

Policies and Procedures of Bus Riders Unite

DRAFT 2016-03-12

Section I. General Membership Criteria

- 1) To be a member of Bus Riders Unite, the following criteria must be met:
 - a) Log 15 or more volunteer hours within BRU annually (attendance at monthly BRU meetings does not count towards volunteer hours)
 - i) Participate in BRU organizing efforts.
 - ii) Participate in actions, attendance at TriMet board meetings, etc.
 - b) Payment of membership dues (sliding scale with a minimum of \$5 and maximum of \$25 annually, family memberships available)
 - c) Attendance at four BRU meetings within the year
 - d) Commitment to supporting BRU principles
- 2) All members are welcome to participate in BRU committees, meetings, and activities. All members are also asked to support and encourage the participation and leadership of transit dependent people and people in our society whose voices are generally excluded from decision-making.

Section II. Leadership Criteria

- 1) To be eligible for nomination on the Steering Committee of Bus Riders Unite, the following criteria must be met:
 - a) Be a member in good standing (see *Section I. General Membership Criteria*)
 - b) Must self-identify as transit-dependent and with one or more of the following criteria:
 - i) Working class/low-income
 - ii) Person of color/multi-cultural
 - iii) Person with a disability/differently abled
 - iv) Sexual/gender minority
 - v) Youth (age 13-21)

Section III. Steering Committee Responsibilities and Terms

- 1) The responsibilities of the Steering Committee in relation to BRU include:
 - a) Commitment to BRU Leadership principles
 - i) Bus Riders Unite values the diverse cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and abilities of our members. We aim to build a democratic, multi-lingual, multiracial, all-inclusive, community-based organization. Our leaders are committed to lifting up the voices of transit dependent people and people whose voices are not commonly heard.
 - b) Prepare agenda and run monthly BRU meeting with BRU organizer
 - i) Must meet at least a week before the monthly BRU meeting to prepare agenda.
 - ii) Will receive agenda items from each committee in advance to review and allow time for at monthly meeting.
 - iii) BRU Steering Committee members, along with personally being stewards of BRU and conducting activities which deepen their relationship with members, will solicit from the general membership volunteers to assist with membership retention activities, such as acting as greeters at the monthly meetings.
 - c) Steering Committee is empowered to decide when issues will be taken to vote by the general membership

- d) Annual evaluation of BRU effectiveness
 - e) Act as liaisons to committees
 - f) All members of the BRU Steering Committee will serve concurrently as members of OPAL's Board of Directors, a commitment of two hours each month.
- 2) Structure of the Steering Committee
- a) Steering Committee will have a minimum of three and a maximum of seven members.
 - b) The Steering Committee shall consist of the elected chairs of Research & Advisory, Action Planning Team and a member at large, elected by the whole membership, who sits on TriMet's Transit Equity Advisory Committee
 - c) Within the group, housekeeping duties will rotate on a regular basis, such as creating the monthly meeting agenda for the committee, offering a recap of the previous meeting, etc.
 - d) Decisions within the Steering Committee will be made by consensus
 - e) All members of the Steering Committee will have an equal say in decisions
 - f) OPAL staff will support the Steering Committee by providing administrative support
- 3) Elections and terms of service
- a) The Steering Committee will be elected annually to serve one year terms, from January to November
 - i) Steering Committee members may only serve two consecutive one year terms
 - ii) If an elected member is unable to fulfill their duties, a special election will be held or the remaining members of the Steering Committee may choose a candidate from the general membership to finish out the term
 - iii) Nominations for the Steering Committee will open at the October membership meeting and can be made in person or in writing at that time
 - (1) Members in good standing can self-nominate.
 - (2) A list of nominees, an autobiographical candidate's statement, and a sample ballot will be available via the OPAL BRU Website and in the OPAL office to members in good standing following the October membership meeting in preparation for the November election. Candidates will provide a statement prior to a vote in the annual membership meeting
 - b) All members in good standing are eligible to vote for the Steering Committee
 - c) A majority of committee members must be in attendance for decisions within the committee to pass. In the case of an even number of Steering Committee members, the quorum will be half + 1

Section IV. Committee Structure

BRU members voluntarily serve on committees. Committees are empowered to choose their own leaders. Leaders within committees are responsible for setting the agenda, taking notes, and facilitating discussion. Members of committees are expected to regularly attend committee meetings participate in committee actions, and take on roles and responsibilities within the committee. In general, it is expected that BRU members take on one leadership role at a time.

- 1) Action Planning Team
- a) Committee members must be a member in good standing (see *Section I. General Membership Criteria*)
 - b) The Action Planning team will have the following responsibilities in relation to BRU:
 - i) Representation of BRU at other groups/coalitions and updating the rest of BRU members. Members who represent BRU at coalition or group meetings must report back to the BRU Organizer, who in turn reports back to Steering Committee members and OPAL Staff

- ii) Ally building.
 - iii) Work closely with OPAL organizing staff on organizing activities, including, but not limited to: phone banking, canvassing, bus organizing, one-on-one visits with potential members, etc.
- 2) Research and Advisory Committee
- a) Committee members must be a member in good standing (see *Section I. General Membership Criteria*)
 - b) The Research and Advisory Committee will have the following responsibilities in relation to BRU:
 - i) Analyze budgets and policies that are related to transit justice campaigns.

Section V. Model Decision-Making Process within Bus Riders Unite

- 1) Committees meet outside of monthly BRU meetings and set their own work plans
- 2) Agenda items will be set by BRU Steering Committee as representatives of the standing committees and the membership at large.
- 3) The Steering Committee facilitates the general membership meeting, changes to BRU Bylaws, campaign endorsements, or any necessary actions that need to be decided by the general membership at large will be decided via a democratic process. Refer to *Bus Riders Unite: A Consensus Decision Making Guide*

Section VI. Becoming an ally to Bus Riders Unite

1. Bus Riders Unite members have established membership and leadership criteria so that people whose lives are affected by transit injustice will be directly involved in BRU's decision-making. Individuals who cannot commit the time to be full members of BRU are welcome to participate in BRU actions and activities. We believe that to achieve the power to make change for transit justice, we need support from many places and many allies. We invite people who may not be directly affected by transit injustice to become supporters of Bus Riders Unite and encourage you to offer your knowledge, skills, and financial support.