

## **RACIAL GRIEVANCE POLICY**

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ESC is committed to becoming an inclusive, anti-racist, multicultural organization engaging our community in environmental education and creating safe and affirming outdoor programs for everyone. We are working to model anti-racist practices in our organization and personal behavior. The Racial Grievance Policy is intended to support People of Color to feel safe in the workplace, for participants to feel welcome during programs, and to actively address and interrupt microaggressions, harassment, racial discrimination, and other racial misconduct.

This policy is designed so that:

- A. All perceived violations and complaints of racial discrimination and harassment are considered to be serious and dealt with in a manner that is fair, urgent, and consistent.
- B. People reporting racial grievances feel that their grievances are addressed and taken seriously.
- C. There will be no retaliation of any kind against an employee or person for bringing up complaints under this procedure. Staff can reference the Whistle Blower Policy for more information on reporting grievances.

This policy applies to all people who are a part of the Environmental Science Center including, but not limited to staff, board members, volunteers, program participants, donors, and government, nonprofit, tribal, and corporate partners.

### **Definitions:**

The Environmental Science Center defines racism as “a system of oppression maintained by institutions and cultural norms that exploit, control, and oppress People of Color groups in order to maintain a position of social and material supremacy and privilege for white people.” (Source: People’s Institute Northwest for Survival and Beyond)

Racist incidents include but are not limited to inappropriate racial comments, microaggressions, slurs, jokes, pictures, objects, threats, physical assaults, intimidation, institutionally or culturally racist policies/practices and norms, unequal application of policies based on race, and unequal or biased treatment based on race. This includes behaviors, actions, or systems that are not intended to be racist but harm People of Color, as well as intentional racial harassment or discrimination.

Some examples of racial discrimination or harassment are:

- Microaggressions whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward People of Color
- Unwelcome comments and conduct with racial connotation (s) or subject matter that are demeaning to an ethnic group or people of a particular skin color or group
- Offensive and vulgar jokes, name calling, or stereotyping based on a person’s skin color
- Physical assaults or threats and intimidation

- Denial or obstruction of access to programs or opportunities at the Environmental Science Center
- Policies, practices, and norms that perpetuate institutional or cultural racism
- Any other racist misconduct that interferes with building culture of belonging at the Environmental Science Center

Racial Discrimination or harassment is a practice that demeans the individual being treated in such a manner. Consequently, ESC will not tolerate racial discrimination or harassment of its program participants, applicants, employees or volunteers by anyone. ESC will, as necessary, take disciplinary action, including termination, in accordance with this policy to ensure that ESC meets its responsibilities to program participants, applicants, employees, program partners, and volunteers.

### **Reporting and Addressing Racist Incidents**

#### **If you feel safe and able, directly address the person committing the racist incident**

1. Address the person committing the incident directly
  - a. You can have another person with you when addressing the person directly
2. Name the behavior or activity and how it impacted you (or someone else, if you have their permission)
3. Explain that their action or behavior is against ESC's values and policies and give them a chance to correct their actions
4. If that does not resolve the incident, bring your concern to your supervisor or a member of the grievance committee as quickly as possible
5. Complete a grievance form as soon as possible so ESC has a record of the incident. Grievance form is available on ESC's website.

#### **If you do not feel safe or able, do not directly address the person committing the racist incident:**

1. Bring your concern to your supervisor as quickly as possible.
  - a. If you do not feel comfortable taking this to your supervisor, you may bring this to the racial grievance committee who will include your supervisor in the next steps.
2. Your supervisor is responsible for taking action within 3-5 business days
3. They will reach out to the person affected and hear their experience and decide on a course of action that best supports and protects the affected person
4. Next steps may include
  - a. A meeting one-one with the offender to share feedback, reinforce our values, and determine a corrective action plan
  - b. Holding a mediation session or conflict resolution with the affected person and the offender
  - c. Involving a third-party person trained in conflict resolution with the affected person and the offender

- i. trusted outside mediators list
  - d. Conducting a prompt, thorough, and fair investigation towards a resolution
  - e. Training or education for offender and community at large
  - f. Dismissing offender from ESC or ESC program/events
- 5. Your supervisor is responsible for recording the incident through the racial grievance form and recording any action taken by ESC
- 6. Your supervisor may reach out to other ESC staff or the Board of Directors for support in addressing the racial grievance.
- 7. Follow-up is recommended after incident is resolved.

**If you are an observer of a racist incident:**

- 1. First, check in with the person experiencing the racist incident and see what support they need and what course of action would be most helpful to them.
- 2. From there, determine next steps for addressing or reporting the racial grievance (see steps listed above for more details).
- 3. If you see someone address a racial incident, offer them support and acknowledge their action to continue to build solidarity and community around interrupting racism.

Each employee or volunteer is accountable for acting in compliance with and support of the policy. All employees and volunteers are encouraged to discuss any violations of this policy with their supervisor without fear of any retaliation. Employees and volunteers may also bring such violations to the grievance committee or President of the Board of Directors.

[Refer also to Grievance Procedure & Whistle Blower Policy]