

# OREGONSERVES COMMISSION AGENDA

Virtual Meeting Information: August 23rd, 2024, from 11:00am-12:30pm

Join by Video: <https://bit.ly/3Svp9UI>

Join by Phone: # (612) 328-1310 Passcode: 3 2 3 6 6 6

Contact Info: [oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.serves@hecc.oregon.gov)



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Agenda Below in Order by: Timing, the Lead to facilitate or introduce, and Agenda Item.

11:00am	Chair	<b>Meeting Opening</b> (starts on time) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Call to Order</li><li>- Land Acknowledgement</li><li>- Welcome and Introductions</li><li>- Agenda Review</li></ul>
	Chair Board Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Roll Call</li><li>- Public Comment Notice</li><li>- June 7th Meeting Minutes (approval item)</li></ul>
11:08am	Chair	<b>Consent Agenda</b> (approval item) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- AmeriCorps West Region Office Report</li><li>- OregonServes Commission Director Report</li><li>- OregonServes Staff Report</li></ul>
11:10am 11:10 - 11:20 11:20 - 11:35 11:35 - 11:55	Director Myronda Schiding Kaira Esgate, ASC	<b>Informational Items:</b> Governance: Elections, Lobbying Restrictions Emerging Collaborations: Climate Corps Oregon Updates Overview: Federal Appropriations Process and Status
11:55am 11:55 - 12:10 12:10 - 12:20	Director	<b>Discussion Items:</b> Updates: Board Book, Review: Process for Policy Proposals Review: State Service Plan Development & Annual Meeting
12:20pm	Chair Board Admin	<b>Meeting Closing</b> Recap: Action Items Reminders: Upcoming Events Requests: Future Agenda Items
12:30pm	Chair	<b>Meeting Adjourned</b>



# OREGONSERVES COMMISSION

## MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: June 7, 2024



### **Commission Members in Attendance:**

Heidi Echeverria, CM Hall, Jared Pruch, June Bass, Shenika Cumberbatch, Sierra Barnes, Greg Carpinello.

**Commission Members Absent:** Jayesh Palshikar, Daniel Altamirano Hernandez

### **Commission Staff in Attendance:**

Carie Bauer, OregonServes Commission Director, Kelly Hale McNabb, Office Support Specialist, Madeline Seghers, National Service Program Officer, Myronda Schiding, Office of Workforce Investments (OWI) Workforce Programs Manager.

**Invited Guests in Attendance:** n/a

### **Meeting Opening:**

Meeting called to order at 12:04pm by Heidi Echeverria  
Stated purpose of this meeting and gave land acknowledgement.  
No public comment at this time.

### **Introductions & Announcements:**

#### **New Members, Staff Updates, General News | Carie Bauer**

- Introduced CM Hall – new commission member. Vast experience, maybe folks already know her. Experience as faculty at Western University, volunteering, works with members of the Deaf-Blind and LGBTQ communities.
- CM introduced self – from Newport, OR. Grateful to be a part of the board and to get to know everyone.
- Round of introductions ensued for the attendees on the call.
- Updates provided on commission openings and need to recognize members who have termed off at upcoming annual meeting.

#### **Updates from OWI, OregonServes and National news | Carie Bauer**

- Carie gave an update that former OSC staff member, Alma Plasencia, relocated to Washington state, and OSC is currently interviewing for a replacement. The new position will focus more on program and partner development in addition to traditional recruitment goals. Carie then introduced Kelly Hale McNabb, a support staff who started in January and will support the Commission.
- Introduced Civic Health Index, a state service plan with opportunity to partner with ASC. Consultants will be pulling in additional parties and want representation for report. We will have more information later and anyone could use this report for their planning, etc.
- American Climate Corps: Initiative where members will serve in positions tackling clean energy, climate action and environmentalism. We are still learning what this means for AmeriCorps being the lead.

There is a recruitment website for those interested in the work. Madeline Seghers is the lead on program development for that work and looking to elevate what is already being done in the state and where new opportunities may be. Also, she is looking at the pathway for workforce development. From youth through adulthood – and skilling up. It's important to be mindful and making sure that, as opposed to a competitive situation, we encourage more partnerships with our programs.

- AmeriCorps extended the federal operational grants expenditure period in order to shift to a state fiscal year to make it easier for state commissions also utilizing state funds as match. This required cuts to other grants to cover the six-month extension, pulling from other funding areas. such as competitive funding. Available funds were lower this year for competitive funding also due a cost-of-living increase. Information shared stated that AmeriCorps leadership understands and recognizes the challenge of the very low living allowance and less funding. While trying to remedy that, other things won't get funded. There will be proactive talk about how to move forward to avoid a huge reduction of positions. AmeriCorps is supported in general as a non-partisan issue. It's important to remember that while a lot of cuts are happening, we need to think about how to move forward and shift priorities.

### **Informational Items:**

#### **Upcoming opportunities, Carie Bauer**

- June 25 – West Region AmeriCorps is visiting Salem HECC to meet staff/have conversations from Commission perspective. Meeting with some other state folks as well. Carie will send invite to folks so you can join as well if interested.
- Certifications and co-enrollment for Climate Corps. OregonServes will be visiting with other programs to get an idea of their best practices and implementation. If any local onsite visits are scheduled, Carie will send out an invite for interested commission members to attend.

### **Discussion Items:**

Madeline shared a PowerPoint and provided an overview and recommendations for approval.

- College Possible had a reduction in slots and a decrease in funding. Decided if they should move into competitive pool or not.
- State Formula Allocation was released late and we conducted outreach and info sessions for applications in the meantime.
- All programs are at current or reduced MSY for the year.
- Formula funds had some monies that was unexpended and will be carried over from last year.
- Pulling College Possible left a funding gap. To meet the gap, we were able to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money.
- Released planning grant – OregonServes has \$400,000 to award through ARPA.
- Current ARPA balance - \$2,374,674. Used majority to fund programs at requested levels as well as funding a new program, Salvation Army. Left with \$222,444.
- Can use potentially for cost-of-living increases as well.

# FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

## **FY24 AmeriCorps State Grants**

- Fund all FY24 AmeriCorps State Formula applications at requested levels
- Fund College Possible as a formula program with ARPA
- Utilize additional ARPA funds to cover program's living allowance increases
- Work with programs on recruitment and retention
- Prepare larger-funded programs to move into Competitive next year

## **FY24 Planning Grants**

- Total of \$400,000 to award to planning grants
- Utilize ARPA Funding to fund planning grant proposals

### **A Question-and-Answer Session ensued:**

What makes the most sense for programs?

Goals to move programs to competitive funding. Planning grants and utilizing ARPA money to fund the proposals.

Jared - How many applications might you get for planning grants?

Madeline – not sure on total. Focus by Jenn Denning on Disaster-related programs.

Jared - If organizations go through a planning grant year, what process?

Would likely apply as a formula grant.

Sierra – After approvals, will there be ARPA funds left and if so when do we have until to spend them?

Madeline - \$222,444 left – must be obligated by Sept. 20, 2024. Can sit on Prime – gives us more time to determine allowable ways to spend it.

### **Funding Recommendation Vote:**

Sierra made a motion to approve the Recommendations as presented by Madeline.

June seconded the motion.

6 votes yay, No nays, CM abstained

The motion carried and the recommendation for the upcoming fiscal year passed.

Heidi - Any other things to add? June is thankful that ARPA money is available and the OregonServes can use these funds to help our programs.

### **Other Business:**

Planning the next meeting, Carie Bauer.

- Kelly will be sending out a survey to find times and topics for feedback. Handbook and calendar changes will be coming out. Appropriations and legislative session topics/news will be forthcoming as well.

- Conversation on how to approach putting in concepts re: staffing, budget requests, etc. and what kind of approaches we can take. Any other items that folks want to see on the agenda?
- Sierra question – Does fiscal effect calendar?  
Carie – Will be easier to figure out projections on a calendar year instead of fiscal year. Could we time our state service plan to extend what we have now to have the new one ready by that date? Alignment with resources. Reflecting our activities and investments. Carie has been talking to other Commissions. We have extended the deadline before and it helps with not rushing community engagement. Report finalized and into effect by mid-next year. Allows time for engagement.
- Heidi question – Transitioned folks off the commission – are there commission seats that we are currently recruiting for?  
Carie – Yes. Looking for local gov representative, travel representative, someone to take over Heidi's spot at the end of the year. Harder to fill. Also looking for business representative. Carie to talk more to WTDB to see if there is someone from there to fill that slot for us. Representative from WTDB. Raising awareness and building partnerships. Open to multiple options if anyone knows someone. Local officials. It was mentioned that CM is an elected Newport City Councilor.

### **Meeting Closing:**

Other business or details that we need to plan our next meeting, Heidi Echeverría

Carie – Talking with director of office of appointments about our needs and something following up on are communities that are overburdened with requests to serve on boards. Looking at potential for cross-serving for existing members on other boards who may want to serve as a technical advisor for us or as a member. Would really like to partner more and leverage being a governor-appointed board and leverage our relationship while reducing burdens.

Can talk more about that for the next meeting.

Will send out emails for information on the next meeting.

### **Additional Comments, Heidi Echeverría**

Thank you everyone for being on the call last-minute. Nice to be able to participate remotely.

### **Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting adjourned at 12:58pm by Heidi Echeverría.

Commission meeting materials can be located on our website:

[OregonServes Commission Board : About Us : State of Oregon](#)

\*Note: A recording for this session is not available due to error.

Please contact board administration for any further assistance at: [kelly.mcnabb@hecc.oregon.gov](mailto:kelly.mcnabb@hecc.oregon.gov)

# OREGONSERVES COMMISSION

## Director Report

Carie Bauer

August 2024



### Committees and Workgroups:

Highlights from ASC Committees and Workgroups Membership:

- State Policy Committee is going to develop a toolkit to further states' interest to establish state hiring priority for AmeriCorps members.
- Workforce Development Committee is developing shared language and definitions to further alignment between the multiple initiatives that are all completing some form of work on credit for service, essential employability, credentialing, dual enrollment, etc., including Climate Corps, Mental Health Corps, and the Apprenticeship and Bridging and Belonging initiatives.
- Public Policy Committee continues to keep an eye on the appropriations process and the impact that the federal spending cap will have on the amount of AmeriCorps positions awarded this next year. Kaira Esgate, ASC Executive Director, will share further details during meeting.
- Climate Corps Committee is in talks with the White House to merge efforts and resources with the American Climate Corps initiative, to establish a streamlined pathway to Climate Corps positions, with a defined and shared curriculum and metrics. Myronda Schiding, OWI Workforce Programs Manager will share further details during meeting on the Commission's efforts leading the Climate Corps work in Oregon.

### Commission Membership:

Four commission member candidates have been submitted for appointment during September Legislative Days; hearings expected to occur between September 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>.

- Susan Dove Carlisle Taylor: To serve in a civic engagement/education slot. Susan is an AmeriCorps Alumni; experienced in many K-12 and higher education and local community organization settings, as a volunteer, service member, fundraiser and more. Susan resides in Central Oregon and is CEO and Founder of The Grant Lab, Inc.
- Dr. Latrissa Neiworth: To serve in an education slot. Dean of the School of Business at Bushnell University in Eugene. Dr. Neiworth has extensive experience in creating opportunities for students, including many initiatives to create pathways for credits for experience, new degree pathways, to build multidisciplinary offerings and dual degree programs, expanded adult education offerings and more.
- Craig Wiroll: To serve in a national service/civic engagement slot. Craig is a Peace Corps and AmeriCorps Alumni based out of Eugene. Craig has an extensive civic engagement and service background, having served or worked in roles that supported rural communities, emergency response, student success, justice-involved, LGBT, and historically marginalized communities, and had a stint as a domestic policy intern at the White House.
- Cari Vandecoevering: To serve in Volunteers 55+ role; current staff for AmeriCorps Seniors programming at Clackamas County. In addition to her work in senior programming, Cari has long done her own volunteering in her local community and serves as a founder of Building Blocks 4 Kids, Inc., an organization that seeks to ensure foster care youth have access to extracurricular activities.

## **Commission Operations:**

Currently undergoing clarifications on the operating grants, Commission Investment Fund and Commission Support Grant, and expects those budgets to be approved soon.

In 2023, the Commission was selected for a routine monitoring by AmeriCorps. The Commission fared well but was requested to develop solutions to issues found with several fiscal processes, including the tracking of match, and alignment of the state budget process/spend-down plan and the Commission's budget categories. I have been leading a workgroup to develop policies and procedures to address these items and more. The Commission has resolved almost all issues through processes developed with the fiscal staff at the HECC that ensures we have better communications, review of reports, and syncing of processes. These items should all be resolved by due date of November 2024.

## **Commission Legislative:**

Due to restrictions on state budget appropriations in the coming year, the Commission does not have any legislative concepts being considered, including those that were submitted to establish permanent funding for the disaster services position, compliance position, and volunteer services position. Two positions are currently covered by the American Rescue Plan Act funding (ARPA). Internal conversations occurring to discuss additional funding options and alternatives to ensure continuity of service.

Earlier this year, Myronda Schiding and I conducted an education visit in DC with Senator Merkley's office, while there for the ASC Leadership Convening. In follow-up, we have contacted Senator Merkley's office to setup an educational visit with Metropolitan Family Service (MFS) to showcase the work AmeriCorps members are doing in partnership with the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF). Through this partnership, AmeriCorps members connect individuals from historically underresourced communities to resources that will assist them with obtaining safe transportation through electric vehicles, electric bikes, and more. Members assist with obtaining waivers, grants, and loans so that community members can have their transportation needs met, while the program works to reduce carbon emissions, and members receive relevant job experience that could lead to a future career in the clean energy sector.

## **Commission Strategy:**

Defining OWI project continues; two facilitated steering committee planning sessions scheduled for September. These sessions will allow for us to review feedback collected during the survey and focus group sessions, which asked about OWI's purpose, how to better alignment the various departments under OWI, and how to expand and elevate the work under a shared vision. This project should benefit OregonServes and its desire to be further incorporated, aligned, and valued within the HECC. We are an underutilized resource, and this project is expected to provide a roadmap to address those issues.

Planning underway for the 3-Year State Service Plan. A draft scope of work for a Request for Proposals has been submitted to Procurement. The budget for this contract is \$50,000 and the goal is to complete the plan on a 6–8-month timeline. If timing works out, the contractor would be invited to the October meeting.



# OREGONSERVES COMMISSION

Staff Report-Outs

August 2024



<b>AmeriCorps Program Officer</b>	
Prepared by Madeline Seghers	
<b>Summary</b>	Administered the grant competition for 2024-25 AmeriCorps formula grants, provided grant administration, technical assistance, and monitoring to current grantees, and engaged in program development research and outreach.
<b>Milestones</b>	Administered the grant competition for 2024-25 AmeriCorps formula grants and awarded 9 total organizations. Managed the pilot of member emergency assistance funding for active members during the 2023-24 program year. Participated in climate action and workforce development work groups through our national association. Conducted outreach calls with various potential state agency partners and other state commissions across the country to learn about state Climate Corps and pre-apprenticeship/registered apprenticeship work. Convened other OWI partners to discuss alignment of our overlapping priorities and projects around climate action. Currently in process of developing state Climate Corps model with these OWI partners. Hosted the annual AmeriCorps staff Orientation for 30 AmeriCorps staff members in July. Completed member file reviews for current grantees.
<b>Challenges</b>	Staff capacity continues to be a challenge. Due to staff transitions, including the rehire of one position and another staff member going on leave, I have covered essential responsibilities for 1-2 staff in addition to my own responsibilities. This has made it difficult for me to spend what I consider adequate time on program development and outreach.
<b>Disaster Services Coordinator</b>	
Prepared by Jennifer Denning	
<b>Summary</b>	Continue to conduct outreach for the Oregon Volunteers in Disaster (ORVID) platform. Developing stronger partnerships with NCCC and the Oregon Department of Emergency Management. OregonServes is currently accepting planning grant applications until August 23.
<b>Milestones</b>	ORVID has 77 volunteers and 24 organizations signed up. In the process of developing an MOU with NCCC to bring more disaster response resources to Oregon. As of August 15, we have received 3 planning grant applications.



<b>Upcoming Activities Section</b>	
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<p>OregonServes will have an ORVID table at the September 5 Volunteer Expo in Portland.</p> <p>Staff are in the early planning phases of developing a potential AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team (A-DRT) which is a nationally deploying team to assist with FEMA declared disasters.</p>
<b>Requests/Recommendations Section</b>	
<b>Requests</b>	<p>OregonServes would appreciate any connections and/or involvement with the outreach of ORVID.</p>
<b>News &amp; Information Share Section</b>	
<p>The NCCC 2024-2025 Request for Applications is open. Oregon had 9 NCCC projects last service year. Projects ranged from fire mitigation, affordable housing construction, habitat restoration, and more.</p>	
<b>Outreach &amp; Program Development Specialist</b>	
<p>Prepared by Priscila Narcio</p>	
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Currently I am working on a few projects related to KickOff planning, reviewing planning grant applications, creating the year's training calendar, and developing a social media/outreach plan</p>
<b>Milestones</b>	<p>Due to me being a fairly new hire, I have not had many milestones or achievements yet, but one notable experience is attending the Program Orientation in July at the Keizer Civic Center. I was really happy to meet all the program staff coordinating AmeriCorps all over Oregon, and it really helped me feel connected to the mission of OregonServes and AmeriCorps.</p>
<b>Upcoming Activities Section</b>	
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<p>I am attending the ASC Symposium in Washington DC during 9/3-9/6. I am coordinating the Fall Kick Off Event on this date:</p> <p>Fall KickOff In-Person Event Monday, October 21st 8am-4pm Keizer Civic Center 930 Chemawa Rd NE Keizer OR 97303</p> <p>About 300 people are expected to attend this event. Currently we have secured the location, catering for breakfast and lunch. I am now working on securing speakers for different topics we have in mind. Currently these are the topics we will be covering, but will be adding to this list once agenda is crafted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Breakout Sessions</li> <li>• Volunteer Management</li> <li>• Financial Management</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Use Your Education Award</li> </ul>
<b>Expected Challenges /Needs</b>	<p>Setting up activities and trainers for each session is what I will mostly need support with. I am in the works with meeting with Procurement so they can teach me how to reach out to trainers and what are the best practices when it comes to hiring external partners.</p>
<b>Requests/Recommendations Section</b>	
<b>Requests</b>	<p>I would really love it if we had our commission members present at the KickOff event if possible. This would be a wonderful way to see the service you are doing to improve Oregon's volunteer service, and how many individuals are involved in this across our state.</p> <p>Additionally, if you have any local presenters or trainers who you would recommend, please let me know. We are looking for trainers to teach about: volunteerism, trauma informed care, anti-racism education, mental health and wellbeing, etc.</p>

# BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK



Image description: The Oregon state seal, which shows a shield supported by 33 stars. The words "The Union" are on the banner in the middle. Above the banner are mountains, an elk with branching antlers, a wagon, the Pacific Ocean on which a British man-of-war ship is departing, and an American steamer ship is arriving. Below the banner is a sheaf, a plough, and a pickaxe. Above the shield is an American eagle. The legend surrounding the seal reads "State of Oregon" and "1859."

**Tina Kotek**

Governor  
State of Oregon

Executive Appointments Office  
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Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

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TINA KOTEK  
GOVERNOR

Dear Board or Commission Member,

Congratulations on your appointment! By serving on a State of Oregon board or commission, you are making an important contribution to your community and to our entire state. Government works best when community members are actively engaged, and I appreciate your willingness to lend your time and talents to serve Oregon.

Oregon's board and commission system increases transparency in government, provides important protections for the public, brings new and diverse ideas to the table, and ensures that people across our state have a voice in the policies and programs that impact their lives. It is important to me that the voices of all Oregonians are represented on state boards and commissions. By leaning into all kinds of expertise – whether gained through education, professional pursuits, or lived experience – we can support better decision making and better government. By having a welcoming and inclusive board and commission system, we will ensure that members can bring their whole selves and meaningfully contribute to the work.

It is my hope that your public service will be a positive and rewarding experience. To support you in your new role, my team has created this handbook to serve as a guide. It contains information about your new role, as well as information about where to get additional help when needed.

On behalf of all Oregonians, I want to thank you for your service and for your commitment to helping our state continue to be a fantastic place to work, learn, and live.

Sincerely,

Governor Tina Kotek

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to board service! The Governor’s Executive Appointments Team has created this handbook to share information that will help you be successful in your new role.

In this guide, you will find information about Oregon’s board system, the activities of boards and commissions, and your role as a board member. There is also information about where to learn more and how to get support when you need it. The information in this manual is provided only as general guidance. For more specific information, please refer to your board’s governing statutes, policies, and rules. Nothing in this manual should be considered legal advice.

If you need something that isn’t in this handbook, please reach out for help. You can contact your board administrator or executive director, your board chairperson, or a member of the Executive Appointments Team. We are all here to support you and want to help make your board service a positive experience. Once again, welcome, and thank you for your willingness to serve.

## THE BOARD SYSTEM

Many state agencies and departments are led by policy-making boards or commissions appointed by the Governor. In addition to decision-making boards and commissions, other Governor-appointed committees, councils, and task forces serve in advisory roles. Throughout the rest of the handbook, the term “board” will be used to refer to all of these groups.

The board system is critical to the success of Oregon state government. Boards, commissions, task forces, and similar groups bring diverse community-centered perspectives, a wide range of voices and experiences, and local talent to the state level. This helps keep our government effective and responsive, while improving state performance for all Oregonians.

By serving as a board member, dedicated people like you can participate in decision-making and help develop a variety of policies on issues like natural resources, education, racial justice and equity, economic development, health and human services, and more. Contributions by board members can make government more inclusive, efficient, and transparent.



Each board has a designated board administrator or executive director who is often an employee of the agency where the board is housed. This person—sometimes with other staff—serves as a liaison between the board and other agencies, including the Governor’s Office, and supports the board with administrative work and other tasks. Throughout the rest of the handbook, the term “board administrator” will be used to refer to the main point of contact, executive director, or administrative staff person for boards.

## TYPES OF BOARDS

Each board’s purpose and scope is determined by the state law (also called a “statute”) or executive order that created it. There are five main types of boards, each created to meet a specific need.

Oregon boards are generally small (three to ten members), although some can be much larger depending on the need. Often, boards have a carefully balanced membership and must include people from various backgrounds, professions, political parties, or geographic areas.

**Policy Making Boards** are given authority by the legislature to make policy decisions and enforce regulations. Policy is developed by interpreting the board’s governing statutes or related Oregon Administrative Rules and by implementing procedures to carry out those statutes or rules. Members of policy making boards are generally final decision makers, accountable directly through the Governor to the public.

Some policy making boards are also **Governing Boards**, responsible for directing a state agency and/or appointing the agency director.

**Advisory Boards** may be created by the Governor, the legislature, state agencies, or existing boards. They serve as policy advisors to their appointing authority who is responsible for the management and administration of the policy. These boards study existing policy and make recommendations for change or implementation. Although they do not have final authority to make or enforce rules, their research, experience, and advice to decision-makers contribute to effective state

government.

Some boards share responsibility for policy making with their appointing authority or another state agency, even though they are called advisory boards.

**Licensing Boards** fall into either of the above types, depending on the statute or executive order that established them. These boards examine and issue licenses for members of a profession or occupation to practice in Oregon. Some can also discipline members of the regulated profession or occupation and suspend or revoke licenses.

**Judgment Boards** are created by the legislature as review and appeals boards which hear and rule on individual cases.

## THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

You've been appointed to serve on one of Oregon's boards because of your professional and/or lived experience, your knowledge and insight, and your interest in serving. Many boards have specific membership requirements set in law. These are often related to occupation or lived experience, the number of years licensed in a field, place of residence, or experience with the board's focus and purpose. Most boards require one or more public members.

In selecting members, the Governor considers the balance of the membership among geographic, gender, age, LGBTQIA2S+, racial and ethnic diversity, and disability communities, and seeks to ensure that all Oregonians feel represented on state boards.

The Governor receives candidate recommendations from many sources including community organizations, legislators, agency directors, and board administrators, as well as her policy advisors and Executive Appointments team.

Once nominated by the Governor, some candidates are required by law to be approved by the Oregon Senate before becoming official board members. This process is called "Senate confirmation." These nominees appear before the Senate

Committee on Rules to give brief testimony about their qualifications and why they would like to be appointed. Their names are then forwarded to the full Senate for a vote. The appointment only becomes official after the Senate votes to confirm the list of nominees and the appointee receives their appointment letter from the Governor's Office.

## **Terms**

Terms of membership are generally established by law and vary from one to four years. In some cases, members serve "at the pleasure" of the appointing authority and do not have specific terms of office. Under the Oregon Constitution, a single term of office cannot exceed four years.

Statutes governing some boards prohibit members from serving more than two or three consecutive terms of office. To include as many people in the process as possible, a member will not generally be appointed to serve more than a total of eight years on the same board. However, a board member might serve beyond eight years under certain circumstances, such as when the board is in the middle of a special project or decision.

If you are currently serving and are interested in being reappointed, let your board administrator know. You will need to reapply for your position.

If a member needs to resign, they should inform their board administrator and the Governor's Office of Executive Appointments and include the date when their resignation is effective.

A member may be removed from the board at any time for neglecting the duties outlined for board members, for missing two board meetings in a row without cause, for incompetence, or for unprofessional or dishonorable conduct, among other reasons. The governing statutes of some boards provide standards for the removal of members.

## **BOARDS WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

In Oregon, most state agencies are relatively independent within their areas of responsibility. Overall policy guidance and direction are provided by the Governor, who is the state's chief executive officer, and by the legislature, which writes laws

and appropriates operating funds. To provide an overall management structure, the Governor uses the Department of Administrative Services, also referred to as “DAS”.

The executive and legislative branches reflect the separation of government powers that provides a system of checks and balances. The legislature creates state agencies, defines their functions, and appropriates funds. The Senate confirms the Governor’s appointments to certain offices. To ensure legislative intent is followed, the Legislative Counsel Committee reviews state agencies’ administrative rules.

The Governor coordinates the activities of state agencies; actively participates in the design, development, and approval of agency budgets; appoints many agency directors, board members and other officials; and approves or disapproves all legislation affecting state agencies.

Board activities are subject to both legislative and executive oversight. Actions by the Governor and the legislature may result in revision of a board’s authority or changes in appropriations.

To learn more about Oregon’s state government, visit <https://www.oregon.gov/pages/government.aspx>.

## OREGON STATE LEGISLATURE

You may have some level of involvement with the state legislature during your time as a board member. Oregon’s legislature consists of the House of Representatives, which has 60 members who are elected for two-year terms, and the Senate, whose 30 members are elected to serve four-year terms.

The Oregon Constitution requires the legislature to meet annually. It convenes on the second Monday in January and stays in session for approximately six months in odd-numbered years. This is referred to as “long session” or a “regular session.” In even-numbered years, the legislature meets for no longer than 35 days. This is referred to as a “short session.” A majority of the members of the legislature or the Governor may call a Special Session if there is a need to meet during the interim.

The Speaker of the House and President of the Senate, the two most significant leadership positions in the legislature, are elected by the majority of their respective chambers to preside over daily sessions, appoint legislators to legislative committees, and perform other duties prescribed by rule, custom, and law. They are referred to as the Presiding Officers.

Both chambers—the House and the Senate—operate under an open committee system that allows public testimony during any public hearing. The committees are comprised of legislators appointed by the Presiding Officers. Typically, some 2,000 bills are introduced each long session, and about one-third of them become law. Most of the work in considering and revising bills during the session is done in legislative committees. Committees also conduct interim studies between legislative sessions.

General information regarding the current organization of the legislature, including committee assignments, office locations and telephone numbers, can be found on the Oregon Legislative Information System, often called “OLIS.”

<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/>.

## YOUR ROLE AS A BOARD MEMBER

### Representation

There are many reasons you may have chosen to serve on a board or commission. Maybe you are interested in learning more about state government and how it operates. You may wish to serve the public and “give back” to others. You may see serving on a board to impact an issue that is important to you, or to ensure the quality of a particular product or service. There are as many reasons to serve as there are board members, and it is likely you have chosen to serve for a combination of reasons. Whatever your motivation, it is important to remember that you have been appointed to the board to serve all Oregonians. Board members should seek input from all interested parties and carefully consider their concerns and different points of view. However, your primary responsibility as a board member is always to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

If you were recommended by a professional association or special interest group, you will be expected to provide the board with your technical or lived expertise

and bring the point of view of the group to the board. However, you were not appointed to serve only as the representative of a specific group. If the interest of the group that recommended you conflicts with that of the public, your first responsibility is to the public. All board members must work for the benefit of the public first.

Public and special interest members working together can complement one another and enhance the work of the board. Listening to all viewpoints and working together can help boards develop good policies and find fair and equitable solutions to problems.

### Being an Effective Board Member

Serving as a board member can be an interesting and rewarding experience. Below are some tips that may help you be more effective in your role and get the most out of your service:

- Stay engaged in the board's work and actively contribute your knowledge and ideas in the way that works best for you. You were selected to serve because of the unique knowledge, experiences, and perspectives you will bring to the role. Your voice is important!
- Regular meeting attendance is a good way to stay engaged. If you're unable to make a meeting, please let your board administrator, executive director, or board chair know as soon as possible. Absences can't always be avoided, but please do your best to attend regularly. According to state law, a board member who has two unexcused absences in a row may forfeit their office unless they were prevented from attending for reasonable cause.
- It's important to prepare for meetings by reviewing agendas, reports, and other documents sent to you ahead of time. If you have questions or need more information, reach out to your board administrator for support. This will help you fully participate in meetings and make more informed decisions or recommendations.
- Familiarize yourself with your board's type, purpose, authority, and assigned tasks. Review your board's charter, bylaws, or other applicable governing documents. It's important that you are familiar with and operate within the

board's governing statutes and bylaws and other state and federal laws.

- Get to know your fellow board members. Positive relationships between members can support collaboration and good decision-making.
- Be the inclusive voice – before deciding, ask, “Whose voice isn’t represented here? Who else should have a chance to weigh in on this?”
- Learn about issues affecting your board and the people or communities impacted by your decisions.
- Think about any support you might need to fully participate in your board’s activities. This might include disability accommodations, translated written materials, access to materials in alternative formats, or language interpretation. Your board administrator or support person will work with you to make sure you have what you need to engage in your duties. For more details about disability accommodations, see the section on the Americans with Disabilities Act later in this handbook.
- There may be times when you feel intimidated by another member’s expertise or worry that you won’t be able to provide meaningful input. Many board members have this experience from time to time. This can be especially true for people who are serving for the first time, are new to state government, are a member of a historically excluded or marginalized group, or are serving as a “public member.” Every member’s perspective is critical to the board’s success and your contributions are important. Public members, consumers, and people with lived experience can bring ideas and insights that others on the board may not have.
- Keep in mind that the board must operate in an open and public matter. Familiarize yourself with public meeting law and strive to conduct business in a way that engages the public to the maximum extent possible. As a board, share information with the public and be open to feedback from the people you serve and represent.
- Remember that authority to act is given to the board as a whole and not to individual members. No board member should make decisions or act on



their own without the consent of the board.

- Remember that as a board member, you will be seen as a representative of the board if you appear at industry or professional gatherings. Take care not to appear to be speaking for the board unless you are specifically authorized by the board to do so.
- Do not share details of board investigations or matters dealt with in executive session unless they are part of the public record.

## Ethics

As a board member, your primary mission is to serve the public. You should not use your board membership to create a personal platform. State law forbids public officials, including board members, from using their office for any personal gain. You will receive special training on these laws, and your board administrator can help you get answers to any questions you have.

You can find more information in the Oregon Government Ethics Commission's Guide for Public Officials, located here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ogec/Documents/2021%20PO%20Guide%20Final%20Adopted.pdf>.

## Public Records/Public Meetings

Oregon is known for an open form of government that allows for public participation. Two illustrations of this are the public records and open meetings laws.

These laws are sometimes called "sunshine laws." They are designed to protect public interest and make sure the public's business is conducted in an open and transparent way. As a board member, it's important for you to be familiar with these laws and how they apply to you and the board on which you serve. You will receive special training on public records and public meetings and are encouraged to reach out to your board administrator or board staff with any questions.

You can find more information in the Attorney General's Public Records and

Meetings Manual, located here:

<https://www.doj.state.or.us/oregon-department-of-justice/public-records/attorney-generals-public-records-and-meetings-manual/>

## Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act, or “ADA,” is a federal law that protects the rights of people with disabilities in many areas of public life. To learn more about the ADA, you can visit ADA.gov website at <https://www.ada.gov>.

Everyone has the right to participate in the activities of boards. This is true for appointed members of boards and members of the public. We can all play a role in making meetings accessible and welcoming to everyone.

The ADA sets requirements for accessibility and accommodation. As a board member, you can request disability accommodations to help you participate in board activities. These accommodations might include (but are not limited to):

- Closed captioning
- Breaks during meetings
- Sign language interpretation
- Large-print or Braille documents
- Extra time to read documents and prepare for a meeting
- Other changes to the board’s processes or procedures that help you participate more fully

If you experience a disability and need accommodation to fully participate in your board, please ask your board administrator for support.

All board members have a role in making sure their meetings and activities are accessible to all. Here are some steps your board can take to make sure people with disabilities can effectively participate:

- Notify the public of their right to disability accommodations. Include a statement on each meeting notice that invites people to request disability accommodations. Include the name and contact information of the person they should send their request to.
- Make sure board documents follow accessibility standards and are easy to read. Use 14-point font or larger and limit the use of boldface, italics, and underlining. Use fonts that are easier to read, like Tahoma, Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Verdana, or Times New Roman.
- Always hold meetings and other board-sponsored activities in places that are accessible to people who use wheelchairs or have limited physical mobility.
- When requested, provide qualified sign language interpreters, materials in accessible formats such as Braille, large print and audio recording, and other communication aids.
- Make reasonable modifications to policies or procedures if they create a barrier to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities.

## GENERAL BOARD ACTIVITIES

### Bylaws, Charters, and Other Guiding Documents

Each board should have at least one guiding document which records and explains the group's structure, processes, and scope of work. Types of guiding documents can include:

- Charter
- Bylaws
- Committee handbooks
- Committee policy documents
- Workplans

- Other process & procedure documents

A board's guiding documents are a good source of information about the board and its work, and reviewing these documents is one good way to become familiar with your new role. These documents usually have information about:

- The purpose of the board, including information about any related rules or statutes and the group's authority and responsibilities.
- The board's values and principles.
- Membership, required number of seats, designation of voting and non-voting members, and any requirements for board composition.
- Expectations of board members and officers, including attendance, behavior, and participation.
- Information about board process and procedures, including meetings, quorum requirements, voting procedures, leadership structure, and subcommittees.
- Process for updating or changing the document.

Formal bylaws aren't needed or appropriate for every group, and the level of formality required will vary for each board. There are multiple ways for a board to record its group agreements and processes. In some cases, a committee handbook can serve the same purpose as bylaws in a more welcoming and accessible way. Depending on the work being done, some groups will benefit from a flexible framework while others will require more structure.

## The Budget Process

Every board whose costs are paid wholly or in part from funds held in the State Treasury must submit a proposed budget to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) every two years. This document, called an "agency request budget," is due before September 1 of each even-numbered year and applies to the biennium beginning July 1 of the following year.

The proposed budget identifies expected revenues and the expenditures needed to maintain the current level of services. It may also include expenditure requests, which add or delete programs or activities. Expenditure requests should be listed in priority order. The proposed budget also includes any requests for fee increases. Preparing and monitoring the budget is a process that involves many participants. As a board member, you may assist in creating or reviewing your board's budget, or you may participate in studying the budgets of other agencies.

The budget process includes several steps. First, the board or its staff prepares an agency budget request and submits it to DAS for review. A DAS budget analyst reviews the board's request and submits recommendations to the Governor. The Governor may approve, reject, or amend all or part of these recommendations. The approved budget becomes part of the "Governor's Recommended Budget," which is presented to the Legislature.

Approval of the budget is one of the principal issues in every legislative session. Because the Oregon Constitution provides that the state may not spend more than its revenues, legislators go through a delicate budget balancing act each session.

Bills that give government agencies spending authority are called "appropriations bills." These bills must follow a procedure like other bills. The Joint Committee on Ways and Means conducts hearings and receives testimony on the Governor's Recommended Budget. The budget is then reviewed and approved by both chambers of the legislature (House and Senate) and signed by the Governor. Upon signature or effective date, the appropriation bill becomes law.

You can learn more about Oregon's budget process here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/das/financial/pages/budgetprocess.aspx>

## Funding Sources for State Boards

Money for state boards comes primarily from three sources. These are:

**General Funds:** This comes primarily from personal income taxes, corporate excise and income taxes, cigarette taxes, liquor apportionment and insurance taxes. Other sources of General Fund money include interest earnings, state court fees and fines and other fees. General Fund money is usually used for programs that

support health, education, public welfare, correctional institutions, legislative and judicial functions, general governmental administrative functions, and public transportation.

Budget approval for a General Fund board means the board is authorized to spend up to a certain amount of tax money for its operation. This authorization is called an appropriation.

**Federal Funds:** Some state boards are funded in whole or in part by federal funds. Such boards must get permission from the legislature to apply for this money from federal grants or entitlement programs. A federal grant may be a gift to the state or may require that the state provide matching funds.

**Other Funds:** Most boards get their operating money from other sources. These are usually established by the Legislature specifically to support the board or its programs. These funding sources can include:

- License and permit fees
- Trust fund contributions and earnings such as unemployment funds
- Sales and user taxes like gasoline tax or cigarette tax
- Sale of services, such as college tuition
- Sales of commodities, for example, timber from state lands

Budget approval for a board financed with Federal or Other Funds establishes the maximum amount of money the board can spend from its income source. This is called an expenditure limitation.

Other Funds money is used for most transportation-oriented programs (highways, motor vehicles, marine); most employee protection programs (employment, retirement, workers' compensation); many regulatory activities (public utilities, banking, building codes); most licensing bodies (professional licenses); and some natural resource functions (forestry, wildlife).

### Requests for Additional Funding

Regardless of revenue source, authority for all state agency spending rests with the Oregon Legislature. During a biennium, if a board finds it needs authority to spend

more than the available funds due to an emergency, it may ask for a limitation increase or additional funding from the Emergency Board. The Emergency Board is a committee made up of state legislators who usually serve on the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. The Emergency Board meets regularly between legislative sessions and considers only state agency requests (including boards). Such requests go to the Emergency Board only if they are approved in advance by the Governor.

A board submits its request to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), which reviews the request with the Governor, and if the Governor approves, makes a recommendation to the Emergency Board. Next, a budget analyst from the Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) evaluates the Governor-approved requests and sends a recommendation to the Emergency Board. The request is then considered by a subcommittee of the Emergency Board which makes a recommendation to the full board, which makes the final decision.

## Recommending Legislation

Some state boards work with the Governor's Office and the Legislature in developing and changing state law. Your board may propose legislation and/or track bills relating to the work and focus of your board.

Legislation proposed by your board should be reviewed by and submitted to your board administrator. They will be able to help your board submit your legislative proposals through the proper channels. This can mean including your recommended legislation in the agency's overall policy recommendations, working directly with the Governor's Office, or working through other processes that may be in place specifically for your board.

As a board member, you may be asked to testify before legislative committees and advise legislators on issues that concern your board. The knowledge and expertise provided by state boards can be very helpful to the Legislature. It's important to know that there are some restrictions on the ways that board members can engage with the legislative process. Your board administrator will provide guidance on interacting with Legislators. If you are contacted regarding a policy issue or board-related matter, be sure to consult with your board administrator before responding to the Legislator or their staff member.



## Rulemaking

To carry out its duties, your board may need to create or adopt administrative directives. There are four types of directives that your board may be involved with. These are:

- Rules
- Policies
- Procedural statements
- Administrative memoranda

It is important to understand the differences between these types of directives and what authority your board has to adopt them.

**Rules:** A rule implements, interprets, or prescribes law. Rules can be general or specific. A rule is adopted when the subject matter affects the public or another government agency, or when a law directs that a rule be adopted. Once established, a rule has the force of law and all persons or entities to whom the rule applies must adhere to it.

Boards may engage in rulemaking *only* if the Legislature has specifically authorized them to do so in the board's enabling statute. Most boards have the authority to pass rules and regulations needed to implement the powers given to them by law. The board cannot pass rules which go beyond the scope of its statute.

Because rules affect the public, they must be adopted in compliance with the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act (also called the "APA") unless specifically exempted by statute.

The APA is a state law that imposes requirements for several types of board procedures. These are: rulemaking, issuing declaratory rulings, holding contested case hearings, ensuring readability of public writings, and legislative review of state agency rules.

According to the APA, any person or group can ask a board to adopt, amend or repeal a rule. The board itself may also create or make changes to rules in response to a pattern of problems. The following is a common procedure for writing administrative rules:

- Board staff, working with the board, draft the proposed rules, keeping these guidelines in mind:
  - The board must have legal authority to adopt the rule.
  - The board must consider the economic impact of the proposed rule on consumers and affected businesses, industries and occupations.
  - The board must consider how the rule will affect racial equity in the state.
  - The board may not adopt a rule which violates the law or the constitution.
  - The board must follow statutory requirements for rulemaking procedures.
  - Throughout the rulemaking process, the board should engage the public to the maximum extent possible.
- The board reviews and approves the proposed rules.
- The board's legal counsel from the Department of Justice may be asked to review the proposed rules.
- Public notice is given of the intent to adopt the proposed rules. This notice must include information about how members of the public can submit comments or suggestions about the proposed rules.
- Public comments are solicited. A public hearing may be held to hear testimony on the proposed rules. Once the public comment period has ended, the board must review the input provided. For each public comment, the board must either edit the proposed rule to include the suggested change(s) or document the reason for not doing so.

- The board formally adopts the rules.
- The rules are filed with the Secretary of State and the public is notified that the rules have been adopted by the board.
- Legislative Counsel reviews the proposed rules.

**Policy:** A policy establishes standards and directives related to internal management of a board. Policies should only be created for matters which do not substantially affect the interests of the public. Policies are generally issued by the board administrator or appointing authority. Within the board, they have the same status as a rule, and all persons to whom a policy applies must adhere to it.

Policy development and adoption are not subject to the requirements of the APA. However, it is wise to have a defined process for policy making. This helps protect the interests of the board members, staff and others affected by the proposed policies. Staff and other affected persons should always be given an opportunity to make suggestions or ask questions before a policy is changed or adopted.

**Procedural statements** give the specific details of the day-to-day processes that carry out policies and rules. They are issued by the board administrative officer, govern all persons affected, and have the same status within the board or agency as rules.

**Administrative memoranda** are the notes used internally to communicate temporary data, one-time announcements or requests, and page revisions of existing policies and procedure statements. There is no specific format prescribed for administrative memoranda.

## ADDITIONAL REGULATORY BOARD ACTIVITIES

Many boards engage in regulatory activities. Government regulation is needed when the public would suffer physical, emotional, or financial injury if the state did not exercise some oversight or control. Occupational and professional regulation is intended to protect the public's health, safety, or welfare, by ensuring that Oregonians are provided with honest and competent service. The regulation

system provides a means for the public to seek amends through a fair, equitable, and objective process.

Members of regulatory boards help to set policy and give guidance to the regulated industry or profession under governing statutes. Their responsibilities may include preparing and conducting examinations, evaluating applications, issuing or denying licenses, regulating by inspection, conducting investigations of alleged violations of the law, taking disciplinary action, issuing citations, holding hearings, and imposing penalties. These responsibilities must be prudently exercised on behalf of both the public and the occupations and professions being regulated.

Key activities of regulatory boards:

### Testing

Appropriate, standardized, and effective tests are an important component of licensure. Licensing tests should be designed to ensure an applicant's education and experience have adequately prepared them to assume an occupational or professional role that impacts the public's health, safety, and welfare. Some boards will administer a state-based test, while others rely on national examinations for licensure.

### Discipline

A main responsibility of licensing boards is to determine whether a person should obtain or hold a license. Those licensing boards with regulatory authority not only establish the standards and set the qualifications required for a license to practice, but they also enforce ongoing compliance with those standards.

Most licensing boards have the authority to revoke, suspend, limit, or refuse to issue any license, registration, or certificate that they issue. Some licensing boards are also authorized to issue probationary conditions. They may issue a letter of warning, reprimand, or censure. Most boards may issue a fine for noncompliance with certain laws or rules.

## Complaints

Boards must review complaints about programs or licensees under their regulatory authority. Complaints are usually received from consumers of licensee services, other licensees or professionals, other regulatory agencies, or as a result of inspections or investigations.

Each complaint must be reviewed in a fair and unbiased manner. At a minimum, board members must comply with all ethical requirements, including requirements regarding conflicts of interest. For more information about those requirements, board members should refer to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission's Guide for Public Officials, located here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ogec/Documents/2021%20PO%20Guide%20Final%20Adopted.pdf>.

If there is a question as to whether a complaint falls within the board's jurisdiction, the board administrator should consult with the board's assigned Assistant Attorney General. If a complaint is not within the board's jurisdiction, the board should send the complaint, together with any evidence or information, to the proper entity. The person or entity that submitted the complaint should then be notified.

## Hearings

In some cases, an administrative hearing will need to be held to resolve a complaint. The Administrative Procedures Act (APA) establishes specific procedures that must be followed to take disciplinary actions against programs or licensees (e.g., suspending or revoking a license or assessing a fine). If the board conducts a hearing required by the APA, board members should not participate in the investigative or pre-hearing complaint handling functions. They must be impartial parties to the hearing.

Individual board members should disqualify themselves if bias or significant interest prevents fair and impartial participation in the hearing. Bias, or prejudice, include issues of fact in a case as well as bias for or against a party in the case. Interest means the board member personally stands to gain or lose from the outcome of the hearing.

If members have any conflicts of interest or have received any communication on a fact or issue made outside the hearing during review of a case, they must place on the record a statement on the nature of the conflict or substance of the communication.

Hearing decisions made by boards may be appealed to the Court of Appeals.

Administrative details of hearings are generally handled by board staff. Your board administrator can give you more information about procedures for any hearings your board conducts.

## LOCAL & FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

As a board member, you may represent state government in its relations with other governmental bodies. State government has a significant responsibility in the federal system of planning, funding, and operating programs. About 70 percent of all federal grant dollars are funneled to state government or through state government to local governments. The other 30 percent goes directly to local programs.

**State-Local Relations:** Many state boards make policy decisions or recommendations and conduct studies that directly affect the budget, programs, and daily operations of cities, counties, and other local government districts in Oregon.

Boards can work directly with local community members and public officials or through established associations to support local government in creating healthy communities. Boards help accomplish this goal by serving as a link between local communities and state government.

**State-Federal Relations:** Under the direction and leadership of the Governor, state government can affect the development and operation of federal regulations, funding, and programs to ensure the state's priorities are considered. Each federal agency must publish significant regulations scheduled for review in the Federal Register. Comments from state governments are included in the review process.

The review and comment procedures determine if existing regulations should be rewritten or eliminated.

## WHERE TO GET INFORMATION & HELP

### Board Administrators & Staff

Most state boards work within a state agency or have access to assistance and advice from the agencies. Typically, if a board works within an agency, some support services are provided to manage internal business. Some boards have their own staff to perform their day-to-day administrative functions. The Governor's Office refers to the main board staff contact as the board administrator.

Most often, the primary role of board staff is to carry out the rules, policies and programs developed by the board. Board administrators or staff also notify the board about issues of importance, prepare meeting agendas in consultation with the board chair, and compile background information for board study.

Other responsibilities of board staff can include:

- Making meeting arrangements
- Supporting accommodation requests
- Preparing minutes
- Processing complaints
- Administering board programs
- Designing forms to conduct board business
- Preparing budget requests and Emergency Board requests
- Monitoring income and expenditures to comply with legislatively approved budgets
- Working with the board to develop proposed rules
- Providing information to the board about proposed legislation
- Tracking bills during a legislative session
- Coordinating testimony before legislative committees
- Representing the board before legislative committees and other groups
- Coordinating member compensation as needed
- Monitoring, reviewing, and recommending candidates who have applied for

- board positions
- Supervising board staff

You can find the list of Board Administrators and their email addresses here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/das/HR/Documents/bap.pdf>.

## Governor's Office

The Governor manages the operations of state government in coordination with her staff. The Governor's Office includes advisors on policy and other issue areas, executive assistants, and operations analysts.

Most state agencies report to the Governor through the Department of Administrative Services. Areas that staff in the Governor's Office are responsible for include human services, behavioral health and health care, housing and homelessness, education, natural resources, emergency management, public safety, transportation and infrastructure, workforce and economic development, legislative relations, executive appointments, constituent services, racial justice and equity work, special projects, and communications.

- Governor's Office Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/index.aspx>
- Governor's Office Main Desk: 503-378-3111

## Other State Agencies & Contacts

You may have occasion to request advice from legal experts, someone with financial management experience, or others with special expertise. Below are descriptions of the specific functions of state agencies that may affect board members and whose support services are available to all state boards.

## Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

The Director of Administrative Services is appointed by the Governor. The Department was established to administer the Governor's programs and to provide policy direction and support services to state agencies. Most state agencies report to the Governor through the Administrative Services Director.



- DAS Website: <https://www.oregon.gov/das/Pages/index.aspx>
- General Email: [oregon.info@das.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.info@das.oregon.gov)
- Phone: 503-378-3104

**The Budget & Management Division** reviews all state agency proposed budgets to assure resources are allocated effectively and prepares the Governor’s biennial budget package for approval by the Governor and presentation to the legislature.

All state agencies, including state boards, submit their proposed budgets to this Division for review and assistance. Additionally, the Division oversees expenditures to assure consistency with the Governor’s policy and legislative intent. Board members participate in preparing, reviewing, and presenting the budget to the Governor and legislature.

- Webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/das/financial/pages/BAM.aspx>.

**The Chief Human Resources Office (CHRO)** provides direction and services to the workforce in Oregon state government. They oversee state agencies' human resources (HR) functions: Classification and Compensation, HR Policy, Executive Recruitments, Labor Relations, and Workforce Development. They also provide services to state agencies for a variety of HR needs including operations and systems through service level agreement.

- Webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/das/hr/Pages/Index.aspx>

## **Oregon Department of Justice**

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is the state’s law firm, led by the Attorney General. The DOJ provides services similar to private law firms, with a few important differences.

By law, the Attorney General and lawyers within DOJ are the sole providers of legal advice and representation to state agencies and officials.

The Department provides oral and written legal advice to all state agencies and state officials, acts as a legal adviser at meetings, and is an advocate for the state in hearings, trials and appeals. The General Counsel Division of the Oregon Department of Justice serves state officials, agencies, boards, and commissions. The Division's legal services include giving legal advice and opinions and representing agencies in administrative hearings.

Each state agency, and its governing board, is assigned at least one assistant attorney general who specializes in law affecting the agency. These lawyers are assigned to identify any legal problems that may be posed by existing or proposed agency policies or actions. Your attorney is there to facilitate your policy choices by pointing out potential problems and evaluating the legal effect of other policy options that may accomplish the desired goal more easily. Requests for legal advice regarding the board must be directed to the Department of Justice.

If you act on the advice of counsel, the Department will defend you in court and any liability will be assumed by the state. Acting without consulting your lawyer, or acting contrary to their advice, may result in personal liability.

Getting legal advice from the Department can be as simple as a phone call. However, some issues require a more formal and comprehensive review through the opinion process. Most agencies and boards have an internal procedure for requesting legal assistance. If you feel you or your board needs to seek legal advice, contact your board administrator for support.

The Department also uses conferences, such as the biennial Administrative Law Conference, and publications, such as the Public Records and Meetings Manual, the Agency Administrator's Guide, and the Administrative Law Manual, to help inform agency staff and board members of their legal rights and responsibilities.

The Attorney General encourages board members to work through their agency staff to arrange personal meetings with their contact attorney and to review the laws or rules related to their board. Reviewing the [Public Records and Meetings Manual](#) and the [Administrative Procedures Act](#) is also a worthwhile task for board members.

- Webpage: <https://www.doj.state.or.us/>

- DOJ General Counsel Phone: (503) 947-4540

## Secretary of State

Oregon's Secretary of State (SOS) is Oregon's chief elections officer, chief auditor, and oversees the State Archives and the Oregon Corporation Division. Two divisions of the SOS Office that might be helpful for you and your board are the Audits and Archives Division:

**The Audits Division** performs fiscal and compliance audits of all state agencies and boards as well as establishing and monitoring standards for municipal audits. Be certain you are provided reports on regular or special audits or any examination of your board.

- Webpage: <https://sos.oregon.gov/audits/Pages/default.aspx>

**The Archives Division** preserves permanent government records and establishes retention schedules for public records of state agencies and boards. State boards must follow the guidelines established by the division on the care, accessibility, storage and destruction of its papers and records. No official records may be destroyed without the approval of the division.

## Administrative Rules

The SOS also receives and processes administrative rules adopted by all state agencies. This section edits, codifies and publishes Oregon Administrative Rules.

- Webpage: <https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/Pages/default.aspx>

## Oregon Government Ethics Commission

The Ethics Commission enforces Oregon's government ethics and lobby registration laws. These laws require public officials to disclose potential conflicts of interest, prohibit the use of office for personal gain, and require certain officials to file statements of economic interest, among other requirements.

Lobby regulation laws require lobbyists to register and to file expenditure reports. Certain lobbying is prohibited. For more information about lobbying in Oregon, please consult the [Guide to Lobbying in Oregon](#) published by the Ethics Commission.

The Commission has authority to conduct investigations and hearings, to issue advisory opinions on these matters, and to levy fines for infractions. We highly recommend all Governor-appointed board members review the [Oregon Government Ethics Law – Guide for Public Officials](#) published by the Ethics Commission.

- Webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/ogec/pages/default.aspx>
- General Email Address: [mail@ogec.oregon.gov](mailto:mail@ogec.oregon.gov)
- Phone: (503) 378-5105

## SUMMARY OF RELEVANT LAWS

The laws and policies listed below are relevant to board members and board service. They may be helpful to reference during your time on the board and we recommend reviewing and familiarizing yourself with them as you start your term. Please see next page.

Topic	Description	Reference
<b>Senate Confirmation</b>	Process for Executive Appointments to go through confirmation by the Senate.	<a href="#">Oregon Constitution, Article III Section 4</a>
<b>Scope of Liability</b>	Scope of liability of public body, officers, employees, and agents.	<a href="#">ORS 30.260 to ORS 30.300</a>
<b>Lobby Disclosure Act</b>	Definitions and guidance related to lobbying, gifts, compensation, etc.	<a href="#">ORS 171.725 to 171.785</a>
<b>Non-Attendance of Board Members</b>	Cause for removal for non-attendance.	<a href="#">ORS 182.010</a>
<b>Administrative Procedures Act</b>	Chapter of Oregon law regarding administrative procedures, review of rules, and civil penalties.	<a href="#">ORS Chapter 183</a>
<b>Alternative Dispute Resolution</b>	Process for agencies to use alternative methods for resolving conflicts related to decision-making	<a href="#">ORS 183.502</a>
<b>Public Records &amp; Meetings Laws</b>	Defines and outlines requirements for public meetings.	<a href="#">ORS 192.001 to 192.695</a>
<b>Vacancies &amp; Eligibility</b>	Outlines considerations and requirements for filling vacant positions and offices, as well as eligibility criteria.	<a href="#">ORS 236.010-263.030</a>
<b>Diversity in Appointments</b>	Outlines demographic/diversity considerations that must be taken when making appointing board members.	<a href="#">ORS 236.115</a>

<b>Term Length, Removal, Prohibition from Accepting Certain Positions</b>	Outlines maximum length terms can be, removal from appointment by the appointing authority, and employment prohibitions in certain scenarios.	<a href="#">ORS 236.140-236.147</a>
<b>Government Ethics Law</b>	Chapter of Oregon law related to government ethics, including gift limits, conflicts of interest, statements of economic interest, and the duties of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.	<a href="#">ORS Chapter 244</a>
<b>Expenses, Compensation &amp; Parking</b>	Outlines compensation and reimbursement eligibility and process for board members.	<a href="#">ORS 292.495</a>
<b>Oregon Documents Depository Program</b>	Provides definitions and guidance for the <a href="#">Oregon Documents Depository Program</a> , which shares state publications throughout Oregon.	<a href="#">ORS 357.004 &amp; 357.090</a>
<b>Unlawful Trade Practices Act</b>	Outlines unlawful trade practices, which include deceptive sales or business practices.	<a href="#">ORS 646.608</a>
<b>Licensing Boards Administration</b>	Outlines licensing board requirements, authority, processes, and related definitions.	<a href="#">ORS Chapter 670</a>
<b>Policy on a Discrimination and Harassment Free Workplace</b>	Outlines state policy and definitions regarding discrimination and harassment in the workplace.	<a href="#">DAS Policy 50.010.01</a>

<b>Policy on a Violence Free Workplace</b>	Outlines state policy and definitions regarding violence in the workplace.	<a href="#">DAS Policy 50.010.02</a>
<b>Policy on Maintaining a Professional Workplace</b>	Outlines professional workplace state policy and expectations.	<a href="#">DAS Policy 50.010.03</a>

Under Oregon law ORS 260.432, public employees are prohibited from participating in certain political activity while on the job. This does extend to appointed board members and commissioners. The Elections Division produces a [manual](#) providing explanation. See page 4:

### **Appointed Board Members and Commissioners**

ORS 260.432 applies to all appointed board and commission members when they are acting in their official capacity. This includes, but is not limited to, attending a meeting of the board or commission, working on a duty assigned by the board or commission, working on official publications (including website materials) for the board or commission, or when appearing at an event in an official capacity.

Appointed board or commission members may use their titles to engage in political advocacy (including endorsing candidates, measures, etc.) as long as they are not acting in an official capacity when making the endorsement or authorizing use of their title.

Ex. A candidate approaches a planning commission board member and asks for their endorsement. The candidate asks if they can use the board member's title, and the board member agrees. This is allowable if the board member was on their personal time when they authorized the endorsement.

Ex. A candidate, attending a planning commission meeting, asks the board members for an endorsement and some board members agree. The board members are not allowed to do this because they are at a meeting and therefore acting in an official capacity

In addition, the Elections Division will answer questions about specific scenarios. The division also operates a Safe Harbor program, which will review materials created by a public agency to ensure compliance with ORS 260.292. To learn more, contact the Elections Division using the information below:

## **Assistance**

If you have any questions about the material covered in this manual or need further assistance, please contact:

**Elections Division**  
255 Capitol St NE  
Suite 126  
Salem OR 97310

✉ [elections.sos@sos.oregon.gov](mailto:elections.sos@sos.oregon.gov)  
📍 [www.oregonvotes.gov](http://www.oregonvotes.gov)


☎ **503 986 1518**  
☎ **1 866 673 8683** se habla español  
tty **1 800 735 2900** for the hearing impaired  
Fax **503 373 7414**



# Restrictions on Political Advocacy by Public Employees

*Published by*

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## Icons

The following icons are used in this manual to emphasize information:



**alert icon**

indicates alert; warning; attention needed



**info icon**

indicates additional information



**deadline icon**

indicates a deadline



**example icon**

indicates an example



**form icon**

indicates a reference to a form



**search icon**

indicates information located elsewhere

## Assistance

If you have any questions about the material covered in this manual or need further assistance, please contact:

**Elections Division**

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Suite 126  
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[elections.sos@sos.oregon.gov](mailto:elections.sos@sos.oregon.gov)



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**Fax 503 373 7414**

## Using this Manual

This manual sets forth allowable and restricted political activities by public employees, consistent with ORS 260.432 *et seq.*, and advice from the Attorney General. Any conflict between this manual and ORS 260.432 must be resolved in favor of the statute. This manual is adopted by Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 165-013-0030 and violations of this rule are to be enforced as violations of ORS 260.432. Examples and lists are used for illustrative purposes only and are not meant to be exhaustive or exclusive. Also included is information about the Elections Division's prior review process and obtaining safe harbor approval for documents and other materials prior to publication or distribution.

Essentially, public employees may not engage in certain political activity prohibited under ORS 260.432 while on the job during working hours or when acting in their official capacity. This manual details what it means to promote or oppose, and when a public employee is considered to be "on the job during working hours." An Oregon Attorney General opinion dated October 5, 1993 states:

"Public bodies may use public funds to inform voters of facts pertinent to a measure, if the information is not used to lead voters to support or oppose a particular position in the election. However, we also have pointed out that 'informational' material may be found to 'promote or oppose' a measure even if it does not do so in so many words if the information presented to the public clearly favors or opposes the measure and, taken as a whole, clearly is intended to generate votes for or against a measure."

## Who Must Comply with ORS 260.432?

All non-elected public employees are prohibited from engaging in political activity proscribed by ORS 260.432. No person, including elected officials or a public employer, may direct a public employee to engage in certain political advocacy proscribed by the statute.

Federal employees, including persons principally employed by state or local executive agencies in connection with programs financed in whole or in part by federal loans or grants, are covered by the federal Hatch Act, which is administered by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

### Candidates and Elected Officials

An elected official may engage in political activity during work time. Elected officials are not considered public employees for purposes of ORS 260.432. An individual appointed to fill a vacancy in an elective public office is considered an elected official for purposes of this statute.

Elected officials cannot request that public employees who are on the job during working hours or acting in an official capacity engage in political advocacy prohibited under ORS 260.432. A request made by an elected official is considered a command.

An elected official's quote, opinion piece, letter or speech advocating a political position may be published in a public agency's newsletter or other publication produced or distributed by public employees so long as public employees did not alter or edit the content in any substantive way. Equal access must be granted to any individual, person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office or political committee.



See [Material Produced by Public Agencies](#), page 12.

See [Voters' Pamphlet](#), page 13, for an exception to this standard.

Public employees may not prepare material that promotes or opposes certain matters set forth in ORS 260.432, including but not limited to the text for a speech, a press release, constituent mail that advocates a vote, candidate filing forms, voters' pamphlet filing forms, file contribution and expenditure transactions online, etc. during their work time.

An elected official, as part of a governing body, may vote to support or oppose a measure under consideration for referral. The elected official may publicly discuss the vote. Elected officials may not use public employee staff time to develop political advocacy proscribed by ORS 260.432, except for administrative functions.

### Appointed Board Members and Commissioners

ORS 260.432 applies to all appointed board and commission members when they are acting in their official capacity. This includes, but is not limited to, attending a meeting of the board or commission, working on a duty assigned by the board or commission, working on official publications (including website materials) for the board or commission, or when appearing at an event in an official capacity.

Appointed board or commission members may use their titles to engage in political advocacy (including endorsing people seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office, measures, etc.) as long as they are not on the job during working hours or acting in an official capacity when making the endorsement or authorizing use of their title.



A candidate approaches a planning commission board member and asks for their endorsement. The candidate asks if they can use the board member's title, and the board member agrees. This is allowable if the board member was on their personal time when they authorized the endorsement.



A candidate, attending a planning commission meeting, asks the board members for an endorsement and some board members agree. The board members are not allowed to do this because they are at a meeting and therefore acting in an official capacity.



See [Use of Public Employee Title](#) on page 7 for more information.

## Salaried and Hourly Employees

Hourly employees' work time includes any time they are "on the job during work hours" which includes any time for which the employee is compensated, minus breaks and lunch periods protected by labor laws. This includes, but is not limited to, regular work hours, overtime, travel or conferences. Activities associated with attending a conference, such as award dinners or other sponsored events, could qualify as being "on the job during working hours" and are subject to the provisions of ORS 260.432.

Salaried employees' work time is not as easily measured as hourly workers. When a salaried employee is acting in their official capacity ORS 260.432 prohibitions apply regardless of the time of day or location.

If a salaried employee applies for expense reimbursement for a function or event, the employee is deemed to be on the job during working hours for the applicable time period. A regular workday may not be definable for a position, or may not have a specific time period or schedule. Whether the employee is on the job during work hours is determined by the activities performed and whether the person is acting, or appears to be acting, in an official capacity.

It is a good practice for salaried employees to keep personal notes to record when they are on or off duty. During public appearances, the employee is encouraged to specifically announce to the audience that they are not acting in their official capacity. However, such an announcement would not negate a subsequent statement or action that indicates the public employee is acting in his or her official capacity (such as handing out official publications, or speaking on behalf of the public agency).

Certain activities that are always undertaken in an official capacity (regardless of time of day or location) and are therefore subject to the provisions of ORS 260.432 include:


- Drafting material for, or approving material, to be posted on an official website;
- Drafting or distributing an official publication from the public agency; and
- Appearing at an event as a representative of a public agency.

**ex** If a salaried police officer attends a meeting about a bond measure on their own time (i.e. while not "on duty") and advocates for the measure, the officer should announce to the audience that they are appearing in their capacity as a citizen, and are not representing the police department.

However, if the police officer hands out official publications from the public agency, the police officer would be acting in their official capacity (despite their previous announcement) and would be subject to the requirements provisions of ORS 260.432.

**ex** A school superintendent acts in their official capacity at all school board meetings and school functions.


Public employees have the right to participate in political activity on their own time. A public employee is not on the job during working hours or acting in their official capacity solely because they may be subject to a call back to duty at any time.

 See [Use of Public Employee Title on page 7](#) for more information.

## Volunteer Personnel at a Public Agency

Volunteers, other than members of appointed boards or commissions, receiving no compensation are not considered public employees and therefore are not subject to the provisions of ORS 260.432(2) which prohibits public employees from engaging in political advocacy while on the job during working hours or in their official capacity. However, all persons are subject to the provisions of ORS 260.432(1) which prohibits anyone from directing a public employee to engage in prohibited political advocacy set forth in the statute. Workers' compensation coverage is not considered compensation.


Volunteers may be bound by the policies of the public agency. The policies may include limits on political advocacy during their volunteer activities as well as limits on access to agency resources for advocacy purposes. While a volunteer will not be liable under ORS 260.432, a public employee may violate if the public employee directs a volunteer to engage in political advocacy.

 If a public employee directs a volunteer to generate and distribute a flyer advocating for or against a measure, this would constitute a violation of ORS 260.432 on the part of the public employee.

## Government Contractors

Public employees may not direct government contractors to engage in prohibited political activity as part of the contracting service.

Contractors are bound by the policies of the agency and the terms of the contract. A public employee may be liable under the statute if they direct a contractor to engage in prohibited political advocacy.

 A school district may hire a public relations firm to help communicate with the public about an upcoming measure. If the public relations firm drafts material to be approved and disseminated by public employees, the material must be impartial. If the material is violative of ORS 260.432, the public employee who approved it would be liable.


## National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and ORS 247.208(3)

While the restrictions imposed under ORS 260.432 apply generally to all public employees, ORS 247.208(3) imposes a separate and rigorous set of restrictions that apply only to persons who provide voter registration services required under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). NVRA is a federal law enacted by Congress in 1993.

Public employees or other persons providing NVRA-required voter registration services on behalf of a designated agency may not:

- seek to influence the political preference or party registration of a person registering to vote;
- attempt to or actually discourage a person from registering to vote;
- display any indications of political preference or party allegiance (including the choice of people seeking appointment, nomination or election to partisan political office);
- make any statement or take any action while assisting a person with voter registration that would lead the person to believe the voter registration has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits;
- seek to induce any person to register to vote or to vote in any particular manner.

These restrictions prohibit public employees from wearing political buttons while performing NVRA services, which is more restrictive than the general rule set forth on [page 8](#).

 See OAR 165-005-0070 for detailed guidelines.

## Overview of Common Activities

Essentially, public employees may not use their work time to engage in certain types of political advocacy. This applies only to activities restricted by ORS 260.432, such as supporting or opposing measures, a person seeking appointment, nomination, or election to public office, recalls, political committees or petitions. The following are examples of when provisions of ORS 260.432 begin and cease to apply:

- for initiative, referendum and recall petition efforts, as soon as a person is considering filing a prospective petition or actually does file a petition with the appropriate elections filing officer (for a statewide initiative, this is the date the sponsorship prospective petition is filed) and ending on the date the petition is withdrawn or otherwise becomes void;
- for a ballot measure, as soon as the measure is referred to the ballot by a governing body (district, city, county, state) or is otherwise certified to the ballot and ending at 8:00 pm on the date of the election at which the measure is being voted on. A county, city or district measure is certified to the ballot when the elections official files the referral with the county election office;
- when a person seeks appointment, nomination, or election to public office and ending when the person is no longer seeking public office; and
- for political committees, whenever the political committee is active regardless of whether the committee is registered on ORESTAR and ending on the date the political committee is discontinued.



The prohibitions may begin to apply again immediately after an election.

An elected official or public employer may not require or direct public employees to prepare or distribute advocacy materials, or otherwise engage in prohibited political advocacy while on the job during working hours or while acting in their official capacity. Oregon election law does not specify any amount of work time that may be used before a violation occurs. Accordingly, a public employee may be found in violation even if they used a minimal amount of work time.

### Notice to Public Employees

Public employers are required to post a notice to employees about the requirements of ORS 260.432 in a conspicuous place.



Visit the Elections Division's website to obtain a flyer for posting.

### Use of Public Employee Title


Public employees may use their work title in political advocacy so long as the title is the only indication that the public employee is acting in an official capacity. Use of a title may give the impression that a public employee is acting in an official capacity, so public employees should exercise caution. Public employees may not always have control over whether people or political groups add their title to a publication.



A public employee, after work on personal time, is asked whether they are willing to endorse a candidate with the purpose of including the endorsement on the candidate's website. The public employee agrees. Regardless of whether the candidate adds the title of the public employee on their own or whether the public employee specifically agrees for their title to be included, this is not prohibited by ORS 260.432 because the endorsement occurred after hours and the title is the only indication that the public employee may be acting in an official capacity. However, ORS 260.432 prohibits a public employee from discussing or agreeing to endorse a candidate while on the job during work hours or in their official capacity.

## Public Employers Discussing Possible Effects of a Measure with Public Employees

A public employer may tell employees about the possible effects of a measure so long as the information presented is impartial and balanced. Public employers may not encourage public employees to support or oppose the measure, implicitly or explicitly.


 ORS 260.665 prohibits threatening loss of employment (or other loss) or offering a thing of value to induce someone to vote in a particular manner.

## Distribution of Political Material within an Agency

Public employees may not distribute or post material that promotes or opposes certain political matters set forth in ORS 260.432 while on the job during work hours. However, public employees may, as part of their job duties, process and distribute incoming mail addressed to specific employees that contains such political advocacy.

Political material can be distributed within an agency if the person doing the distribution is not on the job, if other people would be granted such access, and the activity does not violate the applicable agency's policies.

Unions may distribute political materials to their members pursuant to their contract.

 A teacher may place information about their candidacy for a local office in the boxes of the other teachers at the school so long as any other candidate who asked would be allowed to distribute materials into the boxes and the material was distributed during their personal time.


 See [Email](#) on page 14 regarding responding to or forwarding political emails.

## Political Buttons and Clothing

Except as prohibited under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and ORS 247.208(3), public employees may wear political buttons or clothing at work so long as it does not violate their employer's policy. However, a public employer may not request or require that public employees wear political clothing, buttons, or other accessories.

## Uniforms


Generally, wearing a uniform while engaging in political advocacy is governed by the uniform policy of the public agency that issues the uniform. Wearing a uniform to a political event, or while giving a political presentation, is not prohibited by ORS 260.432, unless other elements of the presentation violate the statute. Public employees who wear uniforms and engage in advocacy should notify the audience that they are not acting in their official capacity.

 If a salaried police officer attends a meeting about a bond measure in their official uniform, it is not necessarily a violation of ORS 260.432, unless they engage in some form of prohibited political advocacy while wearing the uniform. The officer should announce to the audience that they are there in their capacity as a citizen and are not representing the police department. However, if the police officer attends the meeting while in uniform and makes a statement showing support for the bond measure, this could constitute a violation of ORS 260.432.

## Union Bulletin Boards

Public employee unions may have a designated bulletin board to post information. The location and contents of those bulletin boards are regulated by collective bargaining agreements and are not subject to the requirements of ORS 260.432. Unions may distribute political materials to their members pursuant to their contract.

Unions may email their members with political information so long as it does not require the employee to promote or oppose matters as prohibited under ORS 260.432 while on the job during working hours or while acting in their official capacity.

 See [Emails](#) on page 10 regarding responding to or forwarding political emails.



## Campaign Signs

Public employees may generally have political stickers on their personal property or display political signs in their work area, as long as they do so on personal time and such action does not violate ORS 260.432 or any employer policy. Public employers are encouraged to have written policies about posting political material at work.

Oregon election law does not address the size, location or timing of political campaign signs. Depending on the context, the relevant local or state government agency may have ordinances or policies that address campaign sign matters.

Public employees may not display any indications of political preference or party allegiance or wear political buttons while performing NVRA services.


 See [National Voter Registration Act \(NVRA\)](#) on page 6 for signage rules specific to NVRA employees.

## Public Property

If a governing body makes their property available for political events, they must grant equal access for all individuals, people seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office, and committees to use that same public property. This includes charging the same fee or requiring the same permit.

Public agencies may have policies that regulate the use of public property and/or other public resources. An agency's policy may be more restrictive than the requirements of ORS 260.432.


An elected official is not required to grant equal access to their office or equipment, even if it is in a public building.

 ORS 294.100 provides a limited remedy for possible inappropriate use of public resources. That statute is not within the jurisdiction of the Elections Division, and therefore we cannot give advice about compliance with that statute.

## Public Records

Public agencies must grant equal access to public records. All persons should be charged according to the same fee schedule, if applicable.

Public employees may respond to public records requests with information that contains advocacy, but may not proactively distribute advocacy material in a manner prohibited by ORS 260.432.


 See [Websites](#) on page 11, for information about links to previously published materials.

## Agency Interaction with Media

A spokesperson for an agency may respond to media inquiries about the possible effects of a measure or initiative so long as the information they provide is balanced and impartial. The public employee must not state or imply support or opposition.

A public employee may draft and distribute an impartial news release, but may not draft a news release promoting or opposing a resolution or political position on a measure.

Information that is entirely factual may nonetheless be considered advocacy if, for example, it omits the required cost information or indicates only what would happen if a measure passes and does not indicate what would happen if it does not pass.

 See [Resolutions \(Vote Taken\) by an Elected Governing Body](#), page 14.

## Guest Opinions or Letters to the Editor

If a public employee is asked in their official capacity to produce a guest opinion related to a ballot measure or a person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office, the content must be balanced and impartial. A public employee may write a letter to the editor that contains political advocacy so long as they do so on their own time and not in their official capacity.

## Contact Lists

Contact lists are considered public property if they are generated or supplied by a public agency. If contact lists are available to the public, a public employee must grant equal access to anyone who requests the list. This includes any list that the public body administers or maintains. The public body must charge the same fee, if any. This includes any list that the public body administers.

Candidates may use contact lists that they created themselves (including constituent contacts collected as an elected official) without granting equal access to other candidates.

**ex** This issue commonly arises with the use of personnel lists, public utility lists, email lists, voter lists, etc. Public bodies must allow equal access to these lists.

## Emails

Elected officials can send emails that contain political advocacy to their employees, so long as they do not request the employees promote or oppose matters prohibited under ORS 260.432 while on the job during working hours or while acting in their official capacity. An elected official cannot require that public employees read or respond to any email that contains such political advocacy and cannot require them to engage in any sort of political advocacy. This includes requiring their attendance at a political event, wearing political attire or sharing political emails or content. Requests made by an elected official are considered a command.

- Public employees may open and read emails that contain political advocacy. They may not, while on the job during working hours, send or forward emails that promote or oppose matters prohibited under ORS 260.432, except as outlined below. A public employee may:
  - forward an email containing advocacy to their personal email;
  - unsubscribe or otherwise ask to be removed for an email list while they are on the job during working hours;
  - forward an email containing links to advocacy material only when that material is pertinent to the agency and the public employee does not provide commentary.

Agencies are advised to have a policy on use of government email that incorporates the requirements of ORS 260.432. Unions can email their members with political information so long as it does not require the employee to engage in political advocacy while on the job during working hours or while acting in their official capacity.

## Websites

Material which promotes or opposes matters as prohibited under ORS 260.432 may not be posted by a public employee on a government website or blog unless it is part of an official function of the agency.

**ex** An elections website may contain voters' pamphlet information and a public agency may post information that is a record of a public meeting, even if such material contains advocacy.

Candidates and other political groups may link to government websites, but government websites may not contain links to advocacy prohibited material. A public employee could be considered to be acting in their official capacity, even during their personal time or when using personal equipment, when posting prohibited materials to an official agency website or social media account. This activity could constitute a violation of ORS 260.432. Government websites may contain public records about measures or people seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office. Those public records must be treated the same as other public records, which do not contain advocacy. Public records which contain advocacy cannot be proactively distributed or placed in a prominent location on a website when a measure or other restricted issue is pending.

Government agencies are advised to have a policy in place for their website that incorporates the requirements of ORS 260.432.

- ex** A city manager may produce a memorandum to the city council about the need for a possible future bond measure referral. If the city council refers the bond measure, then that memorandum cannot be proactively distributed after the measure is certified. The city could respond to a public records request for the memorandum or maintain it with, for example, the minutes for the meeting in an archival section of the website.

## Social Media

Public employees may not post material to an official government social media account that contains political advocacy prohibited by ORS 260.432. This includes “re-tweeting” or sharing a post or news article that contains political advocacy. Posts or shared materials must meet impartiality requirements, even when sharing outside links, articles or materials.

If a government agency interacts with individuals, people seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office or political committees on social media the agency must ensure that they treat them equally and that any agency interaction remains impartial.

For instance, if an agency allows comments on social media posts, it must ensure that comments in support of and in opposition to the political issues are treated equally.

A public employee may be acting in their official capacity even during their own personal time or when using personal equipment, when posting prohibited materials to an official agency website or social media account. This activity could constitute a violation of ORS 260.432.

- ex** An official school district Facebook page posts a “get out the vote” message. Several people offer comments, both in support of and in opposition to, a school district bond measure that is on the ballot. ORS 260.432 prohibits the school district from deleting negative comments while maintaining positive comments. A school district may delete a comment opposing or promoting the measure if the comment violates school district comment policy.

Agencies are advised to have policies on use of government social media accounts that incorporate the requirements of ORS 260.432.

## Images

The placement of an image can be as important as the image itself. An image that would not normally be persuasive on its own could urge support of or opposition to a measure, initiative, person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office, or recall, depending on context.



Logos used as part of an agency’s normal activities are generally allowable under ORS 260.432, even if the image could be considered persuasive. Altered logos or images that are not used in the regular course of business may be violative of ORS 260.432.

- ex** A school bond measure is being considered in an upcoming election. The school district distributes a flyer with information about the measure. The logo used on the flyer is different than what is normally used for the school district and adds the phrase “For Our Future.” Since this image is not generally used by the district, it would fall under the requirements of ORS 260.432 and may be violative of ORS 260.432.

## Verbal Communication

ORS 260.432 does not restrict the right of a public employee to express personal political views during their personal time. Further, it doesn’t prohibit a public employee from expressing personal political views during work time provided that a reasonable person would not infer that the employee’s opinion represents that of the public agency. However, a public employee may not express personal political views in a context that would lead


a reasonable person to infer that the employee's opinion represents that of the public employer or public agency.

-  A City Manager gives a presentation to staff about a pending measure. During the presentation, they say "I hope we all agree that it is important that this measure passes". That verbal communication would constitute a violation.
-  A city employee is speaking to their co-worker about a pending measure and expresses their personal political opinion about the measure. This would not constitute a violation because the co-worker could not infer that the employee's views represent that of the public agency.

## Public Presentations and Speeches

A public employee cannot give a speech or presentation advocating a political position prohibited under ORS 260.432 if they are on the job during working hours or acting in their official capacity. An elected official may give political presentations and speeches, so long as no public employee contributes substantively to the material.

When making a presentation that contains political advocacy during non-work time, the public employee should announce that they are acting in their capacity as a private citizen. The employee should also document that they were not on the job during working hours or acting in their official capacity.

-  Employees may document that they are on personal time by keeping a log, payroll records that indicate when they were on the job, time off slips, etc.

## Meetings


Public employees may attend meetings at which political issues are discussed, so long as they do not engage in prohibited political advocacy themselves while on the job during working hours or acting in their official capacity.

Public employees cannot be compelled to attend political presentations. If a public agency has a mandatory staff meeting and a political group is making a presentation, the agency must make it clear that attendance at the political presentation is optional. Public employees who do attend the political presentation must do so during personal time. Presentations promoting or opposing political matters set forth in ORS 260.432 should not occur in close proximity to events requiring public employee attendance.

## Forums/Debates

A governing body may sponsor a forum or debate if it is open to all sides but it is not necessary that all sides attend. A forum to allow political proponents and opponents to debate may be held using public employee work time so long as equal access is granted.

Public employees may use work time to arrange the forum and may perform administrative support functions in conjunction with the forum or debate and may attend on work time.

-  All public employee involvement in the forum or debate must be impartial. Public employees may not draft or select questions for the forum or debate.

## Advertising

Public agencies which raise funds through selling or hosting advertisements must grant equal access to any political group or person. The public body must charge the same fee, if any, to any individual, person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office or political committee for the same level of advertising space or time.

Public employees, while on the job during working hours or acting in their official capacity, should not design an advertisement or verbally promote, sponsor or oppose a person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office, political committee, measure, initiative or referendum at an event. A public employee may make edits to an advertisement that are administrative in nature, such as reviewing to ensure it will fit in the

designated space but must not make any substantive changes to the advertisement. Public agencies are advised to have written policies on advertising which incorporate the requirements of ORS 260.432.

## Video and Audio Productions

Video and audio productions created or distributed by public employees must be impartial. Public employees may not make recordings that advocate a political message prohibited by ORS 260.432.

Public employees may not edit a video in a manner that promotes or opposes matters prohibited by ORS 260.432.

Public employees may broadcast videos of meetings for public access channels and post the videos on government websites, even if the videos contain advocacy. Posting excerpts of a meeting in a manner which promotes or opposes prohibited matters is violative of ORS 260.432.



ORS 260.432 does not prohibit a public employee from videotaping or recording a city council meeting and post it on the city's official website. It may be a violation of ORS 260.432 if a public employee records a presentation supporting a ballot measure and distributes the video in a manner that promotes or opposes a measure.

## Scheduling Political Appearances

Public employees may maintain the schedule of a public official. Public employees may not solicit political scheduling opportunities for a public official but may respond to scheduling requests. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to, organizing campaign events, communicating about political matters with the press or constituents, or initiating any other political activity on behalf of the official.

## Visits to a Public Agency

A person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office may request to visit a public agency work site. The public agency must grant equal access to all similarly situated people and should not initiate these types of visits, except for forums or debates. Public employees involved with arranging for the visit may perform necessary administrative duties.

No public employee may take any actions to promote or oppose a person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office before or during the visit. This includes taking a political position when announcing the event, holding a campaign sign during the event or assisting a candidate in distributing campaign materials.

## Voters' Pamphlet

A public employee's duties may include producing an official voters' pamphlet. Public employees may not prepare measure arguments or candidate statements for inclusion in the voters' pamphlet while on the job during work hours or in their official capacity.



See [page 16](#) for information about ballot titles and explanatory statements.

## Postcards

Postcards produced or distributed by public employees must be impartial, balanced, and must not otherwise violate ORS 260.432. When a public employee is involved in the production of a series of small mailers, each piece must be individually impartial. Read together, the series of mailers must also be impartial. If a measure would affect taxes or fees, the material must state how taxes or fees would be affected. "Get Out The Vote" Materials (GOTV).

Public employees may produce "don't forget to vote" materials that generally promote voting so long as the material is impartial. Material can contain information about the date of the election, how to return ballots, etc. and can also include information about a measure, so long as the information is impartial.

## Government Logos

A governing body must allow equal access to logos for political purposes, meaning that if any a person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office is allowed to use the logo, all similarly situated people must

be allowed. An agency may not allow certain individuals to use their logos while prohibiting others from doing so. Public agencies are advised to have written policies about use of their logos.

### Government Letterhead

Election law does not regulate the use of government letterheads. Agencies are advised to have policies governing letterhead use which incorporate the requirements of ORS 260.432.

### State Seal

ORS 186.023 governs the use of the Oregon State Seal. Elected officials may use the state seal in an official capacity, but not in their capacity as a person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office.



For questions about the use of the Oregon State Seal, contact the Secretary of State, Executive Office at 503-986-1523.

### Resolutions (vote taken) by Elected Governing Body

Elected boards of governing bodies may take a position on a ballot measure (or initiative, referendum or recall petition) provided there is no use of public employee work time to advocate that position. With regard to a governing body's resolution that advocates a political position on a ballot measure, initiative, referendum or recall, a public employee:

May	May Not
Edit the public agency's name and board member names to conform it to the requirements for the resolution	Draft, type, or edit substantive content contained in the resolution
Prepare neutral, factual information for the board to use in taking a position on the measure, including impartial information on how the measure could affect the public agency	Recommend how to vote on the resolution
Be available at the board meeting to offer impartial information upon request	Sign a resolution, unless the public employee's signature is ministerial and included only to attest that the board took the vote
Respond to direct questions from the media about the resolution, if their response is impartial	Prepare a news release or other announcement promoting or opposing the resolution
If the public agency lists all votes on resolutions in a regularly published publication, they may include the vote in an impartial manner	Prepare and include impartial information about the vote or position of the governing body in a newsletter or other publication
Use work time to record the vote if that is part of the employee's work duties	
Use work time for regular job duties, such as responding to public records requests, taking minutes, retyping the resolution to conform to the required format, etc.	

### Petitions and Measures

Public employees may produce and distribute advocacy material about referrals prior to the measure being certified to the ballot. Any public employee work time used to change, amend, edit, distribute, etc. a document found to be supporting or opposing a referral between the date it is certified to the ballot until the date of the pertinent election could be a violation of ORS 260.432.

The actions taken by a governing body and its public employees in the planning stages of a possible measure are not subject to ORS 260.432.

Public employees may respond to public records requests for documents that contain advocacy, even if the measure has been certified. They may not proactively distribute those materials after the measure is certified.

- ex** If a school district has a recurring bond levy, district employees may not proactively distribute any materials from the previous levies (even though those elections have passed) during the period between certification and the current election.

### Ballot Titles

Public employees are not liable under ORS 260.432 for drafting ballot titles as part of their regular job duties. Public employees may use work time to draft ballot titles. A public employee may also defend a challenged ballot title. Because the impartiality requirements and ballot title challenge process in ORS chapter 250 are distinct from the requirements of ORS 260.432, this office will not review ballot titles for impartiality.

### Explanatory Statements

Public employees are not liable under ORS 260.432 for drafting explanatory statements as part of their regular job duties. Public employees may use work time to draft explanatory statements. Because the impartiality requirements and explanatory statement process in ORS chapters 251 are distinct from the requirements of ORS 260.432, this office will not review explanatory statements for impartiality.

### Legal Challenges

Public employee's involvement in legal court challenges as part of their regular job duties is not a violation of ORS 260.432.

- ex** Examples of legal challenges include whether an initiative petition meets constitutional requirements, whether a ballot title complies with statutory standards, etc.

### Legislation and Lobbying

Legislative bills are not covered by ORS 260.432. Therefore, it is allowable, under Oregon election law, for public employees to lobby governing bodies. Once a referral has been certified to the ballot, political advocacy is restricted by ORS 260.432.

- i** For more information about lobbying, contact the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

### Advising Elected Official on Appointments

A public employee may communicate with other employees and with an elected official about the appointment of a person to a public office if the communication is made in furtherance of their official duties to make an appointment required by the Oregon Constitution or a state statute.

- ex** It is not a violation for a public employee to provide the governor with their personal opinions about a list of people being considered for appointment to a vacant judicial position.

## Review of Public Agency Material

Material produced by public employees while on the job during work hours or by a contracted entity must be balanced and impartial. At a public agency's request, the Elections Division will review materials created by the public agency under the Division's Safe Harbor program to ensure compliance with ORS 260.432. If Safe Harbor is granted, and the Division later receives a complaint concerning the material, the Division will not investigate or issue civil penalties so long as the material does not deviate from the approved version. However, safe harbor approval does not shield agencies from associated activities which may be violative of ORS 260.432.

### Submitting Documents for Review

Documents must be submitted in an editable format such as Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. In the case of videotaped material, agencies are encouraged to submit a proposed script prior to submitting in video form. The Elections Division will only review material which has not been previously published.




## Review Process

Material submitted to the Elections Division under the Elections Division's Safe Harbor program is edited for compliance with ORS 260.432 and returned to the agency for review and further editing. Participating agencies are encouraged to build plenty of time into their communications plan if safe harbor approval is desired. Safe harbor approval is not guaranteed, even if the agency resubmits the material.


Review of the initial submission of material can take up to 5 business days. However, if five or more requests are submitted for review in the aggregate within one calendar week (Sunday through Saturday), the Elections Division will review the materials within 10 business days.

Each public agency may submit a total of 5 original submissions for review per election. Materials may be resubmitted once, for a total of two reviews prior to a final determination. Resubmissions will be processed in as timely a fashion as possible, given other business demands on the Division.

 Safe harbor material must be submitted by the 21st day before the applicable election.


Once a document has received safe harbor approval, the submitting agency may include a disclaimer that reads: "This information was reviewed by the Oregon Elections Division for compliance with ORS 260.432." The above disclaimer and addition of the applicable measure number are the only acceptable alterations that may be made post-approval.

If safe harbor is granted, the text of the material may be replicated in different formats so long as all the content is unchanged. If approved material is substantively altered and published by the submitting agency, safe harbor protection is rescinded.

 If an agency submits a postcard for review, the agency may use the exact same content on a mailer without receiving safe harbor approval for the mailer.

The Elections Division does not review materials for the following:

- typographical, or grammatical errors
- accuracy or truthfulness of the content
- accuracy of translated materials

 ORS 260.532 governs false statements in elections material. It prohibits false statements of material fact about candidates, political committees, or measures. The Elections Division does not have the authority to enforce the statute. Rather, a person may file their claim with the appropriate circuit court.

## Review Criteria

The overall inquiry for determining impartiality is whether the material "promotes or opposes" an initiative, referendum or recall petition; a person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office; measure; political committee; or recall question. In order to be impartial for the purposes of ORS 260.432, a document must meet certain requirements such as:

- Materials must not implicitly or explicitly urge a yes or no vote;
- Materials must be factually balanced;
- If the material includes information about what a measure would pay for or do, it must also describe information about what would happen if the measure does not pass;
- If the material pertains to a measure that would affect property taxes, it must include the cost per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Material that is entirely factual can still be prohibited if, for example, it omits the required cost information or indicates only what would happen if a measure passes and does not indicate what would happen if it does not pass. The requirements are discussed in further detail below.



## Vote Yes/No

The contents of the document must not urge a yes or no vote for the measure. There should be no “vote yes” or “vote no” language. The document must not include phrases such as:

- “Vote Yes on Measure 99,”
- “Support for Measure 99 is encouraged,”
- “The County is asking voters to approve,”
- “Why Should I Vote for Measure 99?”
- “Voters are asked to support Measure 99,”
- “At election time, please support the Home Rule Charter,”
- “On May 15, 2012, Anytown voters are being asked to continue their support of the community youth by renewing the Youth Action Levy, Measure 57,” and
- “Please support our incumbent mayor.”

Even if the remainder of the document is impartial, explicitly urging someone to vote in a particular manner would be a violation of ORS 260.432.

## Balance of Factual Information

Documents produced by public agencies must not be one-sided. They must include a balance of factual information. If a document states what would happen if a bond measure were to pass, it must also include information regarding what would happen if it does not pass. If the material includes just one side of a matter, it is potentially violative of ORS 260.432 because it is not balanced and impartial.

## Description of Cost

If a measure proposes a change to taxes or fees, the cost of the measure to an individual taxpayer or consumer must be included. In the context of a bond levy, this is generally the cost per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The cost must not be worded in a way to minimize it. An estimate is allowed if the exact cost is not known.

**ex** Describing a cost as “less than”, “merely”, or “only” is not compliant with ORS 260.432.

A public agency may state that the bond, if renewed, would continue to cost \$X.00 per \$1,000 of assessed property value where the measure proposes a continuation of the tax at the same rate. It is also allowable to state how much the bond would increase taxes compared to the previous bond, so long as the full cost information is also included.

**ex** “The ABC School bond, if passed, would cause an increase of \$0.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value over the previous bond. The total rate if the bond is passed would be \$1.45 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.”

For measures that use funding mechanisms other than cost per \$1,000 of assessed property value, the cost must be described in a way that clearly informs the public of how the measure would affect taxes.

## Persuasive or Minimizing Language and Images/Graphics

Material created by a public agency should only provide factual, balanced and unbiased information regarding the topic at issue. Language prohibited under ORS 260.432 can include anything that implicitly or explicitly urges an individual to support or oppose a measure, recall, petition or person seeking appointment, nomination or election to public office. Avoid language that would be considered persuasive, emotional or vague. These types of words or phrases may be violative of ORS 260.432.

## Commonly Used Words or Phrases & Alternatives

Common words or phrases to watch for when drafting a document that falls under ORS 260.432:

→ **Use** “If the bond measure passes, it would...” but not “The bond will...”

It is important to avoid language that might indicate certainty that the bond will pass or fail as this can be considered as persuasive. If the document reads that “The bond will...” it can lead a voter to believe that their vote against the bond is insignificant and they should either not vote or vote for the bond.

→ **Use** “Please remember to vote” but **not** “Please vote for Measure...”

Asking the reader to vote for the measure is violative of ORS 260.432 because this encourages people to vote in a certain way.

→ **Use** “The bond measure would cost \$x...”, but **not** “The bond would only cost \$x...”

Using the word “only” minimizes the cost of the bond and encourages a vote in support. Alternative wording may include, “If the bond passes, the tax rate would be...” By changing the wording the statement becomes neutral and provides factual information regarding the cost of the measure. It is important to also include language regarding the cost and consequences if the bond does not pass.

## Unbalanced Language or Content

The material published or otherwise provided to voters should not be one-sided. It must include a balance of factual information and the information should fairly and neutrally explain the effect of the measure. The text should set out objective advantages or disadvantages of the measure.

**ex** If the bond passes, the city would hire five new police officers.

→ Information is only provided for what would happen if the bond passes. Material which omits information regarding what happens if the bond does not pass is unbalanced and biased.

Alternative language could be: If the bond passes, the city would hire five new officers. If the bond does not pass, staffing would remain at the current level, and taxes would not be increased.

## Enforcement

Any Oregon elector may request an investigation into potential violations of Oregon election law. Requests may be submitted using the Elections Division’s online form or in writing. If the Elections Division receives a complaint after an agency’s materials are granted safe harbor approval, the Division will not investigate or penalize the agency so long as:

- 1 The agency did not alter the approved materials;
- 2 The material was used in a manner consistent with all provisions of ORS 260.432

If the Elections Division opens an investigation and determines that a violation occurred, the Division will proceed as set forth under OAR chapter 165, ORS chapter 260 and ORS chapter 183.

## Who is Liable

Any public employee who authors, drafts or approves the use of material that promotes or opposes certain matters as set forth in ORS 260.432 may be liable. This includes any public employee who creates content for inclusion in material prohibited by ORS 260.432. A supervisor or any other person who requests or directs that a public employee create prohibited materials or who oversees creation of the material, may also be in violation of ORS 260.432, even if they are not the author of the document.

## FORM: Policy Proposal Submission

Purpose: For submission of a policy proposal to Commission for approval

POLICY PROPOSAL: Details	
<b>Requesting Staff:</b>	
<b>Program:</b>	
<b>Policy Type:</b> <i>(new, amend, remove)</i>	
<b>Policy Duration:</b> <i>(temporary, permanent)</i>	
<b>Proposed Effective Date:</b> <i>(needed by)</i>	
Background	
<b>Purpose:</b> <i>Provide a brief statement describing the purpose of the proposed policy.</i>	
<b>Background:</b> <i>Provide a brief background and context for the proposed policy. Does the policy address a new issue, improve an existing disparity, and other relevant information.</i>	
<b>Proposal:</b> <i>Provide the proposed policy in detail, including any specific provisions, requirements, or guidelines. If this is an amendment request, provide the text of the current policy.</i>	
<b>Strategic Alignment:</b> <i>Describe how this policy supports the <u>strategic goals</u> of the Commission.</i>	
<b>Area of Impact</b> <i>What Commission program, initiative, or focus area does the policy impact?</i>	
DEI Outcomes and Benefits	
<i>Describe the potential or intended impact of the proposed policy. Who are the persons, groups, or communities affected?</i>	

<i>Who will benefit from the policy, directly and indirectly? Who will be burdened from the policy? How does the policy increase or decrease equity?</i>	
<b>Community-Informed Policy</b>	
<i>What are the ways community members, stakeholders, partners, or affected groups were engaged in the policy development? Was there any community not represented that should be? What are the barriers/remedies to barriers planned?</i>	
<i>Describe the steps required to implement the proposed policy, including any necessary resources, timelines, or milestones.</i>	
<i>Describe the plan to communicate and/or train on the policy. Describe how approach will reflect inclusive, accessible, and culturally responsive practices.</i>	
<b>Data-Informed Decision Making</b>	
<i>How was data used to inform the design of the policy? Was there a community engagement process or other outreach process included in the collection of the data?</i>	
<b>Data Collection &amp; Evaluation</b>	
<i>Describe how the proposed policy will be evaluated and assessed for effectiveness and impact over time. How will you evaluate your progress and stay accountable to equity goals? How are you collecting and analyzing disaggregated data on race, ethnicity, income, and other demographics or identities?</i>	

## FORM: Policy Proposal Review

Purpose: For guidance to Commission; documentation of review of policy proposal.

POLICY PROPOSAL: Type	
Requesting Staff:	
Program:	
Policy Type: <i>(new, amend, remove)</i>	
Policy Duration: <i>(temporary, permanent)</i>	
Proposed Effective Date: <i>(needed by)</i>	
Committee Review & Recommendation	
Commission Approval: <i>(yes/no)</i>	
Commission Approval with Recommended Amendments: <i>(yes/no with recommendations)</i>	
REVIEW GUIDANCE	DISCUSSION NOTES
Does the proposed policy address the issue effectively?	
Does the proposed policy consider the needs and perspectives of diverse stakeholders?	
Does the proposed policy address any potential barriers to access or participation for underrepresented groups?	
Does the proposed policy provide opportunities for marginalized groups to be represented and heard?	
Does the proposed policy promote diversity and representation in decision-making?	
Does the proposed policy establish measures for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the policy?	
Does the proposed policy establish clear goals and objectives for diversity, equity, and inclusion?	
Does the proposed policy reflect an understanding of cultural differences and norms?	
Does the proposed policy identify and address potential barriers that may disproportionately impact certain groups?	

Has a DEI impact assessment been conducted for this policy?	
Does the proposed policy include a plan for measuring effectiveness?	
Does the proposed policy include a plan to take steps to continuously improve the policy from a DEI perspective based on feedback and data?	
Is there a plan for inclusive communications and engagement, to communicate policy and its impact in compelling, clear, accessible, and transparent ways?	

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**FORM: Policy Proposal Comment**

*Purpose: To provide for opportunity of comment on the proposed policy.*

<b>POLICY PROPOSAL: Details</b>	
<b>Program:</b>	
<b>Policy Type:</b> <i>(new, amend, remove)</i>	
<b>Policy Duration:</b> <i>(temporary, permanent)</i>	
<b>Proposed Effective Date:</b> <i>(needed by)</i>	
<b>Purpose of Policy:</b>	
<b>Policy Language:</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Clarity:</b> Are there any parts of the policy that are confusing or unclear?	
<b>Opinion on the policy:</b> Do you support or oppose the policy as proposed? Please explain. What are the strengths or weaknesses of the policy proposal? Is there anything you would change about the policy proposal?	
<b>Impact:</b> How do you think this will impact you or your community? What positive outcomes do you think could happen from this policy? What negative outcomes do you think could happen from this policy?	
<b>Putting the policy into place:</b> Is the timeline reasonable? What resources would be needed? How should it be communicated? What challenges are there for putting the policy into place?	
<b>Equity and Inclusivity:</b> Does this policy adequately address equity and inclusion? Is there anyone or	

<p>group that will be negatively affected by this policy if it is put into place? If so, how?</p>	
<p><b>Improvement:</b> Do you have any suggestions for improvement? Are there alternative solutions to the problem or issue you would like to share?</p>	
<p><b>Additional Comments:</b> Is there anything else you would like to share about the proposed policy?</p>	
<p><b>Follow-Up:</b> If we have questions about your comments, and need further clarification, may we contact you? If so, please provide your phone number and/or email.</p>	

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**2022-2024**

**State Service Plan for Oregon**

# STRATEGIC FOCUS SUMMARY

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**STRATEGIC FOCUS 1:**  
Evidence-Based, Inclusive Programs

**Strengthen Impacts Of Service**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 2:**  
Volunteer Engagement

**Engage Oregonians In Making A Difference**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 3:**  
Community Capacity-Building

**Foster Ready & Resilient Communities**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 4:**  
Partnership & Policy

**Position Commission As A Leader In Service**

**STRATEGIC FOCUS 5:**  
Intergenerational Impacts

**Increase Service Involvement Of Older Adults**

# INTRODUCTION

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OregonServes, the AmeriCorps State Service Commission<sup>1</sup>, was created in 1994, as Oregon Volunteers, to provide Oregonians with a statewide entity to focus service and volunteer efforts, to enhance the ethic of service and voluntarism in the state and provide funds for state-based AmeriCorps programs. As a state commission, OregonServes' role is to promote and elevate service, volunteerism and civic engagement in Oregon Communities.

## OUR VISION

Engaged individuals, empowered communities, and an equitable Oregon.

## OUR MISSION

We advance volunteerism, service and civic engagement to enrich lives and strengthen Oregon communities.

## OUR VALUES

**Impactful:** We engage individuals in purpose-driven service.

**Innovative:** We commit to continuous learning and creative solutions.

**Collaborative:** We build relationships that strengthen Oregon communities.

**Inclusive:** We elevate equity, diversity, and belonging.

## OUR WORK

OregonServes advances national and community service in Oregon by:

- ❖ Establishing and implementing a statewide vision for volunteerism, national service and civic engagement.
- ❖ Promoting initiatives for expansion of service opportunities and impacts.
- ❖ Introducing policy and supporting legislation that furthers the Commission's service goals.
- ❖ Acting as a central hub for the national service network in the state and administering funding to AmeriCorps State programs to make impactful contributions in local communities.
- ❖ Championing greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in Oregon's service and volunteer opportunities.
- ❖ Coordinating national and community service resources to ensure communities are equipped to prepare, respond, and recover from disaster.
- ❖ From youth to adult, promoting activities that instill a lifelong commitment to service, and lead to personal, educational, and career achievements.

OregonServes is an entity of the State of Oregon, housed within the Office of Workforce Investments (OWI), within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC). OregonServes is supported by an Executive Director, program staff, and a Commission Board.

## COMMISSION BOARD

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. Now known solely as AmeriCorps, the federal agency is the nation's largest grant-maker for service and volunteering, plays a critical role in strengthening America's nonprofit sector and addresses our nation's challenges through service.

As stated in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, state commissions must exist in order for a state to apply and accept national service grants. According to the Code of Federal Regulations §2550.2 (l), a State Service Commission is a bipartisan or nonpartisan state entity, approved by the Corporation, consisting of 15–25 members (appointed by the chief executive officer of the state), that is responsible for developing a comprehensive national service plan, assembling

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2021 Oregon Legislative Session, through Senate Bill 77, the legislature approved a name change for the state commission. The name change is effective January 1, 2022.

applications for funding and approved national service positions, as well as administering national and community service programs in the state.

The Oregon Volunteer and Community Service Act, passed in 2007, also solidified OregonServes' role to promote the development of better communities by using citizen participation and volunteerism to foster greater civic responsibility. Commission members play an important role by representing the Commission at events, advising on funding priorities, identifying public policy priorities, setting state goals for service and volunteerism through development of the State Service Plan, informing the legislature on activities of the Commission, and conducting outreach and education visits to raise awareness of the impact of national service and volunteer programs across the state.

## **AMERICORPS**

Through federal funding provided by AmeriCorps, OregonServes administers funding to local AmeriCorps programs, called AmeriCorps State programs. AmeriCorps funds projects and programs that address community needs in the focus areas of: Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Environmental Stewardship, Education, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families.

AmeriCorps State programs provide an opportunity for people to serve at locations across Oregon through nonprofits, schools, public agencies, tribes, higher education institutions, and community and faith-based groups. People serving in AmeriCorps State programs are called AmeriCorps members. Members serve a term of service (typically one year) at their location, earning a living stipend and, at the end of their service term, a Segal AmeriCorps Education award that can be used to pay back student loans or cover education costs.

Since 1994, more than 20,000 Oregon residents have served approximately 27 million hours through AmeriCorps, earning Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards totaling more than \$66.7 million.<sup>2</sup>

OregonServes' primary duties as an administrator of AmeriCorps funding includes development of a state service plan, establishing state priorities for national service programs, providing training and technical assistance to grantees and national service partners, assist in provision of benefits to national service participants, support recruitment of AmeriCorps members in programs, administration of statewide grant competition, and conducting monitoring and oversight.

### **Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 660.515:**

The OregonServes Commission shall:

- (1) Develop programs and provide oversight and administration of programs granted to this state By AmeriCorps under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, as amended.
- (2) Prepare state applications to AmeriCorps for financial assistance for state-based service programs.
- (3) Establish state priorities for volunteerism and develop a three-year, comprehensive national and community service plan based on the priorities.
- (4) Develop projects, training methods, curriculum materials and other materials and activities related to state service programs that receive assistance directly from AmeriCorps.
- (5) Coordinate national service and volunteer service in statewide activities for disaster preparedness, response and relief activities and climate mitigation. Coordination under this subsection must include establishing an administration, training methods and curriculum materials.

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<sup>2</sup> [National Service in Oregon](#)

## **VOLUNTEERISM & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

As the State Commission, Oregon Volunteers is also charged with supporting and encouraging volunteerism and civic engagement activities within the state.

### **Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 660.515:**

Promote engagement in volunteerism and service for the purpose of strengthening communities in Oregon by:

- (1) Promoting a statewide volunteer recognition plan open to all sectors.
- (2) Assisting efforts by Oregon communities to encourage involvement in volunteerism.
- (3) Evaluating the status of volunteerism and service in the public, private and nonprofit sectors of this state.
- (4) Assisting efforts to inform young Oregonians about opportunities for involvement in the public, private and nonprofit sectors through service and volunteerism.
- (5) Promoting the value of service learning as an educational strategy in both kindergarten through grade 12 and higher education.
- (6) Promoting the concept and practice of business and corporate volunteering, with an emphasis on communities where business and corporate volunteering initiatives are less developed.
- (7) Promoting best practices in volunteer management, including screening and background check processes.
- (8) Promoting and supporting the concept of participation and volunteerism by all residents as an effective means of addressing community needs and achieving a collective commitment to lifelong community service.
- (9) Recognizing individual members of service and volunteer organizations as a means to honor and celebrate their impact on Oregon communities; and
- (10) Recognizing National Volunteer Week and AmeriCorps Week as a time for encouraging residents to participate in community service projects.

# STATE SERVICE PLAN

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The National and Community Service Trust Act requires that a plan “be developed through an open and public process...that provides for maximum participation and input from national service programs within the state and other interested members of the public.” The State Service Plan serves as a vehicle for creating a broad vision for promoting national service and volunteering and for building a solid infrastructure of high-quality service programs and support services. The plan is a blueprint for identifying state priorities, themes, and areas of emphasis among all the streams of service.

The Oregon State Service Plan 2022-24 serves two key roles for the OregonServes Commission. First, as a three-year State Service Plan, it showcases the Commission’s priorities, goals and desired outcomes. Second, as an organizational strategic plan, it provides a roadmap for policy development, capacity-building, and resource development for the Commission and staff.

## STATE SERVICE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with the federal requirements for State Service Plan development, OregonServes’ plan development included four primary processes: 1) Coordination under the guidance of The Coraggio Group, a strategy and organizational change management consultant firm, 2) Formation of a Steering Committee, comprised of staff and board members, 3) Review of the cumulative research, data, and feedback gathered over the last three years through grantee, partner and community conversations, including input from Oregon participants in the Report: Value of State Service Commissions, and 4) Input gathered through surveys and virtual listening sessions.

As part of the State Service Plan Development, the OregonServes Commission took the opportunity to reinvigorate the Commission’s mission, values, vision and purpose statements, to reflect a more inclusive vision of service.

## KEY FINDINGS

Across all streams of research, several themes consistently appeared. While the ethos of service is strong in Oregon – the state consistently ranks in the Top 10 for volunteerism – we heard that we could do better to strengthen service pathways, to invest further in existing community solutions, especially in historically underserved communities, and that barriers to service exist at both the local and national level, requiring intentional, strategic actions to ensure that service is inclusive and equitable.

- Rural regions of the state are often overlooked and left out of statewide planning and resource investments, particularly around disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
- National Service in Oregon needs greater visibility.
- Community organizations, especially those in rural areas, and serving BIPOC communities, need greater supports to increase impact and sustainability.
- The volunteer services network, especially in areas without a volunteer resource hub, would benefit from increased professional development opportunities, and access to statewide tools and resources.
- High housing costs, the rising cost of living, and the low living allowance are negatively impacting AmeriCorps programs, resulting in low enrollment and retention.
- More statewide data collection is needed to tell the story of service in Oregon.
- Oregon has the opportunity to create a strong statewide network of alumni.

## **STAKEHOLDER SECTOR THEMES**

### **THEME: EXPAND OPPORTUNITY, ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN NATIONAL SERVICE**

- Reduce Barriers to Service
- Increase Awareness of Opportunities in Rural and BIPOC Communities
- Increase Advocacy at Local and National Levels
- Further Statewide Coordination, Communication, Collaboration
- Support Alumni Engagement

### **THEME: INCREASE SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTEER SECTOR**

- Collect Data to Identify the 'State of Volunteerism'
- Increase Training and Technical Assistance to Volunteer Service Organizations
- Provide resources for recruitment, retention, recognition
- Support Statewide Coordination, Communication and Collaboration

### **THEME: INCREASE CAPACITY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

- Expand Opportunities for National and Community Service, Especially in Rural and Underserved Communities
- Invest in Community Capacity Building and Resiliency Efforts
- Increase Funding and Advocacy for Nonprofit Organizations at the Statewide Level

In 2019-20, OregonServes participated with four other state service commissions, (TX, OH, VT, UT) in a research study, commissioned by the state commission association, America's Service Commissions (ASC) and conducted by Dialogues in Action (DIA). The purpose of the study was to explore the value that state service commissions bring to their states. Respondents in each state participated through surveys and interviews, and overall included a broad range of members, alumni, national and community service partners, community organizations, and public officials.

Included in the development of the OregonServes state service plan are the insights and recommendations presented in the final report, including<sup>3</sup>:

**Place greater emphasis on elevating national service and volunteerism:** Leaders desire for commissions to play a greater role in elevating the value of national service and volunteerism in their states. Interviewees recognized that commissions' place in state government, statewide reach, and vantage point to see across the sector give them a unique ability to communicate the value of national service and volunteerism in the state.

**Strike a better balance between ensuring compliance and supporting impact and innovation.**

**Reduce barriers to equitable and inclusive service and volunteerism.** Better enable programs to support individuals, organizations and communities that can benefit most from national service. Addressing these systemic barriers will allow programs to engage and serve the state's most vulnerable citizens and communities more effectively.

**Play a more significant role in building the capacity of the social sector.** Leaders see the potential for using commissions' capacity-building expertise as a resource to help fill capacity and capability gaps in the nonprofit sector. This would result in organizations being able to take advantage of the opportunities AmeriCorps and volunteerism

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<sup>3</sup>[The Value of State Service Commissions](#)



present to further build their capacity while benefiting individuals and communities throughout the state.

**Developing strong, supportive relationships.** One of the most significant factors contributing to commissions' impact is the strong relationships commission staff have developed with grantees, partners, and community members. These strong relationships promote trust that enables commissions and programs to more proactively recognize and address issues. They also help to bring community members together to achieve their goals.

**Customizing support to meet programs' needs.** Data shows that programs value the unique and deep knowledge commission staff bring to their work. This knowledge provides comfort and camaraderie to program leaders and helps them feel supported in their work.

**Providing valuable training and resources.** The value of the training and resources that commissions provide was evident throughout the project. This is especially important given that many programs report having limited funding and capacity to seek professional development elsewhere.

**Strengthening support networks.** Commissions create an environment that promotes support and builds community despite the fact that programs are often competing for limited funding and resources.

**Purposeful convening.** Commissions' role as a convener brings people together to build community and share resources.

**Promoting stability and sustainability.** Commissions' support contributes to the stability and sustainability of organizations. The policies, procedures, and practices that commissions help programs develop elevate quality throughout the organization, enabling the organization to use its resources more efficiently and effectively.

**Including specific recommendations for greater impact for Oregon:**

- Build a strategic movement for service and volunteerism
- Capitalize on its potential roles as a connector, convener, and coordinator of strategy in the state to build a movement for national service and volunteerism.
- Become champions for equity and inclusion
- Build bridges between the public sector and communities to promote systemic change.
- Raise awareness about service and volunteerism throughout Oregon



# STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

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## **FOCUS: STRENGTHEN IMPACTS OF SERVICE**

### Objectives:

- Broaden awareness of national and community service opportunities and impacts, through increased data and research, marketing and outreach, community partnership-building, and state and local government collaboration.
- Prioritize funding to high-quality and evidence-based programs that demonstrate an impact on communities served.
- Explore opportunities to increase the benefits of service (member resources, certifications, hiring priorities, credits, tuition match, leadership opportunities), to ensure successful service terms and support pathways to education, employment, and post-service success.
- Promote equity and reduce barriers to national service for communities historically underserved, under-resourced, and marginalized by systemic oppression.

## **FOCUS: ENGAGE OREGONIANS IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

### Objectives:

- Promote accessible and equitable pathways to national service, volunteerism and civic engagement opportunities.
- Invest in resources and professional development activities that increase the capacity of community organizations to engage volunteers and national service members.
- Recognize the achievements of volunteers and national service members.

## **FOCUS: FOSTER READY & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

### Objectives:

- Provide communities with the resources and best practices needed to effectively engage volunteers to prepare, respond and recover from disasters.
- Strengthen partnerships with local, state, nonprofit, tribal and national service partners active in disaster.
- Coordinate the national service response to disaster through local deployments and leveraging of the national service network.

## **FOCUS: POSITION COMMISSION AS A LEADER IN SERVICE**

### Objectives:

- Secure resources to increase state service commission visibility, capacity and sustainability.
- Introduce innovative programming through collaborative relationships, inclusive engagement, and impactful policy.
- Establish a model framework for diversity, equity and inclusion to guide Commission operations.

## **FOCUS: INCREASE SERVICE INVOLVEMENT OF OLDER ADULTS (*AmeriCorps Supplemental Goal*)**

# NATIONAL SERVICE PRIORITIES

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## FUNDING PRIORITIES:

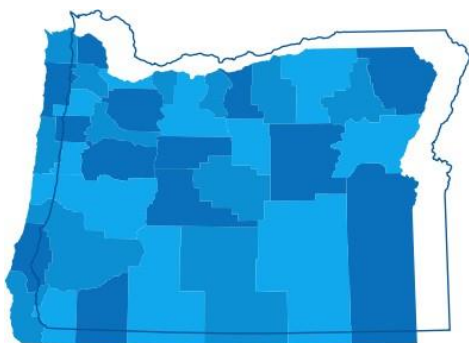
In addition to the national service focus areas of disaster response, healthy futures, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, and veterans and military families, OregonServes prioritizes the following:

- Efforts to help local communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Programs that actively engage in removing structural racial inequities, advancing racial equality, and increasing opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.
- Rural intermediaries - organizations that demonstrate measurable impact and primarily serve rural communities with limited resources and organizational infrastructure.
- Existing grantees that are seeking to expand an existing program model to a rural community or create a new program to address the above listed priorities.
- New programs from BIPOC-serving or led organizations.

## PRIORITIES IN DEVELOPING NEW SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:

- **Resource Gaps:** Activities that may include education and youth development, addressing learning loss, and supporting social-emotional child development.
- **Community Resiliency:** Activities that develop the capacity of communities such as building volunteer capacity, engaging community members as first responders, and improving partnerships and coalition-building among local organizations and agencies.
- **COVID-19:** Activities that center and serve communities who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19.
- **Environmental Equity:** Activities that improve natural environments such as wildfire mitigation, renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable food systems, and conservation and habitat preservation.
- **Health Disparities:** Activities that increase access to health care, including behavioral and mental health care, especially in underserved communities.
- **Housing Affordability and Rent Initiatives:** Activities that support community members with insecure housing such as conducting outreach to unhoused community members, delivery of services to unhoused individuals, and supporting affordable housing initiatives.
- **Racial Equity:** Activities that center and serve communities who are systemically underrepresented and under-resourced, including activities that aim to remove structural racial inequities, advance racial equity and increase opportunity in order to achieve sustainable change in communities.
- **Rural:** Activities that increase capacity and meet urgent needs in rural communities.
- **School-to-Prison Pipeline:** Activities that seek to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline for under-resourced communities such as youth mentorship, improving family relationships with schools, and alternatives to traditional school discipline policies.
- **Systemic Economic Disadvantages:** Activities that lift poverty such as supporting safety net programs, delivering financial literacy education, and providing tax preparation assistance.
- **Workforce Impacts:** Activities that support transitions into the workforce such as pre-apprenticeship programs, skill development, and connecting individuals with employers.

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION



As an entity within the State of Oregon, OregonServes approaches its responsibilities under the guidance of the State of Oregon Equity Lens. In addition to adopting the State of Oregon Equity Lens, OregonServes will integrate practices from the HECC Equity Lens and the State of Oregon Equity Framework in COVID-19 Response and Recovery.

National and Community Service is a special, unique sector with distinctive needs and qualities.

To ensure our work is meeting the need of our programs, members, partners and stakeholders, the OregonServes Commission continues work to adopt a Commission Equity Framework that will also guide our operations and ensure

that we take intentional and transformative actions to embody our values to be impactful, innovative, collaborative and inclusive.

## STATE OF OREGON DEI ACTION PLAN

### DEI Action Plan Objectives

#### Normalize

Normalize the concepts of racial justice in the state government enterprise – acknowledge history, utilize a racial equity roadmap, familiarize by using concepts and tools that will support efforts to put racial equity at the forefront.

#### Organize

Organize efforts and build organizational capacity across departments for connected, cohesive, and amplified impacts. Foster both internal and external partnerships.

#### Operationalize

Operationalize and embed racial equity into every part of state government.

#### Guide

Guide and direct enterprise-level operationalizing of racial equity and DEI work.

#### Inspire

Inspire expansion of equity by sharing and collaborating to build on what is already happening.

## RACIAL EQUITY VISION

Within this context of historical harms, changing demographics, intersectional identities, and more; our vision for the next five years and beyond is to:

- **Dismantle** institutional and structural racism in Oregon state government, and by doing so, have resounding impacts on the communities of our great state.
- **Build** a more equitable Oregon where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, and everyone’s voice is heard.
- **Ensure** an inclusive and welcoming Oregon for all by celebrating our collective diversity of race, ethnicity, culture, color, disability, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and immigration status.

## RACIAL EQUITY VALUES

- **Putting racial equity at the forefront while understanding intersectionality.** We must be bold and put racial equity at the forefront as a primary and pervasive location of oppression that connects with and worsens other identity-based inequities.
- **Prioritize equity, anti-racism, and racial justice actions.** Commitment to prioritizing equity and eliminating racial disparities involves taking action in our policies, budgets, decision-making, and daily work.
- **Foster internal and external partnerships.** Across the state enterprise and other institutions, community-based organizations are crucial to achieving racial equity. True partnership means shared power, listening, resolving tensions by creating solutions together, and scaling up what already works well.
- **Ensure collective responsibility and accountability.** As public servants, we have a collective responsibility at every level of government to proactively reduce racial disparities and barriers. We must establish measurements of success so that we can ensure improvements are real and ongoing.<sup>4</sup>

## RACIAL EQUITY GOALS

- **Establish** strong leadership to eradicate racial and other forms of disparities in all aspects of state government.
- **Center** equity in budgeting, planning, procurement, and policymaking.
- **Strengthen** public involvement through transformational community engagement, access to information, and decision-making opportunities.
- **Improve** equitable access to services, programs, and resources including education, health, housing, human services, environmental justice, criminal justice, and economic opportunities.
- **Foster** an inclusive workplace culture and promote equitable hiring, retention, and promotion practices.

### State of Oregon's Definitions for Racial Equity, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Racial Equity** means closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive equally. This commitment requires a paradigm shift on our path to recovery through the intentional integration of racial equity in every decision.<sup>14</sup>

**Diversity** means honoring and including people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals. It emphasizes the need for sharing power and increasing representation of communities that are systemically underrepresented and under-resourced. These differences are strengths that maximize the state's competitive advantage through innovation, effectiveness, and adaptability.

**Equity** acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.

**Inclusion** is a state of belonging when persons of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues. Ultimately, inclusion is the environment that organizations create to allow these differences to thrive.

<sup>4</sup> [State of Oregon Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging](#)

## EVALUATION & REPORTING

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The strategic implementation of the plan will be coordinated under the supervision of the OregonServes Executive Director and Commission board and will be tracked through a strategic plan dashboard. Timely updates and progress on strategic goals and activities will be provided at each Commission meeting. The plan will be revisited and modified, at least annually, as necessary.

### **Appreciation To:**

OregonServes Commission Board and Staff

Oregon AmeriCorps Programs and Partners (NCCC, VISTA, Seniors, State and National)

The Coraggio Group

America's Service Commissions

Dialogues in Action

State of Oregon

The many alumni, members, volunteers, volunteer organizations and managers, individuals, community organizations, educational institutions, and local and state officials who provided valuable input and insights for the development of this plan.

## **OregonServes Commission**

[www.oregon.gov/highered/oregonvolunteers](http://www.oregon.gov/highered/oregonvolunteers)

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Higher Education Coordinating Commission

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