The intent of the Houston Methodist Resource Guide for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) is to be a framework and reference on how to develop official ERGs that help maintain a culture of diversity and inclusion for all patients and HM employees.

For best practice sharing and questions, please forward to: Rachel Marie Byers, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, HR Client Services – rmbyers@houstonmethodist.org or 832-667-6724.

Posted: December 2019
Owner: Corporate HR Client Services

Acknowledgments
Thank you to all who have assisted in reviewing and providing feedback. This document will continue to evolve as Houston Methodist welcomes new groups to the organization. If any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the owner.

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Table of Contents

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
   Mission and Vision Statements
   Leadership Commitment Letter

OVERVIEW
   Purpose
   Policy

GUIDELINES
   Getting Started
   Becoming a Formal ERG
   Recommended Tips and Resources
   Charter Guidance and Template

CLOSING
Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Houston Methodist is committed to demonstrating I CARE values—integrity, compassion, accountability and respect—in order to provide a pathway to unparalleled safety, quality, service and innovation. In doing so, Houston Methodist values its greatest resource—its employees—and also seeks to ensure an unparalleled career through its inspirational leadership philosophy: to inspire others, engage our people, serve our patients and sustain our mission. Therefore, it is critical that Houston Methodist demonstrates these values by cultivating a work environment that effectively welcomes, engages and supports all employees.

Mission Statement

“To provide high quality, cost-effective, health care that delivers the best value to the people we serve in a spiritual environment of caring in association with internationally recognized teaching and research.”

Vision Statement

“People will seek Houston Methodist as a globally recognized leader of pioneering medical expertise and innovative, personalized care.”

Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement

Houston Methodist will be known for having a culture of inclusive behavior that allows us to provide unparalleled, personalized care and service to a diverse patient population through effective teamwork, while ensuring dignity and respect for every patient, provider, colleague and our community.
A Message from Dr. Boom

Houston Methodist is proud of its incredibly diverse workforce. We know that it is a strength to be able to share diverse ideas, and to be able to leverage that diversity to ensure we continue to offer unparalleled patient care to our community. As we begin our next 100 years of leading medicine, we are committed as ever to being intentional about attracting and retaining the best talent, increasing diversity and sustaining inclusion at all levels, as well as building awareness of the various cultural needs of our patients.

As part of our intentional efforts, we are excited to launch Employee Resource Groups (ERG) at Houston Methodist. These groups will offer you the opportunity to become part of our strategy for diversity and inclusion. We are blessed with a diverse workforce, and it makes sense to engage all of you to help make sure we are meeting the needs of our diverse patient population. ERGs will help cultivate and promote a culture of inclusion, and hold us accountable for demonstrating inclusive behavior.

Most importantly, ERGs allow you to be yourself. Coming to work and being yourself sends a powerful message that you belong at Houston Methodist. It’s my hope that everyone who walks through our doors, including employees, visitors, physicians, students, faculty – and especially patients – feel that they belong. ERGs can offer safe spaces to meet and learn from people who we may not have met otherwise, and to share unique talents and skills to help make sure we all can be ourselves.

I encourage each of you to join me in our commitment to diversity and inclusion by supporting our Employee Resource Groups. I challenge you to attend at least one meeting or event per quarter, to join one group this year or to look into how you might start a new group of your own that furthers our goals related to diversity, inclusion and cultural competency.

Thank you for your support.

March L. Boom, M.D.
Overview

To support our journey to provide unparalleled care, Houston Methodist is adopting the concept of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). ERGs will help cultivate a welcoming, supportive and equitable work environment, by creating opportunities and developing strategies that include but are not limited to: increasing representation of minority populations across job types at all levels, monitoring and increasing inclusion efforts to retain and support a diverse workforce, improving overall cultural competence and support across the organization, and increasing Houston Methodist’s visibility across diverse community populations.

What is an Employee Resource Group (ERG)?

An ERG, also known as an affinity group, is a subgroup of two or more employees within an organization who share distinctive qualities or interests. ERGs are unique in that they are specifically intended to provide support to traditionally underrepresented populations, who have at least one or more characteristic that relates to a protected class—i.e. race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, veteran status, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, citizenship, or genetic information. ERGs are typically initiated by employees who identify with or are interested in supporting a protected or otherwise marginalized group within the organization—e.g. male nurses may be considered a marginalized group, considering the traditional distribution of females within the Nursing discipline, and thus could become an ERG. Another example may be for young professionals, who may find themselves in small numbers in certain offices or certain disciplines, and which data could demonstrate a reason for needing specialized support. New groups also may be motivated by organizational departments, such as Human Resources, that may recommend leveraging an ERG to meet strategic goals or federal regulations related to specific groups.

Key benefits include:

- Increasing retention
- Enhancing employee engagement
- Internal and external networking
- Product and brand marketing through community service
- Talent development for prospective applicants and current employees
- Targeted outreach and recruitment efforts
- Supporting Diversity and Inclusion initiatives and training
- Providing general cultural awareness and insight
ERGs are increasingly popular at many organizations across all industries in the US, due to the potential opportunities and benefits they afford to employees and to the entire organization. Houston Methodist looks forward to realizing these opportunities as much as possible.

Purpose

ERGs will be able to identify specific areas of focus in order to help Houston Methodist maintain inclusive habits that create a culture of fairness, openness, cooperation, support, and empowerment. They also will be able to provide safe, neutral spaces for employees at all levels to share common interests, discuss issues or challenges, offer developmental opportunities, and to brainstorm strategies and solutions that will support diversity and inclusion goals.

Each ERG must serve the following purposes:

1. Foster a working environment that is free of prejudice, bias and stereotypes;
2. Support and promote Houston Methodist’s diversity and inclusion goals and business-related outcomes—e.g. providing opportunities for internal networking and mentoring, assisting with external networking to increase employee referrals, offering development workshops to assist career progression, and participating in I CARE in Action projects that are relevant to their represented group, etc.;
3. Develop solution-based strategies to assist Houston Methodist in addressing issues or concerns that may disparately impact the group; and,
4. Help educate Methodist employees about the broad and diverse cultural and social heritage of the represented group, to improve cultural competence in patient care and community service.

Policy

All ERGs must uphold I CARE values by adhering to the following:

1. All groups, despite the nature of their special interest, must remain open and welcoming to all Methodist employees.

2. The scope of any ERG’s interests and activities shall be inclusive to all Methodist employees (e.g. events or meetings should not explicitly exclude any employee).
   
   a. Shall not engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person employed or seeking employment with Methodist on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, citizenship, genetic information or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran;
b. Shall be a secular, nonpartisan, not-for-profit, volunteer group. Groups may form based on religious or spiritual interests and host related events, but should not engage in activities that seek to convert, exclude, denounce or otherwise devalue employees of a different faith or belief.

c. Funding will be provided by Human Resources Department, HR Client Services as the budget permits, and according to funding needs for each group. Groups should not be supported by membership dues or other funding sources. Sponsorship of items may be allowed, per approval from the appropriate Human Resources Department official.

3. All activities, programs, or services of each group shall not be represented, directly or indirectly, as official functions or activities of Houston Methodist or of any member from Houston Methodist management. However, as groups are affiliated with Houston Methodist, and as activities may be sponsored by Houston Methodist departments, such activities, programs or services should not conflict with or otherwise violate Houston Methodist policies.

In particular, groups should ensure no conflict with the following related policies:

a. System_BP08: Conflict of Interest Policy
b. System_BP11: Government Relations – Lobbying, Advocacy, and Campaigning
d. System_BP19: Gifts and Tips
e. System_FI02: Purchasing Procedures
f. System_HR21: Distribution and Solicitation Policy
g. System_HR32: Nondiscrimination Policy
h. System_HR33: Statement of Union-Free Workplace Policy
i. System_HR36: Accommodations for Disabilities Policy
j. System_HR87: Harassment Policy
k. System_HR88: Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace Policy
l. System_IM13: Release of Media Information
m. System_IM26: Use of Social Media Sites

For additional information, please see the system policy HR70 in Policy Tech. For any additional questions or related concerns, group leaders should contact the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager or the HR Client Services Director.
Guidelines

The following are suggestions for how to build and maintain a new ERG, in phases. Best practices may differ, depending on the type of group and level of interest.

Getting Started

As employees begin to identify special interests that may benefit from establishing a formal ERG, the group may go through various development phases.

Phase 1: Building

The group is not a true group yet, but a collection of individuals (or “Founding Members”) who are sharing information. Relationships tend to be polite, but may be impersonal and guarded. Members at this stage are likely motivated by their own self-interest, and have not yet started to think as a group or team. Members may be cautious in learning whether they can trust each other.

Phase 2: Organizing

The individual members are beginning to build trust and think as a group. Members may breed more thought and intent but may lack any real commitment to action.

The group expresses the desire to adopt a more structured approach to problem-solving and decision-making. Individual members seem to make a decision to be part of a whole, and demonstrate more and more commitment to each other, by planning to meet more regularly, brainstorming and offering ideas or solutions to stated challenges, e.g. volunteering to record notes, etc. The group identifies a common goal, and begins to focus on a strategy to move forward.

During this stage, the group should contact the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager for guidance regarding requirements to become a formal ERG.

Phase 3: Formalizing

The group shows signs of cohesion, and leaders emerge. The group identifies an Executive Sponsor, develops Charter and a strategic plan according to the ERG policy and guidelines, and receives approval from the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager to become a formal ERG.

The group strikes a balance between strategy and tactics. Group members are able to function effectively as a unit, minimizing inappropriate conflict. The leaders are competent, independent, and able to effectively manage the decision-making and action-planning processes.
Phase 4: Activating

Group members are invested in identifying proactive and strategic efforts that benefit HM by enhancing diversity, inclusion or cultural competency. Members understand how activities are aligned to the HM vision, mission, and/or Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. The ERG is leveraged as a core functional organization that benefits HM business-related objectives.

Over time, group leaders or members are considered as experts or advisors for boards and councils to increase engagement or market opportunities and to optimize inclusion of those interests and population(s) represented by the ERG.

Becoming a Formal ERG

Official ERGs that are formed according to the following guidelines will be funded and supported by Corporate HR, HR Client Services.

As groups enter Phase 3, seeking to become a formal ERG, an official document known as the Charter must be submitted to the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager for approval.

Approval will be granted to those groups that submit a Charter that includes at least all of the following components and according to the following guidelines.

Group Name

Each organization must develop a name that helps identify or characterize their special interest. Group names shall not contain offensive or derogatory language of any kind. Consider names that help underscore that anyone can join, not just those from a particular group—e.g. for a group for ethnic minorities in leadership, instead of “Minorities in Leadership”, a group might consider something like, “Minority Leadership Network”.

Mission and Vision Statements

The mission statement should define the group’s purpose—what the group intends to do and how it will do it.

SAMPLE (from Houston Methodist): “To provide high quality, cost-effective health care that delivers the best value to the people we serve in a spiritual environment of caring in association with internationally recognized teaching and research.”

The vision statement also speaks to purpose, but should define the ultimate goal of the group’s existence, to indicate how the group can help enhance the overall environment.
SAMPLE (from Houston Methodist): “People will seek Methodist as a globally recognized leader in pioneering medical expertise and innovative, personalized care.”

**Governing Structure**

The Charter must describe the leadership roles that will exist and how they are defined to carry out the business of the group.

Every ERG must clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of at least the following positions:

![Sample governing structure diagram](image)

*Fig. 1 - Sample governing structure.*

If the group intends to expand beyond one entity or if a group with the same or similar interest(s) happens to emerge at different entities, the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager will request that those entities combine their efforts as chapters that report to a host site, with a shared governing structure and a local governing structure.

For example, if there were a Veterans ERG at Houston Methodist Hospital and then Houston Methodist Clear Lake (HMCL) and Houston Methodist Sugar Land (HMSL) also wanted to have a Veterans-related ERG, the request would be that the groups meet to discuss which entity will be the host site for the formal group. The decision should depend on which entity has the most interested members, as well as the location of or access to the Executive Sponsor.
Each local chapter would then develop a local governing structure, such as the following:

![Sample governing structure with host site and local chapters.](image)

*Fig. 2 - Sample governing structure with host site and local chapters.*

**Executive Sponsorship**

Each ERG must identify an Executive Sponsor, i.e. a Houston Methodist employee at the Director level or above. The Executive Sponsor must be willing to invest in the success of the ERG, by helping to inform senior leadership of the ERG’s efforts and concerns, and by helping the ERG to identify opportunities to develop potential solutions for issues that rise to the senior management level.

While the Executive Sponsor is not expected to be able to attend every meeting or event, she/he/they must be prepared to meet with the group leadership and members on a regular basis, and clearly show their support for the ERG’s various programs or events.

**Partnership with Human Resources**

Each group is required to partner with the Human Resources Department, primarily through the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager. Partnership is critical to be able to discuss potential activities or objectives, ensuring alignment with existing policies, to select and receive approval for an Executive Sponsor, to respond to HR requests for information or
input from the ERG, and to appropriately request relevant data or reports, as necessary or as available.

(Note: Some data may be limited due to confidentiality or privacy laws.)

**Partnership with Other ERGs**

Each group is also required to partner with other resource groups. This also will be facilitated in part by the Human Resources Department, primarily through the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager. Partnership is critical to be able to discuss best practices, partner on equally relevant activities, and to help underline inclusion. In particular, various ERGs working together helps to support and bring awareness to intersectionality, or the concept that employees often identify with more than one group—e.g. a Deaf, African American female nurse, might be interested in separate events that support different aspects of that identity, but also would be interested in events that realize there is a specific experience for people who have a similar combination of identities.

**Open Membership**

The scope of any ERG’s interests and activities shall be inclusive to all Methodist employees (e.g. events or meetings should not explicitly exclude any employee). ERGs shall not engage in discrimination against or harassment of any person employed or seeking employment with Methodist on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, citizenship, genetic information or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran;

**REACH Goals and Key Objectives**

The Charter also must identify at least five (5) key objectives that are clear, realistic, and measurable each fiscal year. These objectives should directly relate to the group’s mission statement, vision and purpose, and should support the REACH goals: to help Houston Methodist to **Recognize**, **Enrich**, **Advocate**, **Connect**, and **Honor** all employees. Read below for more information on each type of goal:

**Recognize.** ERGs should help identify and implement strategies to highlight the efforts of Houston Methodist and its employees related to diversity and inclusion, e.g. acknowledging “firsts” that help increase workforce diversity, rewarding employees or departments for exemplary support or efforts, sponsoring events that appeal to underrepresented populations, etc.

**Enrich.** ERGs should support the employee-employer relationship throughout the employee life cycle to help recruit and retain employees from underrepresented populations, e.g.
assistance with identifying key areas for targeted outreach and recruitment, optimizing internal and external visibility, promoting targeted recruitment initiatives across community networks, identifying and providing mentorship opportunities for new employees and new managers, etc.

**Advocate.** ERGs should help promote positive change to foster inclusion, to include but not limited to providing opportunities to empower employees to voice and resolve challenges, sharing opportunities to participate in focus groups, identifying potential triggers that may suggest bias or unfairness, as well as making recommendations to Human Resources or Management that may help maximize engagement, inclusion, retention, cultural competency and overall patient satisfaction for underrepresented populations.

**Connect.** ERGs should seek to increase outreach to the community we serve, both internally and externally; such efforts may include I CARE in Action projects that align with the ERG’s mission, mentoring students or residents for career development, or providing cultural support for current and potential patients or employees. Such connections may also extend to regional or national organizations, professional associations, one-stop shops, advocacy groups, workforce development agencies, community centers, etc.

**Honor.** ERGs should seek to offer opportunities to celebrate and increase awareness of culturally relevant observances (e.g. historical milestones, heritage months, special holidays, religious observances, etc.), to include but not limited to hosting, sponsoring, or planning themed programs, such as workshops, conferences, or social events.

It is important each of the ERG’s objectives line up with the REACH goals, as it ensures all ERG efforts align with system-wide, business-related goals. **ALL** objectives should fit within at least one (or more) of the goals above.

**Activities Plan**

The Activities Plan should outline all tentative activities designed to allow the group meet each annual objective. This will make it easy to see how each event aligns to each objective, and will help to organize the number and types of events held each year.
SAMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Name</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>REACH Goal(s)</th>
<th>Anticipated Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Women’s Roundtable Luncheon</td>
<td>By invitation only for 50 young women; lunch sponsored and provided by a national association; featured speaker and highlights from milestones or accomplishments by female physicians across the system.</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for female physicians to connect and celebrate both individual and collective achievements.</td>
<td>Recognize, Enrich, Connect, Honor</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch and Learn</td>
<td>Lunchtime workshop series featuring different topics or issues that affect females in the healthcare field.</td>
<td>To offer frequent learning opportunities to highlight and share issues that may impact women more than others.</td>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>On-going; Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Care in Action</td>
<td>Identify at least one I CARE in Action opportunity that benefits young females and coordinate group participation.</td>
<td>To support community projects that benefit outreach to other young females.</td>
<td>Connect</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s History Month Expo</td>
<td>Coordinate with health units, local organizations and vendors to donate items or services to demonstrate or give away to event attendees.</td>
<td>Highlight March as Women’s History Month by planning an annual event that highlights local community support.</td>
<td>Connect, Honor</td>
<td>March 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meetings and Events

As Houston Methodist employees’ schedules may vary depending on exempt vs. non-exempt status, shift times, and entity, groups should consider such variations and attempt the following when planning meetings and events:

1. Schedule with as much advance notice as possible to allow as many people who want to participate to plan accordingly.
2. Adhere to start and end times as much as possible to respect employees’ time away from work.
3. Vary dates and times to maximize everyone’s opportunity to participate.

Funding

Funding will be allotted by the Human Resources Department, HR Client Services Team. Approved funding may depend on the timing of when the group submits their Charter and Activities Plan, as well as those activities planned for what is left of the fiscal year, and the amount of funding available at that time. Every effort will be made to fairly allocate funding based on anticipated group needs.

Reports

Quarterly Reports: Each group must be prepared to report the status of their governance and structure, total number of members, and data to support any activities and progress toward each objective at the end of each quarter.

Annual Report: Each group must also prepare to report a cumulative report outlining completion of each objective outlined in the Charter. The annual report should also include current status of the group’s governance and/or structure, total number of members, and any lessons learned that may impact prospective goals for the following year(s).

All documents and reports must be submitted to the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, or other HR Client Services designee prior to the due date in order to maintain approval as an active ERG. Failure to submit reports on time may result in delayed approval or temporary suspension of official status until all required documents or reports are received.
Recommended Tips and Resources for ERG Leaders

Meeting Management Techniques

Begin on Time
Especially because the members of your ERG are volunteering their time or may have only a limited time (for example, their lunch hour) to participate, it’s important to get the most out of everyone’s time, and respect beginning and ending times for meetings, whenever possible.

Establish Ground Rules
The ERG can decide on its own ground rules for how ERG members want to interact with each other during meetings. Ground rules help the group articulate the norms it is trying to build in terms of respect, timeliness, discussion and decision-making.

Here is a sample list of ground rules--

• Arrive on time.
• Be prepared—to take notes or to provide your feedback.
• Welcome new members and guests with warmth and enthusiasm.
• Stick to the agenda.
• Listen respectfully and thoughtfully.
• Value my colleagues by openly expressing my appreciation of their contributions.
• Be open to discussing differences in perspectives, avoiding personal attacks and concentrating on providing constructive feedback when necessary.
• Avoid interrupting others, side conversations, or taking phone calls.
• Avoid premature judgment, unwarranted criticism, or general put downs when brainstorming ideas.
• Use consensus or majority vote to make major decisions, and discuss both sides to inform all members of the advantages and disadvantages of voting either way.
• Be supportive when a decision is made within the ERG—even if there is disagreement—to show respect for the decision and to demonstrate solidarity.
• Be realistic and accountable when accepting responsibility for follow-up tasks.
• Share responsibility for following and enforcing these ground rules.
Create and Follow an Agenda

An agenda helps the ERG avoid getting off track. Although it should be flexible enough to accommodate emerging issues, it provides guidance in allocating time and meeting priorities. Establish approximate time allocations for each item and strive to stay on track, as much as possible.

Use “Parking Lots” for Unrelated Topics That Can Derail the Discussion

When topics come up that, although important, may derail the current ERG discussion, place them on a flipchart for inclusion in a later part of the agenda, or for another meeting. This assures others that their ideas have been heard, but keeps the discussion on track.

List Group Decisions Visibly During the Meeting

Use a flipchart or white board to list decisions that the group has made during the meeting. This keeps those decisions clear in everyone’s minds, and keeps everyone on the same page.

Facilitate the Discussion without Dominating It

Refer back to your individual conflict management style and reflect on your dominant style (or styles) of dealing with disagreements. Spend more time listening and less time talking, to help ensure that other ERG members feel that their perspective is being heard. As an ERG leader, it will be important to suspend judgment on others’ ideas prematurely to allow open discussion of those ideas. Encourage all ERG members to keep an open mind. Use active listening skills to facilitate the flow of ideas and perspectives instead of stifling them.

Monitor Nonverbal Cues from ERG Members

Pay attention to the nonverbal cues you see and hear from ERG members. This will help you know when to speed up or slow down the agenda. You can also detect when underlying issues and concerns are not being expressed through the sighs, looks, or sideways talking occurring throughout the group. In addition, paying attention to nonverbal cues alerts you to individuals who may be too shy or quiet to bring up a different viewpoint. Such awareness also allows you to monitor energy and interest levels among ERG members in the group.
Surface Important Differences

When there are important differences in perspective between group members, employ your conflict management skills to help uncover and resolve those differences. When important differences go underground, they can corrode ERG morale and effectiveness.

Control Individuals Who Tend to Dominate Group Discussion

Ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate by setting limits with participants who tend to be long-winded, interrupt others, or put down others and their ideas in a disrespectful manner. Setting ground rules can help establish limits; however, in some cases, you may need to directly confront individuals, either in the group or in a private setting.

Offer Anonymity for Sensitive Topics

This technique can be used when the ERG group members need time to sort through their ideas, or when ERG members may be uneasy about expressing their ideas openly in the large group.

1. Clearly state the issue for which the group is being asked to express their ideas.

2. Provide team members with index cards for their responses, and ask them to write their ideas on the cards.

3. Once you have collected the cards, give the group a ten-minute break while you summarize the ideas on a flipchart.

4. When the ERG group members return, take everyone through a systematic review of all posted ideas.

5. No single idea should be evaluated until all have been summarized and are clearly understood by all group members.

6. Utilize multi-voting or other methods of evaluating the ideas

Evaluate the Meeting to Improve Future Meetings

At the end of each meeting, ask the group to provide feedback on the meeting, either verbally or through a written evaluation sheet, or discuss the meeting with a few ERG members. This evaluation, whether formal or informal, helps you reflect on what went well or did not go well at the meeting, and how to improve group functioning for future meetings.
Charter Template and Guidance

**Note:** The following is a sample; not all sections and language are required and additional information may be added, per the discretion of the ERG’s Founding Members. Additionally, some sections feature questions in lieu of sample information to represent the type of information that should be included. For additional guidance, please consult the System ERG Policy (System_HR70) or you may contact the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, Corporate HR Client Services.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP NAME

CHARTER

I. NAME

The name of the organization is (INSERT GROUP NAME).

Note: Consider names that may suggest or help explain the group’s interest but also are not likely to limit appeal or participation among all employees.

EXAMPLE(S) – A veteran-focused group named “Boots on the Ground”. A millennial-focused group named “Minds Over Matters”.

II. MISSION

The mission statement should define your purpose. What will you do and how will you do it?

EXAMPLE - HM MISSION STATEMENT: “To provide high quality, cost-effective health care that delivers the best value to the people we serve in a spiritual environment of caring in association with internationally recognized teaching and research.”

III. VISION

The vision statement should also speaks to purpose but should define your ultimate goal for the group. How do you see the group enhancing the organizational environment?

EXAMPLE - HM VISION STATEMENT: “People will seek Methodist as a globally recognized leader in pioneering medical expertise and innovative, personalized care.”

IV. OBJECTIVES

A. Recognize. To highlight the efforts of Houston Methodist and its employees related to diversity and inclusion, acknowledge “firsts” that help increase workforce diversity, recognize employees and departments for exemplary support or efforts, and sponsor events that appeal to underrepresented populations.
B. **Enrich.** To identify key areas for targeted outreach and recruitment, increase internal and external visibility, promote targeted recruitment initiatives across community networks, identify and provide mentorship opportunities for new employees and new managers.

C. **Advocate.** To provide opportunities to empower employees to voice and resolve challenges, to identify potential triggers that may suggest bias or unfairness, as well as make recommendations to Human Resources or Management that may help maximize engagement, inclusion, retention, cultural competency and overall patient satisfaction for underrepresented populations.

D. **Connect.** To partner with relevant, external organizations to increase awareness, increase opportunities for targeted outreach and recruitment, and provide cultural support for current and potential patients and employees. **Honor.** To celebrate and increase awareness of culturally relevant observances (e.g. historical milestones, heritage months, special holidays, religious observances, etc.), to include but not limited to hosting, sponsoring, or planning themed events, such as workshops, conferences, or social events.

E. Also See “Activities Plan” at Section VIII.

V. **GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE**

A. (INSERT GROUP NAME) shall be governed by this Charter.

B. The Governing Body shall consist of:

1. Executive Board - elected leaders of the group and the Executive Sponsor; see Section V(C) below.

2. Members – voluntary participants of the group; see Section V (D) below.

3. Community-at-large – relevant community advocates, professional associations and other partners that may participate regularly to provide input or consultation; see Section V (E) below.

Note: Additional members (i.e., Voting members, Executive Committees, etc.) and their roles and responsibilities also should be identified in this section and defined in a corresponding section, similar to the following sections for Executive Board, Members, and Community-At-Large.

C. **Executive Board**

The Executive Board shall not exceed (INSERT MAXIMUM NUMBER) members and consist of:

1. Officers, including (INSERT LIST OF OFFICER ROLES AND DEFINE THE TERMS OF EACH ROLE).
EXAMPLE(S): Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, Membership Coordinator, etc.

Chair: The Chair is the person who served as the previous years’ Co-Chair. The Chair will serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Past Chair.

Vice-Chair: The members (in good standing) elect the Co-Chair. The Co-Chair will serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Chair.

Secretary: The members (in good standing) elect the Secretary. The Secretary will serve a one-year term. Additional terms may be consecutive.

Note: Founding Members should vote on the roles to include and the terms of each role. As membership increases, there should be additional opportunities for membership to vote on changes to the Charter (see Section IX).

2. Advisory Representatives, including the Executive Sponsor, the Immediate Past President, and any others elected to represent entities across the HM System. The number of required representatives will be determined each year by the outgoing Board.

Note: Advisory Representatives are strongly encouraged but not required—this perspective may also be achieved through general membership.

EXAMPLE(S): Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, Trustee Board Member(s), Shared Governance Leader(s), Other Officers from other ERG(s) with overlapping interest(s), etc.

3. Executive Sponsor: The Executive Sponsor is not an elected position. The Founding Members or Officers will select an appropriate sponsor, which must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Human Resources. The Office of Human Resources will maintain and provide a list of recommendations who are employed at the Director level or above and who have expressed interest in sponsoring an ERG. If the ERG’s Founding Members or Executive Board have a specific request, it must be approved by the Office of Human Resources before assigning the role of Executive Sponsor. The Executive Sponsor may serve as many terms as agreed upon by the ERG and the Office of Human Resources.

4. Past Chair: The position of Past Chair is served by the Chair of the previous term for one year.

A. Members

a. A member in good standing is a member who meets the qualifications set forth in this charter & Charter or as set by the Executive Board.
b. Full Membership in (INSERT GROUP NAME) is open to all current Houston Methodist employees who support the mission and vision of the organization as set forth in Sections II and III above. A Full Member in good standing shall be afforded all the rights, privileges, and obligations of membership, including, but not limited to, the right to vote, the right to seek office, and participation in organization activities.

c. Associate Membership (INSERT GROUP NAME) is open to all former or retired HOUSTON METHODIST employees and others who support the mission and vision of the organization as set forth in Sections II and II above. An Associate Member in good standing shall be afforded all the rights, privileges, and obligations of membership, except the right to vote and the right to seek office.

Note: Associate members are allowed, but not required.

d. Qualifications:

   a) Must be a current or former Houston Methodist employee, which may include exempt and non-exempt employees, full- and part-time employees, contractors, special volunteers, fellows or interns.
   b) Dedicated to the Mission and Vision of (INSERT GROUP NAME).
   c) Shall not be denied membership with regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, citizenship, genetic information or status as a Vietnam-era veteran or special disabled veteran;

B. Community-at-large

   a. This ERG considers (INSERT COMMUNITY GROUP(S) HERE) a vital component of the success of related efforts because (EXPLAIN HERE). Members from (COMMUNITY GROUP NAME) are welcome to attend regular meetings and events, however are not entitled to full membership rights and privileges nor subject to full membership obligations. Specifically, they are not able to vote or seek office or participate in the process for either (e.g. endorsements or funding for a particular member candidate).

Note: ERGs are encouraged to develop and leverage community partnerships as appropriate, by way of connecting with professional associations, similar ERGs at similar or local businesses, and other community-led organizations. While such membership is not required, if there are connections that the ERG would like to establish as critical to their success, Community-At-Large Membership should be defined here. The ERG should add a section identifying each partner organization and explaining the relevance and value added.
EXAMPLE(S): Veteran spouse(s), partner(s) or children; Veteran ERGs at other businesses; One Stop Shops or Job Development Centers, etc.

C. Committees
   1. To date, (INSERT GROUP NAME) consists of the following committees:
      a. Membership Committee
      b. Elections Committee
      c. Charter Committee
      d. Professional Development Committee

VI. ROLES

A. Executive Board
   1. The Chair is expected to:
      a) Act as the lead facilitator for all meetings of the Executive Board and General Membership.
      b) Act as a representative of (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) to the Executive Sponsor, the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager and the Office of Human Resources, agency leadership, and others as needed.
      c) Review and submit the Charter for approval by the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager or designee.
      d) Invite Houston Methodist departments or other guests to meetings and activities to teach share relevant information.
      e) Maintain responsibility for managing the duties and term requirements of all other positions.
      f) Serve a one-year term and then moves to the Past Chair position.

   2. The Co-Chair is expected to:
      a) Assume the role of Chair in their absence.
      b) Serve as the lead to the Charter Committee.
      c) Use opportunity to sit as an ad-hoc member on all subcommittees.
      d) Serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Chair.

   3. The Treasurer is expected to:
      a) Manage all fiduciary responsibilities, to include developing budget requests, tracking expenditures and revenue, and coordinating with the Fundraising Committee as needed.
      b) Provide updates to members on current budget status during designated meetings.
      c) Serve a two-year term. Additional terms may be consecutive.

   4. The Secretary is expected to:
      a) Maintain all meeting notes and documentation related to the group.
b) Schedule meeting space and disseminates information related to the group’s events or activities.

c) Maintain membership and attendance rosters.

d) Receive input from subcommittee leads, the Executive Board and the Executive Sponsor regarding the Activities Plan and compiles the final document to be incorporated into the Charter.

e) Serve a two-year term. Additional terms may be consecutive.

5. The Executive Sponsor is expected to:

a) Be appointed by the Founding Members or Executive Board; not an elected position.

b) Be approved by the Office of Human Resources.

c) Provide assistance in identifying key objectives that align to system-level goals and business-related needs.

d) Provide administrative consultation to the group as needed—e.g. how to develop objectives, how to develop related activities each fiscal year, and how to measure and demonstrate effectiveness.

e) Attend events and meetings as often as possible.

f) Avoid voting or influencing elections.

g) Serve a rolling term; may begin and end as necessary but must notify the Chair and the Office of Human Resources in advance to allow sufficient time to find a replacement and avoid non-active status.

6. The Past Chair is expected to:

a) Assist the current Chair as needed.

b) Provide guidance regarding the continuity of leadership and direction, or any recommendations for change.

c) Facilitate the election of officers by accepting nominations, preparing all ballots, and providing oversight of the election process.

d) Serve a one-year term.

B. Members

1. All (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) members are expected to:

a) Attend as many (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) general meetings and events as possible.

b) Actively participate on at least one committee of the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE).

c) Share their involvement, general information and upcoming events with their individual departments on the work of the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE).

2. Please note all (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) members will be held accountable to adhere to all applicable Houston Methodist rules, regulations, and policies at all (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) meetings and events.

C. Community at Large
1. These members do not necessarily have to be Houston Methodist employees, however must follow the guidelines applicable to Houston Methodist employees as established by company rules, regulations, and policies.

2. Must be interested in promoting Houston Methodist values and willing to participate in (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) activities.

D. Committees
1. All committees and their members are expected to:
   a) Attend as many (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) general meetings and events as possible.
   b) Plan to host at least one activity per fiscal year.
   c) Prepare a progress report for each general meeting to update all members, including budget status, or otherwise report no progress.

2. Charter Committee
   a. This committee establishes and reviews the Charter of the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE).
   b. A review of the Charter and Charter will be conducted annually in the month of June by the Charter subcommittee.
   c. Convenes as needed to review, update, or modify the Charter.
   d. Presents a report on changes or modifications to the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) during the next meeting to report the review and obtain membership approval.
   e. The Co-Chair acts as the lead to this committee.

3. Career Development Committee
   a. Mobilizes (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) members and initiatives to assist Houston Methodist departments in their efforts to recruit, mentor, and promote diverse candidates.
   b. Partners with local, related organizations that refer diverse candidates for Houston Methodist employment or provide developmental opportunities.

4. Recognition and Employment Support Committee
   a. Acts as a focal point in Houston Methodist departments to recognize, value the contributions, and honor diverse employees.
   b. Supports the planning and hosting of Houston Methodist agency-funded recognition events as planned and agreed to for the year.
   c. Assists in disseminating information on benefits and entitlements to Houston Methodist employees who are in a protected class.

5. Marketing and Communication Committee
   a. Work closely with the Houston Methodist Communications Department at each entity and HR Hub to produce press releases for events (to announce in advance or after an event).
   b. Develop news stories for the President’s Letter and HR newsletter and write and submit articles on a timely basis.
   c. Obtain photos to be integrated into the newsletter.
   d. Continuously update the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE)’s website and social networking sites to reach a broad audience of potential volunteers, employees and the veteran community at large. Post news,
event reminders and success stories and upload pictures, photos, and compelling stories to spike user interest, feedback, and participation.

e. Acts as a conduit for inquires and questions about related issues to organizations that support the targeted interest group.

f. Works with (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) members and associates to prepare an annual report on (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) activities to be presented during the Annual Meeting.

6. Ad hoc committees may be temporarily created for a specified time to achieve a specified goal.

VII. ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

A. Elected Officers are:
   1. Chair
   2. Co-Chair
   3. Secretary
   4. Treasurer

B. Nominations

During the month of May, any current member may submit nominations for the elected officer positions to the Past Chair.

C. Elections

1. When will elections take place?
2. Who will facilitate the Elections process?
3. How will members be notified of the candidates?
4. Written or electronic ballots will be used, but secret ballots are not allowed.
5. A majority vote of all active members will determine the Elected Officers.
6. How to handle ties?
7. The Elected Officers terms are from January 1 – December 31.

D. Successors

1. What happens in the event that an officer resigns or is removed?

   The Executive Board may appoint a member of the Community at Large into a vacant Elected Officer position in times of unexpected vacancies subject to the approval of the General Committee.

2. Who is responsible for deciding the interim replacement?

3. Will an election be held if someone steps down or will the gap be appointed until the next scheduled election?

E. Removal from Office

1. On what grounds can/will an officer be removed from office?
VIII. FY__ ACTIVITIES PLAN

A. Each year, the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) Secretary will work with the leads for the subcommittees, the Executive Board, and the Executive Sponsor in generating an Activities Plan. The plan will include the following:

   a) A list of planned activities in support of the Charter and Charter to include the focus of each subcommittee.
   b) Methods to measure the success and/or performance of each activity.
   c) Measureable goals that will be tracked and reported in the Annual Report.
   d) The Activities Plan will be approved by the membership during the August meeting.

B. The current Activities Plan shall be a part of the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) Charter and shall be incorporated into the Charter by reference at the time it is approved.

C. Current Activity Plan:
   a) Objectives:
      a) Objective #1
      b) Objective #2
      c) Objective #3
      d) Objective #4
      e) Objective #5
   b) Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Name</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>REACH Goal(s)</th>
<th>Anticipated Completion</th>
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IX. CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Charter or amendments to them shall become effective upon adoption by the majority of eligible voters. Amendments to the Charter will be presented to the membership at least __________ days before a vote is taken.

X. MEETINGS

A. General Membership

   a) Meetings will be held from 11 to noon on the fourth Thursday of the following months:
a) January
b) February
c) March
d) April
e) May
f) June
g) July
h) August
i) September
j) October

b) In the month of August, an Annual Meeting of the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) will be held. Items on the agenda for this meeting will include:

a) Presentation of the Annual Report.

b) An update report by the Charter and Charter Committee.

B. Subcommittees
Time will be allotted for sub-committees to meet during the (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) General Meeting, however, all standing subcommittees should meet independent from the General Committee meetings on a regular basis if possible to ensure completion of all initiatives and work activities identified in the Activities Plan.

XI. ALLOCATION/DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

A. Funding

(INSERT GROUP NAME) will receive funding from the Department of Human Resources, depending on the availability of funds and the number of groups in need of funding, as well as in consideration of each group’s Activities Plan.

B. Use of Funds

1. The use of funds shall be consistent with the overall mission of (INSERT GROUP NAME).

a) Funds for committee efforts may be requested in writing to the Executive Board. Please allow at least ## weeks in advance to process fund requests.
C. Compensation

1. Members shall not receive compensation or salary for service to (INSERT GROUP NAME).

2. Members authorized by the President or Executive Board to incur expenses on behalf of (INSERT GROUP NAME) may be reimbursed upon the submission of vouchers explaining and supporting the expenditure.

3. The Executive Board may authorize payment to people hired for specific services.

4. The Executive Board may authorize a member to enter into a contract in the name of and on behalf of (INSERT GROUP NAME) for a specified activity; and unless so authorized by the Executive Board, no member shall have any power or authority to bind (INSERT GROUP NAME) by any contract or engagement, or to pledge its credit or render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

5. Honoraria for guest presenters shall be offered at the discretion of the Chair. The amount of honoraria shall be determined annually by a simple vote of the membership. The Executive Board must approve any honoraria paid in excess of the amount.

XI. STAFFING/OPERATIONAL COSTS

A. Costs for all (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) activities will be supported by an annual budget approved by the Diversity and Inclusion department. Any other needed resources can be provided through sponsorship by other departments, if available.

B. Costs may include, but are not limited to, de minimis use of Houston Methodist resources, as approved by each member’s departments, to include:
   a) Email
   b) Meeting Rooms
   c) Transportation
   d) Presentation or handout materials

C. Support for other (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) activities such as data collection, hosting a (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) information web site, records storage, or other costs may be funded or sponsored by supporting departments.

XII. ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Code of Ethics

   Members shall at all times conduct themselves and their activities in a professional and courteous manner; in conformance with federal, state, and local laws; in conformance with the policies and procedures of Houston Methodist; and in accordance with the Code of Ethics of Houston Methodist. Members shall promote open and equitable access to (INSERT GROUP NAME) programs and activities.
Members shall transact all business on behalf of the association in accordance with the Charter; federal, state, and local laws; and this code of ethics. Members shall not engage in activities harmful to Houston Methodist, the government of the United States of America, or to the purpose of (INSERT GROUP NAME). Members shall not use their position in (INSERT GROUP NAME) to exploit personal views or profit from their membership.

B. Political Activities

(INSERT GROUP NAME) shall not support or participate in political campaigns on behalf of any candidate for public office.

C. Audit

The audit shall be conducted at least ___ days prior to the (INSERT ELECTION MONTH/YEAR) election. The purpose of the audit is to determine the accuracy of the books, detect inconsistencies or errors, provide recommendations for corrective action, protect the financial officers, verify that funds were sent through channels as appropriate, and assure the membership that the association's resources were managed in a businesslike manner within the regulations established for their use. The President shall appoint or hire an impartial person to conduct the audit and to report results to the Executive Board.

D. Financial Statement

The annual financial statement for the preceding shall be published ____(INSERT WHEN/WHERE)

XIII. DISSOLUTION AND LIQUIDATION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Should (INSERT GROUP NAME HERE) become dissolved by majority vote of the existing membership, the Chair is responsible for notifying the Office of Human Resources and paying any and all remaining financial liabilities.

The Office of Human Resources may request an explanation of the dissolution and supporting documentation showing no remaining financial liabilities, and letters of understanding from at least three (3) active members. If confirmed, the HR Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager or designee will approve and document the dissolution, notifying the Former Chair and keeping a copy for HR records.

Upon dissolution, the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager shall dispose of all remaining assets through a donation to (INSERT NAME OF A RELEVANT CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION OR ACTIVE ERG). Any other resources or tangible products will be made available to appropriate departments or other relevant ERGs in accordance with applicable policies.
Meeting Minutes Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Conf. Call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meeting Invitees

☑ Present ☐ Not Present ☐ ☐

Meeting Objectives

1. Objective 1
2. Objective 2
3. Objective 3

Action Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Assigned to</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Status</th>
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Meeting Notes

______________________________________________________________________________
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Additional Resources

Many of the following resources were used to highlight best practices and recommendations for this resource guide. All groups are encouraged to engage in further research and networking to identify additional resource and best practices related to ERGs in general or their special interest in particular. This can be achieved by conducting general research, contacting similar ERGs at other employers in the surrounding community, or partnering with community-based organizations that serve a similar or relevant cause.

1. Employee Resource Groups – Bentley University
5. Employee Resource Groups – Diversity Best Practices
6. Seven Ways to Enable Your Employee Resource Groups Into A Powerful Advancement Platform – Forbes.com

If you have questions or concerns about how to start or where to go from here, please feel free to contact your HR Generalist or the Corporate HR Client Services Office, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, for additional guidance.
Sources

https://www.bentley.edu/files/2017/03/17/Bentley%20CWB%20ERG%20Research%20Report%20Fall%202016.pdf


https://www.diversitybestpractices.com/tags/employee-resource-groups

https://www.forbes.com/sites/glennllopis/2012/06/18/7-ways-to-enable-your-employee-resource-groups-into-a-powerful-advancement-platform/#4d731cea524f