

Equality EPA
A Non-Labor Employee Group of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Constitution

Adopted on August 21, 2019

Article I: Name

1. The organization shall be known as "Equality EPA."

Article II: Purpose

1. To serve as an official EPA Non-Labor Employee Group (NLEG) for addressing matters of interest and concern to LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other sexual orientations and gender identities) employees, their families, and their allies.
2. To eliminate LGBTQ+-related prejudice and discrimination in the Federal Government.
3. To advocate for equal protection under the law and federal regulations, and for the civil rights of all EPA employees.
4. To celebrate and increase awareness of the many streams of social movements that have contributed to the history and inform the present of Equality EPA.

Article III: Objectives

1. Increase awareness and promote acceptance of LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion throughout EPA through advocacy, education, training, and other related activities.
2. Provide organization structure for LGBTQ+ EPA employees, their family members, and their allies to meet and discuss matters of shared interest.
3. Facilitate communication and initiatives of mutual interest with EPA's LGBT Advisory Council (LGBTAC), which is comprised of Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) in each Assistant Administratorship and Region Office.
4. Promote interaction and collaboration between Headquarters staff and Regional office staff.
5. Facilitate communication with other Federal LGBTQ+ organizations.
6. Advocate for and ensure equal opportunity for LGBTQ+ people with respect to employment, benefits, and career advancement throughout EPA.
7. Ensure that EPA's LGBTQ+ non-discrimination policies are fully supported, publicized, enforced, and modernized.
8. Work cooperatively to identify opportunities to further develop Agency policies regarding the elimination of LGBTQ+-related discrimination and those that provide equal protection under the law and access to avenues of redress.
9. Build constructive relationships with EPA's other NLEGs, unions, and other employee organizations.

Article IV: Organizational Policies

1. Equality EPA shall be a nonpartisan, non-commercial organization that is self-funded by members and does not seek to make any profit.

2. Equality EPA shall not discriminate against any person or organization.

Article V: Membership

1. Membership in Equality EPA shall be open to all people who support the purpose and objectives of Equality EPA.
2. Any person who with an active @epa.gov e-mail account who signs a roster at an Equality EPA meeting or who adds their name to the electronic membership list shall be considered a full voting member.
3. Those who do not possess an active @epa.gov e-mail account may participate in Equality EPA as non-voting associate members.

Article VI. Officers

1. Officers must be full voting members.
2. Officers may not use their positions for private gain.
3. The four Officer positions will consist of the following: two Headquarters-based Co-Chairs, a Regional Co-Chair, and a Secretary.
4. The duties of these Officers shall be:
 - a. Headquarters-Co Chairs
 - i. Prepare the agenda and preside at all meetings of the general membership and Steering Committee. Co-Chairs may delegate this responsibility should the need for a general membership meeting arise and none of the Co-Chairs are available.
 - ii. Have overall responsibility for the coordination of Equality EPA activities.
 - iii. Serve as the official representatives and spokespeople for Equality EPA in relation to the EPA's LGBTAC, NLEGs, and external groups such as Federal GLOBE.
 - iv. Appoint Steering Committee members.
 - v. Appoint committee chairpersons.
 - vi. Co-sign and execute agreements and obligations, as ordered by the voting membership or the Steering Committee.
 - vii. Preside over general membership meetings.
 - viii. Receive all funds payable to Equality EPA.
 - ix. Pay all financial obligations as duly authorized by the Steering Committee.
 - x. Keep clear and accurate records of all receipts and disbursements.
 - b. Regional Co-Chair
 - i. Perform all the duties and have equal privileges of Headquarters Co-Chairs.
 - ii. Serve as the primary liaison between the Equality EPA Steering Committee and regional members.
 - c. Secretary
 - i. Keep minutes of all membership meetings and distribute the minutes to all members via e-mail, and by other means as necessary.
 - ii. Maintain a current, updated list of full and associate members.
 - iii. Maintain all official correspondence, documents, and non-treasury related records.
 - iv. Notify membership of upcoming meetings and events at least one week in advance of their occurrence.

- v. Notify voting members of the officer nominees for elections at least two weeks in advance of elections.
- vi. Perform any other appropriate tasks as requested by the Co-Chair, Steering Committee, or general membership.

Article VII. Steering Committee

1. A Steering Committee of up to 11 members, including the 4 Officers, will be established to lead Equality EPA and manage projects and initiatives to help realize the objectives found in Article III.
2. Members of the Steering Committee will be appointed with the consensus of the Co-Chairs.
3. Steering Committee members shall serve until the end of the Officers' term during which they were appointed.
4. The duties of the Steering Committee shall be:
 - a. Serve as advisors to the Co-Chairs on the overall strategic direction of the organization.
 - b. Provide assistance to the Co-Chairs in areas such as, but not limited to, organizational development, leadership, public relations, education, law, and outreach.
 - c. Hold planning meetings at least quarterly to agree upon strategic direction of the organization and to discuss other business as necessary.
5. Advisory Role and Voting Rules
 - a. The Steering Committee is strictly advisory in nature and has no formal authority over the elected Officers or Equality EPA unless otherwise noted in the constitution or bylaws.
 - b. Steering Committee members vote on issues, and unless otherwise specified, require a simple majority vote to carry a motion.
6. Steering Committee members may have specialized or generalized roles, as determined by the Officers.
7. The Steering Committee role of Executive Sponsor shall be a fixed role of the Steering Committee and the Executive Sponsors duties shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Serve as an advisor and champion for Equality EPA's officers and members.
 - b. Communicate Equality EPA's interests as appropriate in various forums among EPA's Senior Executive Service (SES) community.
 - c. Provide the SES perspective as Equality EPA strives to achieve its purpose and objectives.
8. All other Steering Committee positions will be considered "At-Large" unless otherwise specified by the Co-Chairs.

Article VIII. Elections and Appointments

1. Election of Officers
 - a. Election of Officers will occur in August of every odd-numbered year.
 - b. Terms shall commence on September 1st following an election and end two years later.
 - c. Election of Officers shall be conducted electronically.
 - d. A simple majority shall be required to elect Officers.
 - e. Should no majority be achieved for a particular office, a second round of voting between the top two candidates or slates will be held to decide the winning candidates or slate.
 - f. All full voting members shall have the right to vote.

- g. Candidates for Headquarters Co-Chairs must run as two-person slates and be comprised of people of two different gender identities (i.e. a man and a woman, a man and a genderqueer person, etc.).
 - h. Only Headquarters-based members shall be able to vote on the Headquarters Co-Chairs slates.
 - i. Only Regional members will be able to vote on the Regional Co-Chair.
 - j. Elections for Secretary will be open to all full voting members.
 - k. An individual may not serve for more than 4 consecutive terms in one Officer role unless there is no other candidate for the role.
2. Appointment of Steering Committee Members
- a. Steering Committee members shall be appointed by consensus of the Co-Chairs.
 - b. Prospective Steering Committee members may be nominated by a member or self-nominated.
 - c. Co-Chairs are encouraged to select a diverse Steering Committee that consists of people from diverse backgrounds, those with needed expertise, and a mix of members from the Headquarters and the regions in order to best benefit the overall organization.
 - i. LGBT SEPMs may not serve on the Steering Committee or as Officers to avoid a conflict of interest.
3. Vacancies
- a. Any Officer or Steering Committee member may vacate their position at any time by giving notice to the Co-Chairs of Equality EPA.
 - b. In the event of a vacancy, a new Officer or Steering Committee member shall be appointed by the Co-Chairs and confirmed by a majority vote of the Steering Committee to serve the rest of the vacating Officer's term.

Article IX. Removal from Office or Steering Committee

- 1. Under extraordinary circumstances, an Officer or Steering Committee member who violates and terms of this constitution, or who fails to carry out their respective responsibilities as described herein, may be removed from their position.
- 2. To commence the removal process, a petition bearing 5 full voting members' names and signatures must be submitted to the Steering Committee to trigger a debate and vote on removal from office, which must occur within one month of the petition being submitted.
 - a. The Officer or Steering Committee member who is the subject of the removal effort, heretofore referred to as "the Subject," shall have the right to determine whether the debate and subsequent vote will be held by the Steering Committee or by the full membership. In either case, the Subject will not have a vote.
 - i. If the Subject selects the Steering Committee to review their case, it will require a 2/3 supermajority vote of the Steering Committee present to remove the Subject from Office, provided that there are at least 6 members (excluding the Subject) present.
 - ii. If the Subject selects the full membership to review their case, it will require a simple majority vote of the voting members to remove the Subject from Office. The Co-Chairs may opt to hold the debate and vote at the next Regular Meeting or call a Special Meeting to resolve the matter.

Article X. Amendments.

1. Proposal
 - a. Any member may propose one or more amendments by submitting them in writing to the Steering Committee.
 - b. The amendment(s) will then be presented to the full membership at the next Regular Meeting for review and debate.
 - c. After the Regular meeting is held, the author(s) of the amendment(s) will have one week to make changes to the proposed amendment(s) before resubmitting to the Steering Committee for final review and to schedule a vote.
 - d. If no revised draft is submitted, then the original amendment(s) will be voted on unless the author(s) announce their intention of delaying or withdrawing the amendment.
2. Voting
 - a. Amendments to the constitution shall be approved by a simple majority vote, while requiring at least 1/4 of the full voting membership to participate.
 - b. Amendments to the bylaws shall be approved by a simple majority vote.
 - c. Voting will be conducted electronically.
 - d. Members must be given two weeks advance notice of a vote.
 - e. Once begun, voting will be open for at least one week.

Article XI. Dissolution

1. Proposal
 - a. Any member may propose dissolution by submitting the proposal in writing to the Steering Committee.
 - b. The dissolution proposal will then be presented to the full membership at the next Regular Meeting for review and debate.
2. Voting
 - a. After the Regular Meeting is held, voting will commence.
 - b. Voting will be conducted electronically.
 - c. Equality EPA may be dissolved upon a two-thirds vote, while requiring at least 1/2 of the full voting membership to participate.
 - d. Members must be given two weeks advance notice of a vote.
 - e. Once begun, voting will be open for one week, unless extended by a simple majority vote of the Steering Committee for up to one more week if deemed necessary.

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Bylaws

Adopted on August 21, 2019

Section I. Voting in Meetings

- A. All voting members of Equality EPA shall have the right to vote upon any motion presented at a meeting.
- B. The outcome of the vote is determined by the simple majority of the votes cast.
- C. Only those present (either in-person or on the phone) may cast a vote.
- D. Motions made in meetings are advisory to the Officers and the Steering Committee. However, affirmative votes on motions calling for a full vote of the membership are binding.

Section II. Committees

- A. Standing committees may be established as needed by a majority vote of the Steering Committee. Each committee shall serve a specific function in fulfilling Equality EPA's purpose and objectives.
- B. The Chair of the committee shall be appointed by the Steering Committee at the time of formation.
- C. The Committee Chair shall be able to appoint up to 9 others to serve on the committee with them.
- D. Any member, associate or full, may serve on a committee.
- E. Standing committee Chairs shall coordinate committee functions, notify Equality EPA's Co-Chairs of scheduled committee meetings, appoint members of their respective committees, and report committee activities at regular meetings.

Section III. Meetings

- A. In General
 - i. Members may participate in meetings by teleconferencing. There will be no distinction made between virtual and in-person attendance.
 - ii. Robert's Rules of Order may be invoked during a meeting when deemed necessary by a single Co-Chair.
- B. Regular Meetings
 - i. The Regular Meetings of Equality EPA shall be held monthly to the extent possible, at a place and time designated by the Co-Chairs.
 - ii. The Co-Chairs shall give notice through the Secretary of the time, date, and place of each Regular Meeting. The agenda shall be included in the notice as well as any items of importance. A minimum advance notice of 1 week is required for a meeting to be held.
 - iii. Officers, Steering Committee members, and Committee Chairs shall notify the Co-Chairs if they are unable to attend a Regular Meeting, and shall have the responsibility to communicate any timely information to the Co-Chairs prior to that meeting.

- iv. A quorum must be achieved to hold votes on motions within a meeting. A quorum is achieved as long as 2 Officers are present along with a minimum of 10 full voting members.
- C. Steering Committee Meetings
 - i. Meetings will be held on an as needed, but no less than quarterly, basis, and will be called either by either a consensus of the Co-Chairs or a majority vote of the Steering Committee. Ideally, meetings will be held each month in advance of the monthly Regular Meeting.
 - ii. The time, date, and place of each meeting shall be conveyed to the Secretary, who will then be charged with producing the meeting's agenda and disseminating it and related documents to Steering Committee members in advance of the meeting.
 - iii. A minimum advance notice one week is suggested for a meeting.
- D. Special Meetings
 - i. Special Meetings may be called at any time with the approval of a Co-Chair.
 - ii. A quorum must be achieved to hold votes on motions within a meeting. A quorum is achieved as long as 2 Officers are present along with a minimum of 10 full voting members.
- E. Committee Meetings
 - i. Committee meetings may be called at any time by the committee Chair.

Section IV. Interoffice and Electronic Mail

1. Interoffice and electronic mail issued on behalf of Equality EPA will be limited to notices about Equality EPA's activities, minutes, and other specifically related notifications consistent with the EPA's Limited Use Policy.
2. Use of government equipment and facilities shall adhere to all applicable policies, guidelines, and regulations.