including the actions listed below.

1. Administrative and strategic support
  - a) Provide technical assistance to support development of ERGs and to officially recognized ERGs;
  - b) Review the annual report submitted by each ERG; and
  - c) Identify any deficiencies that preclude recertification for the following year.
2. Professional development
  - a) Provide opportunities for ERG members to build leadership and professional development skills; and
  - b) Support and assist coordinating participation in ERG-relevant forums and events.
3. Meaningful collaboration and engagement

- a) Attend at least two ERG events or meetings during a 12-month period; and
- b) Share updates and seek feedback on policy, program, and service changes relevant to the ERG's focus area.

C. ERG Recognition Standards

To be recognized by the OYA executive team, DEI strategic manager, and DEI 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 committee;
- 3. Allow any OYA staff to participate in non-affinity ERG meetings and activities, who is 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. The executive team sponsor or designee must collaborate in the development and submittal of the report.
- 5. Annual reports must consist of at least the following:
  - a) Number of meetings/events held throughout the year and a summary of each meeting/event including how the meetings/events support the agency's values and DEI initiative; and
  - b) End of the year ERG member engagement survey results.

D. To maintain a safer space for ERG members and allies, the ERG chair or co-chair must address violations of OYA policy 0-3.0 Harassment-free Workplace that occur during meetings or events hosted by the ERG and document the event. At the discretion of the ERG members and chair, Human Resources or the executive sponsor/designee may be notified, or a complaint may be filed to ensure safer meeting spaces and prevent further harm to participants.

- 1. Management staff are expected to be proactive in creating and maintaining a discrimination- and harassment-free workplace and must exercise appropriate measures to prevent and correct any discriminatory or harassing actions they know or should know about (see OYA policy 0-3.0 Harassment-free Workplace).
- 2. Violations of OYA policy 0-3.0 Harassment-free Workplace during ERG meetings may be grounds to restrict or remove the offending individual(s) from ERG participation.

- E. ERG events and activities may be open to community members who are affiliated with OYA (e.g., employees from other state agencies, youth, youth families) with approval from the ERG executive sponsor or designee.
- 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) Lack of engagement or involvement: ERGs cannot sustain community with inactivity for a prolonged period (six months or longer without a meeting or event);
    - 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.
- G. Official ERG meetings and activities sanctioned by OYA must be considered paid work time for OYA employees. This does not apply to interns, volunteers, contractors, or members of the public.
  - 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. Allotted ERG participation time 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.
- H. Activity limits
  - 1. 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.
2. 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**