Portland Utility Board Beliefs, Values and Anti-Racist Principles

We believe that:

- Clean water is a human right.
- Every person requires clean and affordable drinking water and sanitation, healthy communities, and healthy watersheds.
- A failure to address policies that continue to drive racial inequities is a form of racism.
- We must hold ourselves and the Bureaus accountable for identifying and addressing racism, systemic racism, and structural inequities.
- Those most directly affected by racial and economic inequities should be afforded culturally appropriate opportunities to speak for themselves.
- We are all learning how to support each other on this anti-racist journey. As long as individuals are willing to learn, we are willing to engage.
- While every person has the right to share their personal perspective, we stand against wrongful conduct, particularly any conduct that is targeted toward people that are made vulnerable by systemic inequities.

Putting Our Principles into Action

We will act in accordance with our principles. To that end, in all our work we will:

Be active and deliberate.

We will continually seek to be educated, to act in accordance with our principles, to incorporate practices into our workplan, and deliberately hold ourselves accountable. Before we make decisions, we will intentionally pause to consider whether we have followed an equitable process to reach decisions, asking how equity and race are showing up in the work and decisions. We challenge ourselves not to succumb to the characteristics of white supremacy culture (for example efficiency or right to comfort, view summary in handout by overcomingracism.org) and to ensure that the outcomes align with our values and anti-racist principles.

Speak up and speak out.

Remaining silent while observing wrongful conduct maintains the status quo and thus perpetuates the system that empowered that conduct to occur in the first place. Thus, we will not be bystanders to wrongful conduct.

Each person is empowered to maintain the culture of the Portland Utility Board.

A culture that leaves speaking up and speaking out as the sole responsibility of the person or population most impacted by wrongful conduct is a culture that perpetuates indifference and inequity. Thus, to foster a culture of inclusion and trust, each board member is empowered to speak up and out when they observe wrongful conduct. Too often the effort to speak up falls onto those in the impacted group. We thus encourage each board member to speak up and out regardless of their seniority, leadership status, or their membership in an impacted group.

In the moment, we may not have the right, perfect or most elegant words to speak up and speak out. Indeed, we may even need time to react internally, process and think. In those moments, we will raise an alert, such as:

- "What was said didn't sit well with me,"
- "That action is not okay with me,"
- "Something feels wrong to me," or
- "What was said seems inconsistent with our established values".
- "I condemn that hate speech."

Focus on the impacted individual or population, condemn the conduct (not the person).

We will prioritize having empathy and the need for healing for the impacted individual or population, while condemning the wrongful conduct. In condemning the conduct, we recognize that our bureau employees, board members and community members possess widely varying levels of experience and understanding about, for example, anti-racism; diversity, equity and inclusion; English as a second language communities; gender identity; immigration status; multiculturalism; Native American heritage and legacy; racial trauma; sexual orientation; structural inequities; systemic racism; and white privilege. While we will not tolerate the wrongful conduct, we will demonstrate compassion for the individual.

Wrongful conduct means conduct that is or fosters bigotry, intolerance, harassment, discrimination or hate based on, for example, age, color, criminal justice system impacted, disability, education, ethnicity, familial status, gender identity, housing status, immigration status, legal citizenship, marital status, military status, national origin, physical or mental ability, political affiliation, religion, race, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, source of income, other protected class, or any other status as identified in the Board's governing documents.

These guidelines are intended to guide the conduct at our meetings. They are not intended to restrict anyone's right to speak or compel anyone to speak in a particular way.

Version History (Content):
Developed December 2020
Adopted by PUB 4.6.21
Amended by PUB 6.1.21
Amended by PUB 2.1.22
Amended by PUB 10.4.22
Amended by PUB 7.18.24

Version History (Accessibility)
Amended by PUB staff 3.18.26