

# Metro | *Policies and procedures*

**Subject** Code of Ethics  
**Section** Human Resources  
**Approved by** Office of the Executive

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## **EXECUTIVE ORDER 66 (1997)**

*Policy is under review. Numbering is from the original Executive Order.*

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Executive Order is to provide a statement of ethical principles that shall serve as guideposts for Metro officials.

For the purpose of this Order:

1. “Metro official” means the Executive Officer and Executive Officer’s staff; any Metro employee other than employees of the Council, Auditor or Metro Exposition-Recreation Commission (MERC); and any appointee to a board or commission, or citizen volunteer authorized to act on behalf of Metro, who was appointed by the Executive Officer.
2. “Ethics” means positive principles of conduct. Some ethical requirements are enforced by federal, state, or local law. Others rely on training, or on individuals’ desire to do the right thing. The provisions of this Order which are not elsewhere enforced by law shall be considered advisory only.

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The following statements regarding trust, objectivity, accountability and leadership should be considered as moral and ethical guideposts for actions by Metro officials.

#### **TRUST**

The purpose of Metro is to serve the public. Metro officials should treat their office as a public trust.

1. Metro’s powers and resources are used for the benefit of the public rather than any official’s personal benefit.
2. Metro officials ensure public respect by avoiding even the appearance of impropriety.
3. Policymakers place long-term benefit to the public as a whole above all other considerations, including important individuals and special interests. The public interest includes protecting the rights of under-represented minorities.

4. Administrators implement policies in good faith, as equitably and economically as possible, regardless of their personal views.
5. Whistle-blowing is appropriate on unlawful or improper actions and should be done with no threat of reprisals.
6. Citizens have a fair and equal opportunity to express their views to Metro officials.
7. Metro officials do not give the appearance or impropriety of personal gain by accepting personal gifts. Individuals should refer to relevant law regarding acceptance of gifts in current Oregon statutes, and/or review the propriety of any anticipated action with the Office of General Counsel.
8. Metro officials devote Metro resources, including paid time, working supplies, and capital assets to benefit the public.
9. Political campaigns will not be conducted on Metro time or property. Relative federal and state statutes apply.

### **OBJECTIVITY**

Metro decisions are based on the merits of the issues. Judgment is independent and objective.

1. Metro officials avoid financial conflict of interest and do not accept benefits from people wanting to affect decisions.
2. If an individual official's financial interests will be specifically affected by a decision, that official will give written notice to be placed on file with the Office of General Counsel and will then withdraw from further participation on the matter.
3. Metro officials avoid bias or favoritism and respect cultural differences as part of decision-making.
4. Intervention on behalf of constituents or friends is limited to assuring fairness of procedures, clarifying policies or improving service for citizens.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Open government allows citizens to make informed judgments and to hold officials accountable.

1. Metro officials exercise their authority with open meetings and accessible public records.
2. Officials who delegate responsibilities also follow up to make sure the work is carried out efficiently and ethically.
3. Campaigns for election should allow the voters to make an informed choice on appropriate criteria.
4. Each Metro official is encouraged to improve Metro systems by identifying problems and proposing improvements.
5. Metro government systems are self-monitoring, with procedures in place to ensure appropriate actions.

6. All Metro departments and work teams will develop detailed ethical standards, training, and enforcement procedures, and submit work plans to the Executive Officer concurrent with the annual budget year.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Ethical leadership sets a good example and treats all citizens with respect.

1. Metro officials obey both the letter and the spirit of all laws and regulations.
2. Leadership facilitates, rather than blocks, open discussion.

## **EXAMPLES AND EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS**

Past experience has shown that certain activities by Metro officials may create the appearance of ethical conflicts. This section of this Executive Order sets forth examples of questionable behavior that should be avoided where possible. The use of these examples is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the scope of the standards expected and created by the adoption of the statement of principles by this Executive Order.

- Maintain a clear separation of your personal life and your Metro activities. The work space you are provided at Metro is where you work. Personal activity should not be centered here. Many Metro officials work after hours on Metro business. Evening or weekend use of Metro facilities for personal use should be avoided.
- The use of telephone equipment, computers, email, or other Metro-owned devices is limited to Metro business. Metro officials should refer to pertinent Metro Code, Executive Orders and other directives (such as the Computer User's Handbook) that may be issued regarding use of these types of devices.
- Don't let friendships create the appearance of favoritism. Your friends, coworkers and former coworkers may be considered by some of Metro's citizens and stakeholders to represent special interests. Metro officials should avoid creating the appearance that their friendships will result in biased decisions or disparate treatment.
- Avoid the appearance that the personal, political or social agenda of non-elected officials is a substitute for Metro's policy decision process. Metro policymakers are elected by the public. Some Metro officials are delegated discretionary authority as well, subject to approval and supervision of elected officials. All Metro officials should be careful to act only within the authority for decision-making they have. Personal involvement with political or social activities by Metro officials is acceptable. However, all Metro officials should avoid taking actions on behalf of Metro that create the impression that their own personal agendas are guiding their official actions at Metro, rather than being subject to Metro's policymaking procedures.

## **CONCLUSION**

From time to time the Executive Office may supplement this Executive Order with further principles and examples. This Executive Order is not intended to limit the authority of the Executive or supervisors to take disciplinary action where they deem it appropriate.