

Metro Justice Core Principles

Mission

Metro Justice is a progressive, membership-based organization of the greater Rochester area. We seek to achieve social and economic justice and peace for our local, national, and global communities by educating the public, supporting legislation, and holding policymakers accountable to their constituents.

Vision

Since we seek to build mass movements for the betterment of our entire society, we recognize that the individuals within our community are the indivisible units of societal change. Our struggle toward universal justice moves forward when our movement grows. Thus, we must maintain an environment that enables all to participate in building a more just world. This means our community must be welcoming, accessible, and safe for every participant. Thus, our values of responsibility, inclusion, diversity, equity, and resilience guide our pursuit of the mission of our organization.

Values

Responsibility- We take responsibility for creating justice in the world. By fulfilling our obligations to the organization and accepting our missteps, we improve ourselves and our society.

Inclusion- We welcome individuals from all walks of life because everyone has something to contribute to the cause.

Diversity- We value our differences of all kinds because the better world we create should be better for everyone.

Equity- We believe in radical justice and our organization ensures that our actions and communications reflect this commitment.

Resilience- There will be many pitfalls on the path to a better world. As we have for decades, Metro Justice will arise stronger in the face of setbacks.

Code of Conduct

In accordance with our values, vision, and mission as an organization, every member and staff person commits to act in the following manner:

- Ensure that everyone feels welcome, valued, and a sense of belonging at Metro Justice

- Allow differences of opinion to be strengths, not weaknesses. We are all working for the cause: same struggle, same fight.
- Come to our work with open minds and hearts
- Work together without ego: the goal is to promote justice, not ourselves

Metro Justice is dedicated to the maintenance of a harassment-free environment. Harassment, including based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, absence of religion, or other characteristics will not be tolerated. Metro Justice has an anti-harassment policy, adopted in February 2018. This policy is hereby expanded to cover members as well as staff, and as provided by the following complaint procedure. No person's status within the organization (including employment) will be adversely affected as a result of bringing complaints of harassment.

Complaints Procedure

All members, officers, and staff are expected to hold themselves to the standards set forth in the code of conduct. Any suspected violation should be reported to the committee chair, member-ombud, mediator, Personnel Committee, President of Metro Justice, or Council of Metro Justice depending upon the circumstances and severity of the violation. Ombuds will work with the complainant to direct to appropriate leadership for follow up with or without anonymization of the complaint, based on the preference of the complainant. Generally, violations concerning only staff should be reported to Personnel. Violations concerning only members should be reported to Council.

For sufficiently minor infractions, it is most efficient for initial action to be taken informally by leaders directly working with the individual in question. In general, an informal intervention would entail a discussion with the individual in question with written or verbal follow-up to ensure a change in behavior. For more serious complaints or repeat allegations, a full formal process must be strictly adhered to. Infractions should be reported to Personnel or Council, even if treated as minor. The complainant will have the presumption of confidentiality during the duration of the investigation while the accused employee or member will have the presumption of innocence.

When a formal procedure is necessary, it will be initiated by either the President of Metro Justice or Personnel. Personnel will, within two weeks, decide whether a full committee investigation should be launched. If so, an investigative committee (IC) will be formed, presided over by a member of Personnel. The IC will be responsible for the investigation and making a recommendation to Council as to whether a Code of Conduct violation did indeed occur, and a recommendation to Council as to outcomes.

At the start of any IC investigation, Council must be notified that the accused person is under investigation for a possible infraction of the Code of Conduct. If the person is a staff member or the infraction particularly severe, the Council, committee chairs, and affected staff and membership must be notified at this stage within three business days.

In determining outcomes, the IC must consider community restorative justice resources. In the case of a violation, the IC will initiate a victim-centered restorative justice process to remediate the violation of the accused member. In the event that affected members do not desire participation in a victim-centered restorative justice practice, the IC will nonetheless initiate a restorative justice process to remediate the accused member.

Though we strive to be an organization that forgives individual members, the needs of the collective register above the prospects of any single individual. Thus, members/staff found to be in violation of the Code of Conduct for serious offenses such as assault, harassment, or fraud will be relieved of any leadership duties they may have held. Staff should be placed on paid suspension for the duration of an initial personnel inquiry and IC proceedings. If found to be in serious violation of the code of conduct, staff members will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Details of the IC investigation in either case will be reported to the complainant and accused member. At the conclusion of the investigation, the IC must make the results of the investigation and an executive summary of the findings available to the membership of Metro Justice.

At the conclusion of the IC investigation and determination of outcomes, Council and affected membership will engage in a reflective process of formal or informal meetings to review and discuss the decisions made.