

DEEP Affinity Group Guidelines

Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland (DEEP) was developed by City employees for City employees as a way to enhance the City work experience through networking, resource, and professional development and support. The mission of DEEP is to assist the City of Portland in creating and enhancing a work environment that is inclusive and supportive of the City's diverse workforce. DEEP is committed to working to support the City of Portland's interest in attracting, developing, and sustaining a diverse workforce committed to quality public service.

DEEP will provide the City with assistance in a variety of ways, including:

- Mentoring
- Resources
- Assistance with diversity events
- Peer support on an individual or affinity group basis
- Interview panel resources
- Recruitment and retention strategies

Affinity Group Overview

Affinity groups are voluntary, employee-driven groups that are organized around a particular shared interest or dimension. DEEP envisions that affinity groups will be organized around the protected classes set forth in non-discrimination laws such as race, disability, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. However, DEEP will consider approving an Affinity Group that is organized around other historical barriers to an equitable and inclusive work environment.

Each affinity group must be open to any and all employees within the City of Portland. In addition, Affinity Groups may choose to allow retired City employees as well as employees from Portland Development Commission (PDC) to participate. In order to participate in an Affinity Group that has elected to allow the participation of retired and/or PDC employees, a retired and/or PDC employee must agree to abide by all City rules and policies relating to participation in Affinity Groups, including without limitation those set forth in these Guidelines and in HR Administrative Rule 2.02.

Each affinity group must conduct its discussion and activities in a manner that complies with City of Portland and Bureau rules regarding workplace conduct. For example, City and Bureau rules require employees to conduct themselves in a professional fashion. In addition, Human Resources Administrative Rule 2.02 sets the expectation that employees are to interact with one another in a respectful manner, and prohibits conduct that is based on an employee's race, religion, gender, marital status, family status, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, or veteran status. Conduct that is contrary to Rule 2.02, or undermines the spirit or intent of Rule 2.02 will be grounds for dismantling or not approving an affinity group.

The affinity groups are not intended to create a public forum or platform. The affinity groups are not intended to establish or promote any political or social agenda. Rather, they are designed to facilitate employee professional development, cultural connections, diversity and understanding within the City's workforce.

State law prohibits public employees from engaging in political activity while on the job during working hours. As a result, an affinity group designed around political activity, including, but not limited to, the topic of political candidacy or political measures (whether for or against) will not be approved. In addition, no affinity group may engage in political activity, including but not limited to seeking to advance a political position or candidate, or to convince other employees to adopt or adhere to a particular political position or viewpoint.

State and federal law prohibits government (such as the City) from the establishment of religion. Governments must pursue a course of neutrality, favoring neither one religion over another nor religion generally to non-religion. As a result, no affinity group may be organized for the purpose of advancing or opposing any religion or religious viewpoint nor may affinity groups engage in religious or worship activity.

In order to become a recognized affinity group within the City of Portland, each proposed group must submit an application to the DEEP Executive Committee. The Executive Committee approves Affinity Groups for a renewable three-year term, provided the group remains active and within the guidelines.

The Executive Committee retains the right to suspend or terminate its recognition of an affinity group at any time for any reason. Rules and processes relating to affinity groups may be revised at any time.

Procedures for starting a new affinity group within the City of Portland

A completed application (attached), which includes the following information, should be submitted to the Executive Committee of DEEP:

- Names and bureaus of at least five individual members supporting and joining the group
- A mission statement, group policy, and a list of goals
- Two proposed activities of the group
- Names and organizations of two individuals designated as Co-Chairs of the group and other leadership the group might choose
- Recruit and obtain a signature from an Executive Committee Advisor to help guide the development of the group.
- Commitments to have at least one of the co-chairs participate in DEEP's quarterly meetings.
- Present a proposed budget on forms provided.

Affinity Group Structure

Affinity groups need formal roles to ensure that their meetings are structured and efficient. Those roles include the co-chairs, who coordinate the activities of the group; a secretary or recorder, who records the output of meetings such as actions items and recommendations; and a reporter, who serves as a liaison to other affinity groups and the Executive Committee.

Affinity Group Meetings and Activities:

- Each affinity group should meet at least every two months.
- It is suggested that decisions be made by consensus.
- A quorum is attained when at least two thirds of the current affinity group members are present.
- Notes should be taken at every affinity group meeting.
- The note taker is expected to reproduce and distribute the notes in a timely fashion, but no later than 10 days before their next meeting.
- In addition, a copy of the notes for each affinity group meeting will be kept on permanent file with the Executive Committee.
- At least one of the affinity group co-chairs should attend the quarterly Executive Committee meetings, and provide a report on the status of the affinity group.
- Affinity Groups must submit any and all artwork, documents, advertisements, citywide emails, flyers, etc. advertising affinity group activities to the DEEP Executive Committee for review before posting.
- Any and all of said submissions should contain the term, “[name of affinity group] is an approved affiliation of Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland (DEEP).”

Affinity Group Objectives

The affinity groups should share numerous objectives:

- To provide a network of employees to promote professional development and advancement; to foster mentor relationships
- To encourage all employees to value their respective groups' uniqueness and contribution to the City
- To discourage stereotyping
- To promote a positive work environment
- To bring to the attention of top management the concerns of their respective groups
- To work with other entities to address broader organizational and community concerns.

DEEP Executive Committee

Members of the DEEP Executive Committee are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of, the Mayor, upon recommendation from the Executive Committee. The Mayor can recommend City employees to serve on the Executive Committee if he or she so chooses. The Mayor has the authority to remove members of the DEEP executive committee at will and without cause.