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East Portland Community Office GUIDING DOCUMENT

“Place Based People Centered”

Preamble: East Portland’s greatest asset is the diversity of communities that live, work, play, and come together in East Portland.

Mission: The East Portland Community Office’s mission is to support the community building and advocacy activities of the diverse East Portland Communities.

We recognize that:

- Community building and advocacy look different in different communities.
- People will work with us in ways that are meaningful to them and when our programming is relevant to them.
- We should not privilege one model of community building, advocacy, or organizing. Instead we invite people to work with us in ways that are meaningful to them; let them define their own issues, set their own activities, and use organizing models and structures that work for their communities.

The East Portland Community Office** is actively evolving and showing what collaborative, inclusive, and equitable support of community-driven efforts can look like. Below are the considerations we use to prioritize our work.

** A note about the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ in this document: ‘We’ most narrowly references EPCO staff. Most directly, this document guides the work of EPCO staff. Where relevant, ‘we’ also references the EPCO Advisory Committee. This document came out of the Advisory Committee’s work and thus, also embodies and guides the work of the Advisory Committee. Finally, to some degree and again where relevant, the ‘we’ also encompasses other key teams supported by and supporting the work of EPCO Community Building and Advocacy Programs.

Guidelines for support from the East Portland Community Office:

- The activity must be in East Portland, be by East Portlanders, or clearly benefit East Portland.
- The activity must originate in the community or clearly support the community’s efforts.
- Activities should meet at least one of the following goals:

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- Increase the number and diversity of people involved in their communities.
- Strengthen community capacity through, for example, skills building, fostering teamwork or partnerships, and other community building activities.
- Increase community impact on public decisions.

East Portland Community Office Values

Activities we support should embody our program values.

- Community Leadership – Those most directly impacted should be in the lead: initiating and playing an active role in defining the project or advocacy effort.
- Collaboration – Working together creates solutions to community issues that are more effective, lasting, and inclusive.
- Flexibility – Take advantage of opportunities when they arise.
- Inclusion – The East Portland Community Office should include and support all diverse East Portland Communities.
- Equity – The East Portland Community Office should take active steps to engage with communities that historically have had least access to City and East Portland Community Office programming and resources.

Pragmatic Considerations for Support

There are more important community-driven efforts than EPCO has resources to support. We use the following considerations to guide us in deciding which efforts - out of all the many that meet our program requirements, goals, and values - to support. These are not yes/no answers. Rather, a guide to balance all factors involved.

Balance: Depth – Are we maintaining support for existing efforts while making space to support new efforts?

We recognize that a balance must be struck between supporting existing and supporting new efforts.

- To match the ebb and flow of community efforts we do our best to support a mix of new and existing efforts.
- The support needs of existing efforts may change over time. We strive to provide continuing support as needed and appropriate.
- To be responsive and inclusive, we strive to maintain space to support new and emerging community efforts.

Balance: Breadth - How does this fit into the other activities, projects, and groups we're supporting?

We strive to support a diversity of projects, activities, and community groups. When a new request for support comes in we look at the activities, efforts, and groups we are currently supporting and ask:

- Does the activity represent a different approach?
- Is it a different activity than currently supported?
- Does it represent a different advocacy issue?
- Is there leadership from groups underserved by us and other City Programs and Services?
- Is the activity a limited-term or ongoing activity?
- Is the activity or group a new-to-us activity or group?

Cultural Competency – Are we remaining open to and supportive of different ways of doing things?

- Are we remembering to be open to different ways of community building, organizing and advocacy?
- Are we remembering that planning, team, finances required, and more look different across cultures as well?
- Are we appropriately seeking support for understanding different ways of doing things and actively working to increase our understanding?
- Are we checking our beliefs, perceptions and assumptions about what ‘works’, who is an ‘expert’, and how things get done? That is, are we being respectful and acknowledging different ways of doing things?

Feasibility - Are there resources to support the activity?

- Does the group have access to the financing, skills, and equipment necessary? Can EPCO assist in connecting to missing resources?
- Does the team match the project?
- Cost/benefit – How does the potential community benefit compare to the cost in resources?
- Sustainability – Should and how will the activity continue?
- Planning – How well has the activity been planned? Are goals and expected outcomes clear? Can EPCO assist in scoping the project?

Organization size – Is direct support or a relationship/partnership most appropriate?

- We prioritize providing direct support to grass roots community groups with little access to resources.
- We actively build relationships and partnerships with any organization, no matter the size, in ways that will benefit East Portlanders.

Staffing - What role will EPCO staff play?

- Is the activity led by community? Is the content driven by the community?
- Is staff providing technical, logistical, or administrative support unavailable through volunteers?
- Do we currently have the staffing resources to offer?

Team-building - Does the activity build a community team or partnerships?

- Is there a team leading the project?
- Does the project foster collaboration or build capacity within a team?
- Is the activity led by the communities benefiting or impacted by the issues the activity addresses?

Accountability

This is a living document. As such, we should:

- Regularly review alignment between this document and EPCO's work. Adjustments, as necessary, should be made to both our work and this document.
- Regularly review and discuss our work and this document with the EPCO's Advisory Committee.
- Make the document prominently available to all who work with EPCO.
- Where possible, provide support and training to community and EPCO's staff around the core values, goals, and pragmatic considerations guiding EPCO's work.