



Policy Handbook

Mission: *Street Roots*, a non-profit, grass roots newspaper, assists people experiencing homelessness and poverty by creating flexible income opportunities. Through education, advocacy and personal expression, we are a catalyst for individual and social change.

Purpose: To provide everyone in the street roots community with information surrounding the running of our organization and to serve as a point of reference for our behavioral council in its deliberations.

Intent: The policy handbook is designed to be used as a tool of compassion. As we strive to create an atmosphere of safety and community for everyone at street roots we must begin to look at our language, our intentions, and our actions. Compassion means accepting everyone for who they are and where they are while still upholding a sense of individual and group accountability. It is this ethic that *must guide* all policy development and all behavioral council decisions. It is difficult in our society to conceive of "rules" being associated with compassion. However, this is the shift of consciousness that will bring about lasting change in our communities and our world.

Process: All policies within this handbook are open to change or revision through the policy committee. In all stages of its development we adhered to a process of democratic consensus and will continue to do so in all of its applications and revisions.

Organizational Definitions for Unsafe Behavior

- **Verbal abuse:** Yelling, belittling, or demeaning language in reference to any person in our community.

- **Violence:** Any act or threat used to intimidate or harm a person /property while in the office or out on turf.

- **Intoxication:** In determining a person's sobriety it is important to use discretion and when ever possible draw on familiarity with the person in question. Visible signs of intoxication include slurred speech, smell of alcohol, impaired motor skills, red or bloodshot eyes, extreme drowsiness, delayed reaction, and cognition, twitching, shakes, hyper-activity, argumentative or belligerent behavior, stumbling or a weaving gait.

Specific Policies on Unsafe Behavior:

- Communication is extremely important in any interaction with a person engaging in these behaviors. If someone is made to feel unsafe in the newsroom it is important to communicate this to the person(s) involved and to the office manager.

- The Street Roots staff is responsible for helping to maintain the safety of the office and vendors on turf. It is important to ask people engaged in unsafe behavior to leave the newsroom if such behaviors are impeding the productivity of the office or making persons feel unsafe.

- It is important to communicate clearly in the event of asking a person to leave the office. Always make sure that the person(s) involved understand that it is the behaviors that are unwanted and they are welcome to return once they have cooled off or sobered up.

- Use common sense in the application of these policies. If it is inappropriate to invite a person back, then don't. If the situation warrants a creative approach the primary and office manager are welcome to try one.

Office Policies

1. Hours of office operations are 7:30A.M. - 3P.M. Vendor hours are between 7:30 A.M - 10 A.M. During this time, vendors are welcome to sit and chat, enjoy a cup of coffee, and generally hang out. After 10 am vendors may stop by the office for a 15-minute time frame to buy papers, have a cup of coffee, eat lunch, check e-mails, make a phone call, or hang out. Because the office converts to a newsroom between the hours of 10 am to 3 p.m. we ask that everyone please respect the 15-minute time limit in the office unless they are working on the production of the newspaper or are volunteering.

2. As Street Roots strives to maintain a positive and professional atmosphere and comply with current leasing agreements, we ask that all staff, vendors, and volunteers stay awake while in the Street Roots office.

3. The Street Roots staff attempts to maintain a safe environment for everyone. We ask that all vendors, volunteers, and staff respect our designation as a hate-free zone by using respectful language, demonstrating courteous behavior, and keeping voices at a reasonable working level.

4. Street Roots often gets donations of food and drinks. We currently provide a microwave, refrigerator, fresh hot and cold water and eating space for community use. Food that is available for all will be kept unlabeled. Any personal food should be carefully labeled if it is to remain personal food. Food may be stored in refrigerator only.

5. Street Roots currently provides a computer in the front of the office for vendor use. This computer may be used for word processing and checking e-mail. A fax machine and printer are also sometimes provided for vendor use.

6. There is a phone in the front of the office for vendors' use. Staff, vendors, and volunteers may use all phones, but we ask that you limit your number of calls to those that can be made within 15-minutes. Because vendors are often calling in their turf preferences before 9A.M., we ask that everyone refrain from making any calls until after nine. All are welcome to receive messages through Street Roots. Vendor messages will be posted on the vendor message board.

7. Due to the nature of addiction and because many of us are in the process of recovery, we ask that all members of the Street Roots community respect that by entering the office in a sober state.

8. Because Street Roots is a smoke-free office, we have provided a smoking space outside for everyone's use. Please be considerate of the smoke-free office atmosphere and close the door if you are going to smoke. Please consider neighbors and individuals walking by when smoking.

9. Street Roots has a bathroom for public use. Please be considerate of others who may need to use the bathroom by limiting your time.

10. The staff on any given day have the right to exercise discretion over office policies during their shift. If the primary or office manager is unavailable, responsibility for the newsroom falls to the present key holder(s).

- Repeated violations of office policies will result in loss of privilege, including the loss of key.

General Harassment:

Harassment is defined as deliberate or repeated behavior that is unwanted and not returned. General harassment falls into one major category:

Hostile Work Environment: Repeated unwelcome and demeaning behavior, which creates an intimidating, hostile, and offensive work environment. Example: Hateful remarks, jokes, pin-ups, flyer(s), etc.

Harassment is not conducive to the atmosphere of community and safety that Street Roots is seeking to maintain in at the office. As a result, Street Roots encourages all members to communicate openly about their boundaries around these issues. If a person is made uncomfortable in the office, it is incumbent upon that person to say "**No**" in a way that respects both the person they are speaking with and themselves. If communication is not the first step in informing our community about this issue, there will be no lasting progress in truly making this office a safe space for everyone.

Specific Policies on General Harassment

- Communication is essential. It important that all members of the *Street Roots* community speak up if they are made to feel uncomfortable.
- Documentation is important. If communication has been attempted and unwanted behaviors persist, please file an incident report.
- To ensure that Street Roots is in compliance with all state and county laws regarding handling of harassment, all incidents of this nature will be turned over to a committee of street roots members advised by a lawyer.

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual Harassment is defined as deliberate and/or repeated sexual or sex based behavior that is not welcome, not asked for, and not returned. This includes physical, verbal, and non-verbal interactions. Sexual Harassment falls into two main categories:

- Quid Pro Quo: Acceptance of sexually harassing conduct as a term or condition of employment or advancement. Example: "Have sex with me and I'll guarantee you a promotion, raise, etc."

- Hostile Work Environment: Unwelcome and demeaning sexually related behavior, which creates an intimidating, hostile, and offensive work environment. Example: Repeated lewd or offensive remarks, sexual jokes, pin-ups, touching, etc.

Sexual Harassment is not conducive to the atmosphere of community and safety that Street Roots is seeking to maintain in the office. As a result, Street Roots encourages all members to communicate openly about their boundaries around these issues. If a person is made uncomfortable in the office, it is incumbent upon that person to say so in a way that respects both the person they are speaking with and themselves. If communication is not the first step in informing our community about this issue, there will be no lasting progress in truly making this office a safe space for everyone.

Specific Policies on Sexual Harassment:

- Communication is essential. It is important that all Street Roots members communicate openly if they are made to feel uncomfortable.
- In order to downplay the risk of making any Street Roots member uncomfortable, physical touching should be limited to after hours socializing and community gatherings.
- Documentation is important. If communication has been attempted and unwanted behaviors persist, please file an incident report.
- To ensure that Street Roots is in compliance with all state and county law regarding handling of harassment, all incidents of this nature will be turned over to a committee of Street Roots members advised by a lawyer.

Discrimination

Street Roots strives to maintain a safe office space where people can come together as a community in their mutual quest for social change and personal empowerment. To honor the human dignity of all Street Roots vendors, volunteers and staff, this organization will not tolerate shaming or discriminatory behavior or engage in discriminatory hiring practices on the following basis:

Sex, Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Age, Income, Gender, Marital Status, Domestic Partnership, Family Relationship, Disability, Expunged Juvenile Record, Association with a Protected Class, Sexual Orientation, Prior Felony Record, Political Affiliation