

Metro | *Policies and procedures*

Subject Political Activity by Public Employees
Section Office of Metro Attorney
Approved by Martha Bennett, Chief Operating Officer; MERC Commission

POLICY

As public employees, all Metro employees are prohibited under Oregon law from engaging in political activities while on the job during working hours.

Applicable to

All employees.

Definitions

Political Activity: An activity directed toward supporting or opposing federal, state, regional or local measures, candidates, recalls, political committees or petitions.

Public employee: Any employee of a government agency. All Metro employees are public employees.

Guidelines

1. Under ORS 260.432, a public employee may not engage in political activities while on the job during working hours. Prohibited political activities include soliciting money for political purposes, promoting or opposing the election of candidates, the gathering of signatures on an initiative, or promoting or opposing ballot measures once they have been referred to the voters. Additionally, no person, including managers, supervisors or elected public officials, may require or attempt to coerce public employees into engaging in any of these political activities.
2. While ORS 260.432 does not restrict the right of a public employee to express personal political views, Metro employees should remain aware that Metro employees have differing political views and that every Metro employee has a duty to preserve workplace decorum.
3. Metro employees must exercise due caution to avoid suggesting or implying that they are acting or speaking on behalf of Metro when engaging in personal political activities or expression.
4. See the following websites for detailed information on prohibited and permitted political activities by public employees:

- a. The Secretary of State's "Restrictions on Political Campaigning by Public Employees":
<https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/restrictions.pdf>
- b. "260.432 Quick Reference":
https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/documents/260.432_quickref.pdf

Responsibilities

Employees:

- Comply with the prohibition on political activities by public employees while on the job during working hours;
- Report any observed violations of these prohibitions to a manager or the Office of Metro Attorney;
- Consult with the Office of Metro Attorney whenever questions arise regarding the interpretation or application of this policy.

Supervisors:

- Comply with the prohibition on political activities by public employees while on the job during working hours;
- Do not require or coerce public employees into engaging in political activities.

Office of Metro Attorney:

- Issue staff reminders annually or as needed.

References

ORS 260.432