

Monterey County 2022 CSAC Challenge Award Entry
Issue Area: Government Finance, Administration and Technology
Population: Suburban County Category

Monterey County – Employee Resource Groups

OVERVIEW: The Civil Rights Office created the Employee Resource Group (ERG) program. ERGs are employee-led groups promoting inclusion and aim to build a stronger sense of community for employees.

CHALLENGE: Monterey County has over 5,000 employees who provide services to over 439,000 residents. With such demand, it can be hard to create a sense of community and belonging at work, which can lead to employee attrition. Building community became harder in 2020 with the start of the pandemic and the switch to remote work. The CRO saw an opportunity to develop an employee-led program around shared protected characteristics where employees could feel a sense of community, belonging, and comradery when they were isolated, stressed, and could not interact physically.

SOLUTION: Starting in November 2021, the CRO began the launch of the ERG program. ERGs are County-recognized, employee-run groups based around protected classes that instill the County's values around DE&I. In addition, ERGs serve as incubators for ideas and programs around DE&I and help the County meet its Equal Opportunity Plan goals around recruitment, retention, and promotion. ERGs meet via Zoom or in person to collaborate on initiatives they value and that help the County strengthen its DE&I initiatives.

INNOVATION: ERGs serve many functions within the organization. First, they help the organization gauge how it is performing in terms of DE&I. Second, ERGs foster professional development and mentorship as they must have an executive sponsor at the assistant or department head level. Third, ERGs must present to the Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights Advisory Commission (a commission made up of local community leaders of diverse demographics) which allows professional development and brainstorming sessions for employees who might not otherwise have access to commission. Fourth, ERGs foster collaboration through all County departments, leading to greater efficiency and innovation by allowing exchange of ideas. Lastly, ERGs are a valuable mechanism to discuss and attempt to resolve issues around DE&I.

RESULTS: Participation has been enthusiastic. Within the first six months of launching the program, the County has three officially-recognized ERGs: LGBTQ+ Professionals, Neurodiversity in the Workplace, and the Monterey County Veteran ERG. Thanks to the ERGs, the County has already seen results, such as:

- For the first time in Monterey County history, the Board of Supervisors presented the June LGBTQ+ Pride Resolution publicly to the Monterey County LGBTQ+ Professionals Employee Resource Group.
- The Neurodiversity in the Workplace ERG is promoting seminars around neurodiversity and how to better understand the needs of our neurodivergent residents and workforce.
- The LGBTQ+ Professionals marched representing the County at Monterey Peninsula Pride event and collaborated with the Human Resources Department on an informational booth at the event. This was the first time Monterey County as an agency showed up in solidarity with our local LGBTQ+ population and actively recruited LGBTQ+ applicants for employment.
- The Civil Rights Office is working with the LGBTQ+ Professionals to initiate a Safe Zone Project training to be made available to all County employees. The curriculum aims to educate on inclusivity, pronouns, and help create understanding around LGBTQ+ issues.

REPLICABILITY: We developed the ERG guidelines with a Department Head Committee. ERGs that wish to charter must follow simple guidelines which include a charter, defining goals, obtaining an executive sponsor, and electing officers. We then offered a webinar to educate the workforce on ERGs.

CONTACTS

Juan P. Rodriguez, Civil Rights Officer
Monterey County Civil Rights Office
(831) 759-6614 / rodriguezpj1@co.monterey.ca.us

Leeset Torres, Senior Equal Opp. Analyst
Monterey County Civil Rights Office
(831) 759-6625 / TorresL1@co.monterey.ca.us

OPTIONAL SUBMISSION:

- Employee Resource Group Guidelines;
- Employee Resources Group Charters
- Weblink: [Monterey County Employee Resource Groups Website](#)

Employee Resource Groups Program Guidelines

I. Purpose

The County of Monterey recognizes that Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are successful mechanisms for the County to improve the leadership development process as well as to help ensure alignment between the County's business, equity, and inclusion strategies. The purpose of these Guidelines is to define authority, responsibility, accountability, and procedures for the formation and operations of the County of Monterey Employee Resource Groups.

II. Definitions

Employee: all persons employed by the County of Monterey including but not limited to managers, supervisors, department heads, frontline staff, elected officials, appointed officials (including commissioners), interns, and volunteers.

Employee Resource Group: County-recognized, employee-run groups based around protected groups to promote equity values and strategic efforts of the County while also fostering personal and professional growth for County employees. ERGs are formed around protected groups and improve retention and promotion by providing a stronger sense of community within the County.

ERG Participant: non-member employees with approval from their supervisor to attend an ERG activity during work time.

ERG Member: any employee with approval from their supervisor may become a member of an ERG. Membership is granted by an employee's supervisor for a minimum of six months and up to one year. Membership may be renewed after the term expires.

Executive Committee: the organizing body for an ERG. The size of an executive committee and the roles of its members are designated in the approved ERG charter.

Executive Sponsor: Y-Unit employee, either Department Head or Assistant Department Head who acts as an advocate and ally for an ERG. In some circumstances and at the discretion of the CRO, a non-Y-unit employee may serve as an Executive Sponsor.

Protected Group: categories such as race, color, national origin, ancestry, veteran or military status, disability, age, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity, or any other category recognized law.

III. Background

The County of Monterey believes in treating all people with respect and dignity. The Board of Supervisors expects that all County employees foster a supportive working environment that celebrates the diverse county in which we live and serve. As part of this expectation, the Board

of Supervisors directed the Civil Rights Office to develop programs such as ERGs, which are aligned with diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Monterey County Civil Rights Officer or their designee in the Civil Rights Office (CRO) has direct management, oversight authority, and responsibility for the policies, rules, and procedures for all County-sponsored ERGs.

The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrative Office shall ensure the Civil Rights Office has all authority and budgetary support and staffing to successfully implement this program.

IV. Policy

The County of Monterey is committed to supporting the growth and development of workforce diversity through fostering the development of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). It is the County's expectation that participation is supported by executives and managers to the greatest extent possible in order to promote an organizational culture that values inclusion, equity, and diversity.

ERGs promote equity and social justice, foster employee engagement, strengthen workplace effectiveness, improve leadership abilities, and enhance personal and professional growth within Monterey County.

ERG activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Contributing to employees' professional development;
- Identifying workforce engagement barriers and solutions;
- Helping the County with strategic planning, recruitment, employee development, and diversity awareness;
- Hosting events that give members and employees the opportunity to network and develop skills, in such areas as career development, business education, resume writing, or stress management;
- Sponsoring events, seminars and conferences with Civil Rights Officer's or their designee's approval;
- Representing the County at job-fairs, internship fairs, or similar events;
- Taking on special initiatives and projects; and,
- Celebrating cultural, educational, and other special events.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Civil Rights Office

The Civil Rights Office (CRO) oversees the administration of the ERG program. As such, the CRO is a resource to provide support and guidance as necessary in support of all ERGs

County Committees and Commissions

As appropriate, ERGs will present to County Committees and Commissions. County Committees and Commissions will provide insight and recommendations to ERGs to better align activities and goals with the Monterey County Equal Opportunity Plan.

Executive Sponsor

Each ERG must have an Executive Sponsor. The Executive Sponsor must allocate time to support ERG organizational needs, provide consultation to ERG executive committee, and ensure all strategies and goals are aligned with the Equal Opportunity Plan (EOP). Executive Sponsors are expected to be active in the group as an advisor, but not involved in the day-to-day operations and do not hold decision-making roles within the group.

Managers/Supervisors

Managers/Supervisors provide approval for employee ERG participation. Each meeting or activity during work time is subject to additional approval by the supervisor/manager. Managers and Supervisors are expected to encourage and support employee participation in ERGs, while ensuring operational demands are met.

ERG Members

ERG Members act on behalf of the group. This includes but is not limited to serving as the group contact for employees who are interested in joining, as well as serving as a liaison with management and/or senior leadership. ERG Members are also responsible to request assistance from the Civil Rights Office or Executive Sponsor, as needed.

V. Procedure

ERG Formation

To be a recognized ERG, members must complete the application process and agree to create a formal charter. The formal charter will identify executive committee size and roles, in addition to group goals in support of advancing goals within the Monterey County Equal Opportunity Plan. The ERG must consist of a minimum of three members. After submitting application materials, the CRO will have exclusive authority to approve or deny the application if it does not meet the goals outlined in these Guidelines. Once an ERG is approved, the group status must be renewed by the CRO annually.

Membership Eligibility and Participation Approval

Membership in an ERG is voluntary and open to all regular employees. County temporary employees are eligible to participate at the discretion of their supervisor. To truly embrace diversity and inclusion, employees are encouraged to join groups that are not reflective of their race, color, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran's status, or other protected characteristic.

Employees interested in becoming a member of an ERG will obtain supervisor approval. The supervisor will re-evaluate and renew the employee participation approval as needed. Copies of the employee participation form may be kept as part of the employee's professional development plan.

Additionally, all employees must have an ERG participation approval by their supervisor prior to participating in any work-time ERG activities. ERG membership and/or participation will not be approved if the operational needs of the organization will not be met, there are employee performance concerns, and/or if ERG attendance puts the employee in overtime status. ERG members are expected to make every reasonable attempt to provide at least two weeks' notice to their supervisor or manager for approval to attend an activity during work hours.

Work Time

Individuals may spend up to two hours per month on ERG-related activities as approved by their supervisor. Additional hours must be approved by the participant's supervisor.

Structure and Operation

ERGs must form an executive committee, which functions as an organizing body for the group. The executive committee is responsible for annual reporting, complying with all applicable policies and procedures, and setting meetings and activities in support of the ERG mission and goals. ERGs also develop the roles and responsibilities of the executive committee beyond what is required in these guidelines.

Meetings and activities must be open to any County employee who has approval and wishes to attend. ERGs will track attendance at all meetings and activities.

Agendas are required for all activities and meetings during work time. Agendas must be disseminated in advance of the scheduled meeting. Any ERG activities that are strictly social must be scheduled during non-work time (e.g., lunch time).

Prohibited Activities

In accordance with County policy and procedures, ERG's are prohibited from engaging in political or religious activities. The CRO will revoke approval for any ERG found to be in violation of these prohibitions.

In compliance with the County Nondiscrimination Policy, ERG's may not discriminate because of any protected category when determining membership or participation eligibility.

The Civil Rights Office may terminate an employee's membership and/or participation approval in an ERG for violating any County Policy during participation in an ERG or ERG activity. Additionally, an ERG may be discontinued due to low membership (less than three members), inactivity for a prolonged period, inability to demonstrate sufficient achievement of ERG group goals, inability or unwillingness to comply with the requirements of the ERG Guidelines, or any other reason identified by the Civil Rights Office as opposed to the interests of the County of Monterey.

Review of Guidelines

These Guidelines were last reviewed on November 4, 2021, and shall be reviewed no less than every two years.



EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP CHARTER TEMPLATE

ARTICLE I: NAME

1.1 NAME

This Employee Resource Group shall be known as

Monterey County - Veteran Employee Resource Group

ARTICLE II: MISSION

2.1 MISSION

The mission for this group is to

To improve County veteran recruiting and retention, develop veteran leadership, and promote equity while also fostering personal and professional growth and providing a stronger sense of veteran community within the County.

2.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

How does this group support and connect to the County's Equal Opportunity Plan?

1. To promote an inclusive work culture, employee recruitment, and retention of veterans employees, the MC -VERG will strive to ensure the County treats each veteran employee on the basis of merit and experience gained through active service in the US Armed Forces.
2. To ensure veteran's preference are clearly established and implemented by the County as a whole and each department individually, the MC-VERG will strive to



ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

3.1 ELIGIBILITY

All County employees are eligible to join this Employee Resource Group. The Group will provide a roster of all members to the Civil Rights Office every year. A minimum of three active members is required to maintain group charter.

3.2 RECRUITMENT

How will you plan to recruit individuals, i.e., via flyers, email communications?

Initial recruitment will be accomplished via an email sent to all Monterey County employees announcing the establishment of the MC-VERG and requesting for employees who desire to be members to complete an enrollment form via Microsoft Forms.

Ongoing recruitment will be accomplished through sharing information about the MC-VERG during Monterey County Employee Orientations as well as challenging MC-VERG members in each County Department to recruit on behalf of their Department.

Meeting dates, times, agendas, and minutes will be made available to all Monterey County employees via the Civil Rights Office SharePoint page.

ARTICLE IV: STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

4.1: LEADERSHIP, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Group shall have a President. This individual shall:

1. Schedule and organize meetings
2. Document the meeting summaries and attendance
3. Act as a liaison to the Civil Rights Office
4. Send meeting summary and attendance roster to the Civil Rights Office in a timely manner.

Acknowledgement of Responsibilities:

President's Name: [REDACTED] **Signature:** [REDACTED]



A Vice President will:

1. Step into the role of the Employee Leader when they are unavailable
2. Hold positions accountable for their duties
3. Assist the Employee Leader in their duties.

Acknowledgment of Responsibilities:

Vice President's Name: [REDACTED] **Signature:** [REDACTED]

(Follow the same template as the two examples above for any additional positions, such as Secretary, Treasurer, Event Coordinator, etc. Please make sure to have individuals sign off as an acknowledgment of responsibilities.)

A Former President will:
1. Serve to ensure the continuity of MC-VERG information as new Executive Boards are elected. In year 1, any member may be elected to fill this position.

A Treasurer will:
1. Manage revenues and expenditures related to the raising of funds and use of the funds raised.
2. Provide a treasure's report at each official MC-VERG meeting as a standing agenda item.

A Secretary will:
1. Develop meeting agendas, minutes, and collect attendance for all official MC-VERG meetings.
2. Communicate will all MC-VERG members on behalf of the President to collect and share information related to the Mission, recruitment, and activities of the MC-VERG.

A Women's Veterans Advocate will:
1. Represent and draw awareness to the unique and diverse women veteran employee perspectives and concerns on the MC-VERG Executive Board.

A Minority Veterans Advocate will:
1. Represent and draw awareness to the unique and diverse minority veteran employee perspectives and concerns on the MC-VERG Executive Board.

A Disabled Veterans Advocate will:
1. Represent and draw awareness to the unique and diverse disabled veteran employee perspectives and concerns on the MC-VERG Executive Board.



4.2: Terms of Office for the Steering Team

Once a year, this ERG will hold elections for their leadership roles.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

5.1 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

There shall be regular meetings of the ERG on a date and place to be designated by the Group. This meeting shall be held at a specified location and announced to members of the ERG and County employees. There will be an agenda created prior to the meeting and the agenda will be sent to the Civil Rights Office as soon as practicable but at least 3 days before the meeting. The Group will create a summary of the meeting, take attendance, and send it to the Civil Rights Office within a week of the meeting.



EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP CHARTER TEMPLATE

ARTICLE I: NAME

1.1 NAME

This Employee Resource Group shall be known as

Neurodiversity in the Workplace

ARTICLE II: MISSION

2.1 MISSION

The mission for this group is to

To raise awareness and education around Neurodiversity and create a more inclusive environment for neurodiverse people to help them thrive and achieve their highest potential.

2.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

How does this group support and connect to the County's Equal Opportunity Plan?

1. To educate on the challenges of neurodiverse people in the workplace and create a more inclusive environment.
2. To collaborate with colleagues to support acceptance of Neurodiversity in the workplace.
3. Create a safe and compassionate environment for neurodiverse employees to foster common humanity.



ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

3.1 ELIGIBILITY

All County employees are eligible to join this Employee Resource Group. The Group will provide a roster of all members to the Civil Rights Office every year. A minimum of three active members is required to maintain group charter.

3.2 RECRUITMENT

How will you plan to recruit individuals, i.e., via flyers, email communications?

The group will use flyers and email to recruit members.

ARTICLE IV: STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

4.1: LEADERSHIP, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Group shall have a President. This individual shall:

1. Schedule and organize meetings
2. Document the meeting summaries and attendance
3. Act as a liaison to the Civil Rights Office
4. Send meeting summary and attendance roster to the Civil Rights Office in a timely manner.

Acknowledgement of Responsibilities:

President's Name:

████████████████████

Signature:

████████████████████



A Vice President will:

1. Step into the role of the Employee Leader when they are unavailable
2. Hold positions accountable for their duties
3. Assist the Employee Leader in their duties.

Acknowledgment of Responsibilities:

Vice President's Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

(Follow the same template as the two examples above for any additional positions, such as Secretary, Treasurer, Event Coordinator, etc. Please make sure to have individuals sign off as an acknowledgment of responsibilities.)



4.2: Terms of Office for the Steering Team

Once a year, this ERG will hold elections for their leadership roles.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

5.1 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

There shall be regular meetings of the ERG on a date and place to be designated by the Group. This meeting shall be held at a specified location and announced to members of the ERG and County employees. There will be an agenda created prior to the meeting and the agenda will be sent to the Civil Rights Office as soon as practicable but at least 3 days before the meeting. The Group will create a summary of the meeting, take attendance, and send it to the Civil Rights Office within a week of the meeting.



**EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP
CHARTER TEMPLATE**

ARTICLE I: NAME

1.1 NAME

This Employee Resource Group shall be known as

LGBTQ+ Professionals

ARTICLE II: MISSION

2.1 MISSION

The mission for this group is to

Provide a safe space to speak about LGBTQ+ issues in the workplace, provide opportunities for advancement to LGBTQ+ employees, allies, and other County employees by creating workshops and training opportunities, and provide resources to create an inclusive environment within the work space no matter a persons sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

The ERG will be a valuable mechanism to: (1) build a culture that fosters awareness, respect, and inclusion in the workplace; (2) establish programs and activities aligned with the mission of the Monterey County Civil Rights Office; and, (3) provide

2.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

How does this group support and connect to the County’s Equal Opportunity Plan?

(1) Support LGBTQ+ employees and provide LGBTQ+ employees with access to leadership opportunities; (2) empower LGBTQ+ employees to assist in outreach to diverse organizations; (3) empower LGBTQ+ employees to provide input on strategies and outreach for hiring, retaining and promoting a diverse workforce; and, (4) support mentoring programs that are sponsored by LGBTQ+ employees.



ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

3.1 ELIGIBILITY

All County employees are eligible to join this Employee Resource Group. The Group will provide a roster of all members to the Civil Rights Office every year. A minimum of three active members is required to maintain group charter.

3.2 RECRUITMENT

How will you plan to recruit individuals, i.e., via flyers, email communications?

The ERG plans to recruit employees for this ERG by posting flyers in break rooms and sending out email communications to current and new employees. It will look for partnerships within the County, such as CRO and HR departments to market the group.

ARTICLE IV: STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

4.1: LEADERSHIP, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Group shall have a President. This individual shall:

1. Schedule and organize meetings
2. Document the meeting summaries and attendance
3. Act as a liaison to the Civil Rights Office
4. Send meeting summary and attendance roster to the Civil Rights Office in a timely manner.

Acknowledgement of Responsibilities:

President's Name:

[REDACTED]

Signature:

[REDACTED]



A Vice President will:

1. Step into the role of the Employee Leader when they are unavailable
2. Hold positions accountable for their duties
3. Assist the Employee Leader in their duties.

Acknowledgment of Responsibilities:

Vice President’s Name: [Redacted] **Signature:** [Redacted]

(Follow the same template as the two examples above for any additional positions, such as Secretary, Treasurer, Event Coordinator, etc. Please make sure to have individuals sign off as an acknowledgment of responsibilities.)

The Structure of this ERG will be as follows:
 Sponsor(s): Up to two (co)sponsors who may be voted on every year.
 Executive committee made up of 6 people, with a Chair, Co-Chair and 4 committee Chairs representing the ERG 4 pillars - Community, Learning, Recruitment, and Outreach. Members of the executive committee should represent and encompass the diversity which makes up the LGBTQ+ community. In the event that there are not enough members to hold each position, members may vote to incorporate duties into minimum chair assignments. Per CRO requirements, the ERG must have at least 3 active members. Elections will be held every year or in the event of an unexpected vacancy or resignation. Members will have the option to re-charter every 2yrs should majority vote choose.

Executive Committee:
 Chair and Co-Chair
 The responsibilities of the chairs will be to:

- 1.Schedule and organize meetings
- 2.Document the meeting summaries and attendance
- 3.Act as a liaison to the Civil Rights Office and Executive Sponsor
- 4.Send meeting summary and attendance roster to the Civil Rights Office in a timely manner.
5. Act as fiscal agents on behalf of ERG
5. Share leadership roles when one may not be able
6. Hold positions accountable for their duties

Committee Chairs:
 1. Lead and communicate pillar efforts for ERG with chairs and ERG members
 2. Provide ongoing reports as needed

Efforts



4.2: Terms of Office for the Steering Team

Once a year, this ERG will hold elections for their leadership roles.

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

5.1 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

There shall be regular meetings of the ERG on a date and place to be designated by the Group. This meeting shall be held at a specified location and announced to members of the ERG and County employees. There will be an agenda created prior to the meeting and the agenda will be sent to the Civil Rights Office as soon as practicable but at least 3 days before the meeting. The Group will create a summary of the meeting, take attendance, and send it to the Civil Rights Office within a week of the meeting.