

# Employee Resource Groups

## PURPOSE

The City of San Jose is committed to supporting workforce equity by fostering the development of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), also known as Affinity Groups. The purpose of this policy is to define the authority, responsibility, accountability, and procedures for the formation and operations of City of San Jose Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).

## SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to all City Officers, employees (full and part-time), unpaid interns, and volunteers who participate in City ERGs. Participation in an ERG is subject to supervisory approval.

## DEFINITIONS

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs or Groups) is an employer-recognized, employee-led group of employees who share a common interest in diversity such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, status as an individual with a disability, sexual orientation/gender identity, age, or are allies of that group. ERGs promote the City's equity and diversity values and efforts by providing a stronger sense of community within the City and by raising cultural awareness.

## GENERAL POLICY

ERGs are committed to offering a sense of community and belonging to all City employees, helping to introduce new and current employees to the organizational culture, and providing mentoring and networking opportunities.

### Formation

1. ERGs must be in alignment with the values, business purpose, policies and mission of the City;
2. The groups must be organized by employees who support the goals of the ERG and wish to participate in its activities.
3. To propose an ERG, the employee(s) must submit the ERG Application to the Director of Human Resources with all completed sections. If approved, ERG will receive an approval letter.
4. An annual work plan must be established within 30 business days of formation and submitted to Human Resources for review and approval containing the following information:
  - a. The group name and the group's goals and objectives for the coming year
  - b. The expected business value added by the group in the coming year

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5. The ERG shall have the Leadership structure described below, which will function as the organizing body for the ERG. The ERG Leadership Team will be responsible for the development of the Annual Work Plan. The ERG Leadership Team is also responsible for the development of the roles and responsibilities of the ERG Leadership Team beyond what is required in this policy.
  - a. The ERG must maintain at least five active participants (including those in the ERG Leadership Team)
  - b. Set meetings and activities including frequency, location, purpose, and content
  - c. Submit the Annual Report to the Human Resources Department

### Structure

An ERG Leadership Team is comprised of a Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary. These roles are defined in general terms as:

Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads in driving activities to meet goals</li> <li>• Delegates roles of the ERG</li> <li>• Serves an advisory function when term is over</li> </ul>
Co-Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succeeds the Chair</li> <li>• Supports the Chair in leading the group</li> <li>• Monitors the budget for scheduled events/activities (if any)</li> </ul>
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records meeting attendance</li> <li>• Records meeting minutes</li> <li>• Facilitates ERG publicity</li> </ul>

Prior to assuming an ERG Leadership role, the employee must obtain supervisory approval.

### Participation

Participation in an ERG is voluntary and open to all City Officers, employees, unpaid interns, and volunteers. Criteria for participation includes:

Employee has obtained supervisory approval on the ERG Participation Form, including those employees in part-time classifications, temporary classifications, unpaid interns, volunteers, or employees in their initial probationary period.

- a. The Participation Form must be re-evaluated and renewed annually. The form should be maintained by the employee, the employee's supervisor and the ERG Secretary.
- b. When requesting to participate in an ERG activity on work time, employees shall request prior approval from their manager/supervisor in order to allow managers sufficient time for adequate coverage. Participation shall not directly or indirectly cause overtime pay for an employee.
- c. With prior supervisory approval, ERG participants may spend up to 1.5 hours per month on City time working on ERG business, and employees in ERG

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Leadership Team positions may spend up to 3 hours per month on City time working on ERG business, as long as it does not interfere with the regular work of employees and it must not result in overtime. Allotted hours include commute times.

- d. It is up to the ERG leadership to define within the ERG what constitutes a violation of any group agreements for any of the ERG participants. The goal of this is to allow ERGs to have a structured way to work out any conflicts among its members. The ERG Leadership may request consultation from the Department of Human Resources as necessary or desired.

### Manager/Supervisor Approval

Managers and/or supervisors are encouraged to work with employees who are interested in participating in an ERG group or activity by allowing employees to adjust their schedules by flexing their time, while ensuring the employee is able to meet the expectations of their position.

- a. ERG participation is subject to manager/supervisor approval. ERG participation will not be approved if the operational needs of the department will be impacted and/or if ERG attendance would result in any overtime for the employee.
- b. If the employee's request is denied, the manager/supervisor shall provide a reason to the employee, which includes the department operational needs that preclude the employee's participation.
- c. The employee and/or manager/supervisor may request consultation with the Department of Human Resources.
- d. Managers/Supervisors shall review an employee's ERG Participation Form upon the employee's initial request to participate in the ERG and at least once annually thereafter.

### The Role of the Human Resources Department

1. Provide consultation to employees seeking to start an ERG
2. Provide feedback and approve proposals to form new ERGs
3. Review annual reporting submitted by each ERG
4. Identify any deficiencies that preclude recertification of an ERG for each following year after approved formation
5. Provide consultation to departments and/or divisions regarding employee participation in ERGs as needed
6. Coordinate and convene ERG Leadership Teams as needed
7. The Director of Human Resources will establish Review Committee comprised of the Office of Employee Relations and divisions within Human Resources to review and make recommendations for approving ERGs.

### Discontinuation of an ERG or an Individual's ERG participation

An ERG or an employee's participation in an ERG may be discontinued if any of the following occur:

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1. There are substantiated violations of any of the City's policies, as determined by the Office of Employee Relations
2. Low participation (less than 5) or inactivity for more than six (6) months
3. Inability to demonstrate sufficient progress on the Annual Work Plan
4. Inability or unwillingness to comply with the requirements of this policy
5. Any other reason identified by the Department of Human Resources, in consultation with the Review Committee

Employees may send an email to the designated Chair and/or Co-Chair if they desire to discontinue their participation in an ERG.

### Activities

ERG activities may include the following:

1. Identifying workforce engagement barriers and solutions;
2. Helping the City with diversity awareness;
3. Hosting events that give ERG participants and employees opportunities to network, develop skills and further personal and professional growth;
4. Sponsoring events, seminars, and conferences (with City Manager or designee approval);
5. Celebrating cultural, educational, and other special events;
6. ERG activities that are strictly social must be scheduled during non-work time.

### Guidelines

1. ERGs must not make discuss or deal with matters involving terms and conditions of employment which would fall within the scope of employee bargaining.
2. May not engage in political activity;
3. May not form or evolve for the purpose of opposing other ERGs;
4. May not seek remedies for individual employee matters;
5. Discussions and activities must be in compliance with City Administrative policies;
6. City funds may not be used for any activity conducted by the ERG. Any activity conducted by the ERG must be funded by the ERG;
7. Participants of ERG may not represent themselves in a manner that would suggest that they speak for the City or represent the policies or positions of the City;
8. With prior supervisory approval, ERG participants may spend up to 1.5 hours per month on City time working on ERG business, and employees in ERG Leadership Team positions may spend up to 3 hours per month on City time working on ERG business, as long as it does not interfere with the regular work of employees and it must not result in overtime. Allotted hours include commute times. The supervisor retains the authority to curtail a member's activity in an ERG if their activity is shown to have a deleterious effect on the member's performance of their normal City duties;
9. ERGs may use City communication systems for ERG business to notify participants of meetings, events, meeting actions, or distribute minutes;
10. ERGs may use City conference rooms for the purpose of regular meetings with appropriate coordination;

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11. Citywide communications must have approval from the City Manager or designee; and
12. The Chair/Co-Chair must attend the ERG Leadership meeting with the Department of Human Resources as needed.

### Approval Process

1. Applications to form an ERG will be submitted to the Director of Human Resources. The Review Committee will review and make a recommendation to the Director of Human Resources for approval or denial.
2. Proposals will be reviewed to assess for the following:
  - a. Activity/goal ideas
  - b. Written supervisory approval
  - c. Potential for growing participation
3. Proposals that are denied will be returned to the submitting employees with explanation for the denial. Employees whose ERG formation application is denied can submit a revised proposal for reconsideration.

### Annual Review

1. The Review Committee as designated by the Director of Human Resources will conduct an annual review of all ERGs to ensure that the goals and objectives continue to contribute to the City's values and mission;
2. The ERG Leadership Team will be responsible for submitting an annual report to Human Resources by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year containing the following information:
  - a. The group name and a summary of the last year's accomplishments toward the work plan and objectives
  - b. The business value added by the group in the last year; and,
  - c. A work plan for the coming year.
3. Following the review of the annual report each ERG will be notified by email of approval or of any deficiencies that preclude approval by August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

## PROCEDURES

Employees seeking to establish an ERG must follow the following procedures:

**Responsible Party**  
ERG

**Action**

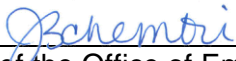
Submit an application to the Director of Human Resources with all completed sections.

Director of Human Resources/Review Committee

Within 30 business days of receipt, review application to ensure minimum requirements are met. If approved, provide approval letter to ERG. If the application is incomplete or is otherwise not approved, provide a letter to ERG with reasons for denial and possible remedies to correct the deficiencies.

# Employee Resource Groups

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of the Office of Employee Relations  
Director of Human Resources

September 1, 2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved for posting:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant City Manager

September 1, 2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date