

Statewide Employee Resource Groups (ERG) Guidelines

What are statewide employee resource groups?

Statewide Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are a network of employees that help drive results and act as a catalyst to build a culture of inclusion. Statewide ERGs help to foster an environment that embraces and leverages the culture of employees, fosters talent growth and development, and encourages meaningful community involvement. Statewide ERGs work collaboratively to ensure the business impact is reflected through the three core principles (3Cs): **Culture, Career Development, and Community Involvement**. Examples of activities Statewide ERGs may perform are:

- Working with agencies to create an inclusive work environment
- Providing career development opportunities with ERG members
- Assisting in statewide recruitment and retention of talent
- Increasing awareness of equity and inclusion efforts
- Identifying and meeting business needs

Statewide ERGs work closely with MMB to help ensure that activities align with overall strategic goals of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Benefits of statewide employee resource groups

Statewide ERGs serve as a means to bring employees and agency leadership together to work toward a common goal by leveraging talent to promote a culture of diversity, respect and inclusion.

What's in it for the state?

- Gain insights into diverse perspectives in the workforce
- Provide employees a structured system to identify relevant business issues and provide recommendations to agencies across the enterprise
- Increase employee engagement
- Support statewide equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts
- Retain talent

What's in it for employees?

- Provide unique insights from diverse perspectives, drive inclusion and engagement
- Career development and networking opportunities
- Raise awareness and promote a culture of inclusion
- Develop a sense of belonging in the workforce

Program Strategic Objective

To have an inclusive, equitable, and diverse work culture where employees feel respected, valued and empowered to promote the agencies of the State of Minnesota as employers of choice.

Strategic goals

Attract, retain, engage and develop a diverse, inclusive and effective workforce by doing the following:

1. Foster an inclusive and equitable workplace culture
2. Support employees to enhance retention, including for groups with high turnover
3. Develop leaders who value and work to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion in agency workplaces and agency programs

Key areas

Culture

Creating a diverse and inclusive work culture which supports employee retention.

Career development

Investing in professional growth so employees can thrive in a career in state government.

Community involvement

Building meaningful community relationships.

Impact

- Engaged and thriving workforce
- Culturally competent, equitable, and inclusive workplace
- Strengthened community relationships and partnerships

Approved statewide employee resource groups

MMB Recruitment, Retention & Affirmative Action currently has approved Statewide Employee Resource Groups that form under any one of the following identities/backgrounds:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Disability communities
- Generational (ex. young professionals, etc.)
- Sexual orientation/gender expression/gender identity
- Gender
- Veteran status

While all approved groups will be referred to collectively as Statewide ERGs, each group can maintain a name in accordance with the dimension of diversity it represents. Statewide ERGs cannot be formed around common interests or activities such as sports/hobbies, politics and other beliefs that do not align with the strategic objective of the ERG program. The following would not be considered a Statewide ERG: Biking or Exercising Group, Healthy Living Clubs, Investment Groups, or Book Clubs. Though these groups/clubs can support the morale or productivity of employees, they should be considered as interest groups and not ERGs. Questions should be directed to MMB.

State of Minnesota Executive Branch Statistics

36,749+ Employees
18,484 Female
5,279 Racial/Ethnic Minorities
2,961 with Disabilities

State of Minnesota Cabinet Agencies

Department of Administration
Department of Agriculture
Department of Commerce
Department of Corrections
Department of Education
Department of Employment and
Economic Development
Department of Health
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
Department of Human Rights
Department of Human Services
Department of Iron Range Resources
and Rehabilitation
Minnesota IT Services
Department of Labor and Industry
Minnesota Management and Budget
Bureau of Mediation Services
Metropolitan Council
Department of Military Affairs
Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Department of Public Safety
Department of Revenue
Department of Transportation
Department of Veterans Affairs

24 Agencies

Criteria for statewide employee resource groups

Employees who are interested in forming a Statewide ERG must take into consideration the following criteria (***note that this information is required in the proposal application***):

1. The group must have a minimum of 5 members to start.
2. The group should recommend the following on their application:
 - a) Executive Sponsor
 - b) Champion
 - c) Chairs

Please see Article 3: Structure, for more information about these roles.
3. Must develop a work plan that is in alignment with the mission, objective and strategic goals of the state in addition to how this relates to the 3 Cs: **Culture, Career Development, and Community Involvement**
4. Develop group bylaws and identify key leader roles – designating the chair, vice chair and secretary.
5. Statewide ERGs are not intended to and do not replace labor/management committees
6. Groups cannot be formed in opposition to another group.
7. Group membership must be open to all – including allies who support the mission of the ERG.

Frequently asked questions

Q1: I would like to start a Statewide Employee Resource Group (ERG) but my proposed Statewide ERG does not meet any of the approved identities/backgrounds, what should I do?

A1: Employees are encouraged to contact Minnesota Management and Budget to discuss whether or not the proposed Statewide ERG meets the requirements to be considered a Statewide ERG.

Q2: Do I need to have prior approval from the proposed Executive Sponsor and Champion in order to submit the application to Minnesota Management and Budget?

A2: Employees must have prior approval from the proposed Executive Sponsor or Champion to submit the proposal if they have identified leaders to fill these roles. If the ERG has not identified a leader to fill the role of either the Executive Sponsor and/or Champion an application may be submitted with out prior approvals. The Statewide ERG Advisor Committee will serve as a resource to provide the ERG contacts to consult about the open leadership positions. Once the positions are filled the application can be approved..

Q3: How do I submit a proposal to start a Statewide Employee Resource Group (ERG)?

A3: Employees who are interested in starting a Statewide ERG must submit an application (attached on page 7-10) detailing how the group meets the criteria listed on page 2. The completed application should be sent to Statewide Talent Pipeline Coordinator (MMB) for further review. Once approved, Minnesota Management and Budget will notify the proposed Chair(s) of the group. Please allow several weeks for processing once submitted.

Q4: Do I need supervisor approval to join a Statewide Employee Resource Group?

A4: Employees who take part in any leadership role of a Statewide ERG (such as Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretary) **must** have supervisor approval to hold a leadership role since there is a commitment expectation to deliver Statewide ERG goals during the duration of service (Executive Sponsor and Chair 2yrs, Champion and Secretary 1yr) Employees who attend or participate in Statewide ERGs in a non-leadership role or participant do not need supervisor approval to participate in unpaid Statewide ERG activities that are not during work hours, but must have supervisor approval to take part in paid Statewide ERG activities, and activities that occur during work hours.

Q5: My supervisor has denied my request to form and/or participate in a Statewide ERG. I am not on an oral or written performance improvement plan and I have not received prior discipline. What can I do to rally my supervisor's support at this time?

A5: Employees can access resources at [Minnesota Extranet website](#). If the employee is unable to access this website contact the [Statewide Talent Pipeline Coordinator](#) for further assistance. These resources are meant to help employees and supervisors understand the advantages of participating in a Statewide ERG both in a leadership and non-leadership role. Employees must have supervisor approval to serve in any leadership capacity since the employee is expected to dedicate additional time to the work of the Statewide ERG. The amount of time should be determined by the employee and supervisor. If the employee is unable to rally the support of the supervisor after accessing these resources, they should contact their agency's Human Resource department for further guidance.

Q6: How many Statewide Employee Resource Groups can I be involved in?

A6: Employees are expected to prioritize their job responsibilities; it is expected that employees will use good judgment as it relates to the ability to meet work commitments /deadlines. Employees in leadership roles should limit their involvement to the single group they are serving due to expected time commitment and responsibilities. If an employee is interested in participating in more than one ERG, the employee must consult with their supervisor for the parameters. See Article 10: Employee Participation.

Q7. Can I form and/or participate in Statewide ERGs if I am a new employee in a probationary period?

A7: Yes, new employees are eligible to participate in and apply to form a Statewide ERGs during the probationary period. Statewide ERGs are platforms meant to support and advance employee recruitment and retention objectives. Therefore, new employees should use these resources as a means to network and build relationships across the enterprise for professional development.

Q8: Do I get paid if I attend a Statewide ERG event outside of my normal working hours?

A8: No. ERG activities that occur outside of normal work hours are unpaid, unless the employee is non-exempt and is assigned by their manager to attend the activity as a work assignment or attendance is otherwise directly related to the employee's normal job duties.

Q9: I supervise an employee who wants to participate in an ERG-sponsored professional development workshop for 4 hours on a Thursday, during their normal work hours. Should they be paid for this time?

A9: You have the discretion whether or not to permit your employee to attend this event during their normal work hours. If they do attend, they will be paid their normal hourly rate for a supervisor-approved professional development workshop that occurs during normal work hours. If you have concerns regarding approving their request, we encourage you to consult with your agency's Human Resource department.

Q10: I supervise an exempt employee who wants to participate in an ERG-sponsored symposium that begins at 3 p.m. and ends at 8 p.m.; their normal workday ends at 5 p.m. Do I need to pay the employee for the additional three hours that they spend at the event?

A10: No. You never are required to pay your exempt employee additional compensation for attending any ERG event, and you are not authorized to do so. The portion of the symposium that takes place during work hours is considered work time. The portion of the symposium that takes place outside of work hours is not considered work time. Supervisors have discretion to authorize or not authorize attendance during the workday.

Q11: Would your answer to Q10 change if the employee were nonexempt?

A11: Generally no. The nonexempt employee should be paid their normal hourly rate for participation in a symposium during normal work hours, but time spent outside of normal work hours at an ERG event is not paid time. Supervisors have discretion to authorize or not authorize attendance during the workday.

However, if the ERG activity is directly related to the employee's job duties (for example, if an ERG member is a recruiter and attends an ERG-sponsored job fair), or if a supervisor requires the employee to attend, any hours spent on the activity would be paid as normal work time. Consult with your agency's HR department for more assistance.

Q 12: I supervise an employee who wants to participate in an ERG-sponsored charitable activity that occurs during the employee's normal workday. Is the employee's participation paid work time?

A12: No, these types of activities are never paid, even if they occur during the normal workday. However, the employee may use accumulated vacation or compensatory time to attend the activity if it occurs during the normal workday. You have the discretion to decide whether the employee may attend this activity during normal work hours.

Employee resource groups (ergs) bylaws

Article 1. Purpose

Statewide Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are a network of employees that help drive results and act as a catalyst to build a culture of inclusion and diversity across the enterprise. Statewide ERGs understand the advantages of an environment that embraces the culture of employees, fosters talent growth and development, and encourages meaningful community involvement. Statewide ERGs work collaboratively to ensure that the business impact is reflected through the three core principles (3Cs): **Culture, Career Development, and Community Involvement.**

Article 2: Membership

All employees are encouraged to participate in Statewide ERGs as active members. Active members are members that attend meetings and are involved in contributing to the ERG's annual workplan. Employees who take on leadership roles such as Champion, Chair, or Secretary of a Statewide ERGs must receive supervisor approval to hold the position.

Article 3: Structure

All Statewide ERGs shall have a leadership team comprised of the following positions:

Executive Sponsor

The Executive Sponsor (an agency head or delegate of an agency head) shall provide overall leadership to the Statewide ERGs to help the ERG to ensure it is operating in alignment with the Bylaws. The Executive Sponsor shall support the efforts and initiatives of the Statewide ERGs stated in the annual business work plan.

Champion

The Champion (*Director Role*) shall have a commitment to the purpose of Statewide ERGs and to advance the goals of employee recruitment and retention. They shall ensure that the goals of the Statewide ERG are carried out effectively and preside at and/or arrange meetings, lead business planning, as well as oversee all business done by the Statewide ERG. The Champion shall also be the main point of contact for the Statewide ERG Executive Sponsor.

Chair

The Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that Statewide ERG meetings are in alignment with the objective, mission and strategic direction of the Statewide ERG. They shall work closely with the secretary to establish meeting agendas and provide structure to the meetings. The Chair shall act as the facilitator of the meetings and address any issues raised by the Statewide ERG.

Secretary

The secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of Statewide ERG actions, including overseeing the taking of minutes at all Statewide ERG meetings, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of minutes and the agenda to each Statewide ERG member, and assuring that Statewide ERG records are maintained. The secretary must file Statewide ERG meeting minutes and other records with MMB.

Article 4: Meetings and Notices

Statewide ERGs shall meet at least monthly, at an agreed upon location. Statewide ERGs should establish their own meeting schedules and notices as they see fit. It is **required** that ERGs establish **at least one** mode of audio/video conferencing for participants/members who are outside of the region and/or off-site. Examples of audio or video tools are: Skype, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, etc. Meetings must also comply with state accessibility standards and requirements. See, e.g., Minn. Stat. 15.44. Contact MMB if assistance is needed.

Article 5: Regional Chapters

Statewide ERGs shall be organized by the following regions: Northwest, Northeast, East/West Central, South and the Metro Area. MMB will support Statewide ERGs created in all regions.

Article 6: Election and Nominations

The Champion and Secretary roles shall be 1-year terms, with individuals permitted to serve a maximum of 2 consecutive elected terms, except in the case where a leader assumes the role mid-term. Members of the Statewide ERG shall elect a Champion during the last quarter of the fiscal year. The elections will be conducted annually. Terms shall begin on July 1 (the start of the fiscal year). Leadership appointments are subject to final approval by MMB.

Additionally, MMB reserves the right to:

- Assign an employee to a Leadership Team or committee lead position of any ERG should there be opportunities identified for employee leadership development. In said cases, MMB shall inform the Statewide ERG Leadership Team prior to any appointments.
- Remove any Leadership Team member should they fail to meet any of the requirements listed in Article 7 and/or violate the code of conduct in any way (*see Article 14*).

Article 7: Leadership Requirements

Any employee serving in a leadership capacity in Statewide ERGs must:

- Dedicate time and effort to ensure the business success of the Statewide ERG.
 - Be in good standing with their manager/supervisor, **cannot** be on any type of oral or written performance improvement plan, and **cannot** have received any disciplinary action within 1 year of assuming a leadership role or while holding a leadership role.
 - Have manager/supervisor permission to participate in a leadership role with the Statewide ERG.
 - Act in accordance with the State Code of Ethics, Minn. Stat. § 43A.38, and in support of the creation of an inclusive environment.
 - Attend scheduled Statewide ERG leader training sessions.
- Include Statewide ERG leadership responsibilities in their annual performance and development goals.
- Supervisors will add the ERG leadership tasks to the employee's position description and/or
 - Supervisors will add the ERG leadership tasks to the employee's Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Article 8: Executive Sponsorship

Each Statewide ERG shall have one Executive Sponsor who will be identified by the Governor's office in partnership with MMB.

The Executive Sponsors shall serve a 2-year term. Some of the key responsibilities of the Executive Sponsor will be to:

- Provide leadership and guidance to the annual Statewide ERG business plan.
- Help remove organizational and individual barriers to achieve Statewide ERG goals.
- Champion inclusion and diversity both internally and externally.

Refer to the Statewide ERG Executive Sponsor Role Description (Article 3: Structure) document for more details. Additionally, each Executive Sponsor will serve on the State's Diversity Council or sub council.

Article 9: Funding

All Statewide ERG activities must be aligned with the ERG's objective, mission, or annual goals to be considered for funding approval. MMB reserves the right to approve or deny funding for any activity for any reason. Statewide ERGs only use approved vendors with the State of Minnesota per policy and guidelines.

Article 10: Employee Participation

Participation in Statewide ERGs is completely voluntary and shall be open to all employees, including interns/student workers, trainees and temporary employees. All employees are expected to prioritize their job responsibilities over Statewide ERG participation. It is expected that employees will use good judgment as it relates to their ability to meet work commitments/deadlines and will ensure that their participation in Statewide ERGs does not interfere with their job responsibilities.

Employees must receive approval from their manager/supervisor prior to participating in any ERG events that occur during an employee's normal work schedule or that may result in paid time.

Supervisor Support

MMB encourages supervisors to support employees' interest in Statewide ERG membership and activities. For additional questions or support please contact your agency's HR department.

Using Paid Work Time to Participate in ERG Activities

Participation in ERG activities is entirely voluntary. With manager/supervisor approval, employees may use paid work time to attend Statewide ERG meetings that have a business purpose, and ERG-sponsored professional development events such as symposiums, lectures, workshops, learning opportunities, etc., which occur during the employee's normal work schedule. Managers/supervisors are encouraged to allow participating non-exempt employees the opportunity to balance hours within their workweek to avoid overtime. Managers/supervisors always retain the discretion to deny any request for participation during the workday or that would result in paid time. Exempt employees are never eligible for overtime for ERG participation.

ERG Activities that Are Unpaid

Participation in any type of ERG activities outside of an employee's normal work schedule is always unpaid, unless the employee is non-exempt and attendance at the activity is assigned by the employee's

manager/supervisor or attendance at the event is otherwise directly related to the employee's normal job duties.

In addition, employees cannot use paid work time to participate in ERG-related community service activities, charitable events, or social events. However, for such events that occur during the employee's normal work schedule, employees may use accrued vacation or compensatory time with supervisor authorization.

You should consult with HR or your manager/supervisor if you have questions about whether time spent in an activity or event will be considered work time.

Article 11: Events and Communication

Statewide ERGs are responsible for creating performance measures and tracking business goals, as well as maintaining their web pages on the MMB website. Each Statewide ERG shall determine appropriate communication vehicles and frequency. All printed materials should follow MMB's branding guidelines and MMB's specific templates where applicable. Refer all inquiries from external media outlets/press to MMB. ERG activities are prohibited if they conflict with respectful work place objectives, statewide policies, the State Code of Ethics, or law.

Article 12: Dissolutions/Resolutions/Removals

MMB reserves the right to dissolve Statewide ERGs at any time, with or without cause or notice. Statewide ERG leaders serve at MMB's discretion. In the event a designated Statewide ERG leader fails to satisfy all of the requirements set forth in Article 5: Leadership Requirements – the individual will be removed from the leadership role and MMB will appoint a new individual until time of election and nominations.

MMB shall have the authority and discretion to certify new Statewide ERGs. Submission of a proposal is not a guarantee that Statewide ERG status will be granted. Statewide ERGs shall not be used to discuss, negotiate or bargain over terms or conditions of employment or to address grievances or labor disputes.

Article 13: Bylaw Changes

MMB reserves the right to change these bylaws at any time and will communicate any changes by updating the Statewide ERG website as well as communicate to Statewide ERG Champions and Executive Sponsors. Statewide ERGs shall comply with any changes within the identified timelines.

Article 14: Code of Conduct

Employees who participate in Statewide ERGs must conduct themselves in accordance with the State Code of Ethics, Minn. Stat. § 43A.38. They must:

- Conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner, and
- Comply with all applicable laws, policies, and rules.

State of Minnesota ERG Application Form

Instructions:

Submit the completed form to Minnesota Management and Budget. Once approved, Minnesota Management and Budget will notify the proposed Chair regarding next steps to formalize the Employee Resource Group. Questions? Please contact MMB's [Statewide Talent Pipeline Coordinator](#)

Proposed name: _____

Executive Sponsor (appointed by Governor's Office): _____

Proposed Champion: _____

Proposed Chair/Co-Chairs: _____

Proposed Secretary: _____

Participants

Names of Participant	Agency	Phone Number	Email Address

What is your objective?

Provide a summary of your ERG objectives and the desired goals of the ERG.

What is your mission?

Provide a summary of who, what, and why your ERG would exist.

Work plan required

Proposed Initiatives/Goals. How will you address your mission? (during a 1 year period)	Impact – How will your ERG measure success? What are the measurable goals?

Approval

Champion approval: _____

Executive Sponsor Approval: _____

Statewide ERG Advisory Committee Approval: _____

Date of approval:

MMB approval required for official operation

Date received:

Date Approved: