

Adopted 5/31/2023
**Code of Conduct for the Northwest Regional Planning
Commission**

Purpose

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) Code of Conduct promotes constructive civic engagement, and a welcome and inclusive workplace. This policy ensures that members of the Board of Commissioners or established committees (members) understand their role to uphold these goals while also serving in the best interest of NRPC and the community or group they represent. This policy is adopted in part to reflect the intent of the NRPC's *Statement of Inclusion* (attached) and other adopted policies of NRPC.

The Code of Conduct will be provided to all members of the NRPC Board and Committees and their appointing entities, including new members as they join. The Code of Conduct will be periodically reviewed and affirmed.

General Conduct

Members of the Board of Commissioners and committees shall conduct themselves in a manner that serves the public interest and is consistent with this Code of Conduct, NRPC's Statement of Inclusion and the mission of NRPC. In addition, Board and Committee members will:

- Act honestly, conscientiously, reasonably and in good faith at all times having regard for a member's responsibilities, the interests of NRPC and the welfare of the region.
- Refrain from communicating or acting in a disrespectful, abusive and/or threatening manner towards members of the community, other members of the Board/Committee, or NRPC staff.
- Comply with all applicable local, state and federal government laws, rules, and regulations including but not limited to Vermont's Open Meeting and Public Records Laws, as well as all NRPC adopted policies including but not limited to the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Personnel Policy's non-discrimination policy (attached).

Conduct in Carrying out Duties of the Board or Committee

NRPC is striving at every meeting, forum or other official interaction to treat every person fairly and with respect, regardless of any differences. All members appointed to the Board of Commissioners or one of its committees must maintain respectful discourse when acting in an official NRPC capacity, with their fellow members, with those who work for NRPC, those who volunteer their time and services on behalf of NRPC, and members of the public. This means:

- Treat all members of the Board/Committee to which one belongs with respect despite differences of opinion; keeping in mind that professional respect does not

preclude honest differences of opinion, but requires respect within those differences.

- Participate and interact in official meetings with dignity and decorum fitting those who hold a position of public trust.
- Attend all regularly scheduled Board and committee meetings insofar as possible, and notify staff as soon as possible if unable to attend.
- Uphold the intent of executive session as defined in the Open Meeting Law and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.
- Act only as a member of the Board/Committee. Recognize that no individual member is given authority to act alone. Do not assume any individual authority to represent the Board/Committee unless directed by the Board/Committee.
- Treat all staff as professionals and respect the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual.
- Take advantage of learning opportunities related to NRPC's Statement of Inclusion.
- Utilize inclusive meeting practices to make all feel welcome. Words or phrases that have been used in the past or present in a derogatory manner towards a group of people should never be used, regardless of the context.
- Take advantage of opportunities to learn about NRPC projects and programs.
- Speak up -within meetings if it is safe to do so. Speak up to the Chair, anonymously if preferred, if something does not meet this Code of Conduct. Hear with a fair and open mind and be responsive to concerns about conduct brought by members of the public, staff and other Board or committee members. Never retaliate against a person or persons raising a concern.

Upholding the Code of Conduct Policy:

NRPC strives to assist members in adhering to this Code of Conduct through education, training and discussion. All Board and Committee members of NRPC have a responsibility to respect and uphold this Code of Conduct.

Annually, the Chair shall appoint and the Board shall ratify up to five members of the NRPC Board of Commissioners to an ad hoc Code of Conduct committee. This committee will receive and review concerns raised under the Code of Conduct and make recommendations to the Executive Committee. In addition to any other remedies or enforcement options

available or required under the law, the NRPC Executive Committee may take, any action including but not limited to:

- Request member(s) receive specific training or education
- Arrange for additional training for the Board or Committee
- Request an apology or other restorative action
- Vote to censure any member
- Notify the appointing authority that their member(s) is in violation of the Code of Conduct Policy
- Request resignation of the member(s)
- Remove the member from the Board or Committee (when NRPC is the appointing authority)

If any Board or Committee member is accused of violating NRPC's requirements under our Personnel Policies or a state or federal law, the NRPC will initiate actions as described in the NRPC Personnel Policies.

ATTACHMENTS

Northwest Regional Planning Commission Statement of Inclusion

Adopted by the Board of Commissioners, 2020

NRPC celebrates diversity and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, or disability. NRPC wants everyone to feel and be safe and welcome in the communities we serve. We formally condemn racism and discrimination in all of its forms, and commit to fair and equitable treatment of everyone in our communities. NRPC strives to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment. NRPC has and will continue to support its member communities as places where all individuals can live freely, express their opinions, and feel a sense of belonging.

Personnel Policies

From NRPC Personnel Policies, Adopted 2019. This is an excerpt and does not represent the full policy.

U. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is against the policies of this employer, and illegal, for any employee to discriminate against or harass another employee, Commission member, or member of the public because of that person's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, citizenship, ancestry, place of birth, disability, military or veteran status, gender identity, health coverage status, HIV status, genetic information, crime victim status, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition or any other category protected under local, state or federal law. This employer is committed to providing a workplace free from this unlawful conduct. It is a violation of this policy for an employee to engage in illegal harassment. It is also illegal, and violates the Commission's policies, to retaliate against any employee for filing or cooperating in the investigation of a complaint of illegal harassment.