



PDX Tenants United Bylaws

Updated 1/5/2023

ARTICLE 1: Name and Purpose

- 1.1 The name of the organization is PDX Tenants United (PTU).
- 1.2 PTU is a union dedicated to making improvements in its memberships living conditions, and to winning, safe, secure, decent, and affordable housing for everyone in the Portland Metro area.
- 1.3 PTU combines direct action and political action in its struggle

ARTICLE 2: Bylaws

- 2.1 PTU bylaws outline the organizational norms of PTU and may be updated throughout the life of the organization.
- 2.2 The PTU bylaws can be changed by the Organizing Committee (OC) by a vote of 2/3 majority of quorum.
- 2.3 For OC votes changing the bylaws, motions will be proposed and seconded at one meeting then voted on at the next meeting

ARTICLE 3: Membership

- 3.1 Any tenant in the Portland Metropolitan Area is welcomed and invited to become a full voting member of Portland Tenants United.
- 3.2 All voting members will receive one vote on matters brought before the General Assembly, and may themselves bring resolutions to the General Assembly through approved processes.
- 3.3 No voting member shall profit from the payment of rent, nor shall own the deed to their land or home, with the exception of any mobilehome or manufactured home owner who pays rent on the land they occupy.
- 3.4 Non-voting members committed to housing justice are welcome to participate in the

working groups and organizing activities of Portland Tenants United.

- 3.5** All voting members in good standing pay monthly dues of not less than five dollars to Portland Tenants United. These dues will go directly toward organizing tenants, as well as planning and implementing action and advocacy to defend the rights of tenants across the Portland Metropolitan Area in the manner deemed fit by the membership.
- 3.6** Dues waivers are available to people who qualify for housing vouchers, live in subsidized housing, are houseless, or are experiencing temporary financial hardship.
- 3.7** All members agree to abide by our community agreements. Members who violate the community agreements may be expelled from PTU according to the process outlined in the community agreements
- 3.8** As Portland Tenants United grows, new services may become available. By actively working to build our organizational capacity, members will strengthen the tenant union movement and help create new collective possibilities for our housing.
- 3.9** PTU members may access resources and the collective power of Portland Tenants United. This includes but is not limited to organizing assistance, trainings, and research help.
- 3.10** Portland Tenants United is a democratic and inclusive place for all tenants, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, domestic violence victim/survivor status, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, political affiliation, housing status, creed, age or any other discriminatory class. Any claims of discrimination or harassment shall be dealt with immediately.

ARTICLE 4: Organizing Committee

- 4.1** The Organizing Committee will be responsible for key administrative duties, financial decisions, messaging, strategic planning, campaign vetting and planning, responding to the needs of the membership and other critical functions required to grow and sustain PTU in whatever capacity requires trust, commitment, consistency, and historical context.
- 4.2** The Organizing Committee will function as a democratic, transparent, and responsive organizing body of the assembly. The Organizing Committee will be charged with engaging the larger body, recruiting others to the Organizing Committee, bringing proposals to the General Assembly, setting agenda for meetings of the General Assembly, leadership development, liaising with Working Groups, organizing and coordinating all aspects of PTU.
- 4.3** The Organizing Committee will meet each month.
- 4.4** Reasonable notice will be given for OC meetings held outside the normal cadence
- 4.5** Members of the Organizing Committee are not landowners, and do not function as landlords.
- 4.6** Members of the Organizing Committee are committed to the principles outlined in

the points of unity without qualification.

4.7 Members of the Organizing Committee commit to regularly attending meetings, though attending by phone/video is acceptable, if available.

4.8 The OC must be notified of planned absences by email. The OC member is expected to email a report-back on their action items (and/or working group) to the OC prior to the meeting, and read the minutes when they are available. Communication will allow the absence to be counted as excused.

4.9 OC members must physically attend 50% of OC meetings, and 75% of all meetings if phone/video conference is available to be considered in good-standing. Absences communicated in advance will not count against an OC member's status. Three consecutive unexcused absences will render an OC member inactive.

4.10 Quorum for Organizing Committee votes will consist of a simple majority of active Organizing Committee members

4.11 Motions for all Organizing Committee votes will pass according to a 2/3 majority of quorum

4.12 The OC may convene Working Groups that are delegated to serve a particular purpose.

4.13 Members of the Organizing Committee can excuse themselves from the responsibilities of the Organizing Committee. This should be communicated to the OC by email, with the Secretary copied. This is understood to be a stated intention to not attend meetings and not actively participate in the decision making process of the OC. For the purpose of quorum, such an OC member will be understood to be inactive.

4.14 Inactive members of the Organizing Committee will reclaim voting rights at the second meeting they attend after their absence (the two meetings must both occur within a two month period), and will henceforth be considered active for the purpose of quorum. Ex or Inactive O.C. Members, in good standing, may access O.C. content on Basecamp, as Ex-Officio Members

4.15 Organizing Committee members agree to support the implications of democratic decisions even if they personally voted against them.

4.16 Organizing Committee members are expected to regularly participate in at least one working group OR have a defined working-role in PTU (i.e. Treasurer). Mandatory service and fieldwork outside of meetings (**3 hours a month**)

4.17 Members of the Organizing Committee should be able (but are not required) to represent PTU in public settings, but in doing so agree not to represent personal opinions and ideologies as those of PTU.

4.18 PTU's endorsement or commitment to campaigns/organizations/activities, etc.

must be voted on by the Organizing Committee

4.19 For certain votes defined in policy, the PTU OC will accept votes cast in absentia (votes cast in absentia should include a brief description of the member's rationale for their vote).

4.20 The Organizing Committee may refer votes to the general membership at the OC's discretion

4.21 Elections for the Organizing Committee will be held at the first General Assembly of each year. In addition to the in-person vote at the General Assembly, all tenant members will be provided the opportunity to vote in absentia via mail and/or webform. Any PTU tenant member who has been a member for at least two weeks is eligible to nominate themselves or a fellow tenant member to run for the Organizing Committee. Organizing Committee members are elected for twelve (12) month terms, beginning with the second Organizing Committee meeting after the General Assembly where elections were conducted. Organizing Committee elections shall be considered valid only if a quorum is reached, defined as valid ballots being cast by at least one-fifth ($\frac{1}{5}$) of PTU tenant members. If quorum is not reached by the pre-set voting deadline, the deadline will be extended until a quorum can be reached. The Organizing Committee is responsible for setting rules for elections. Any changes to election rules shall be subject to approval by membership at a General Assembly.

4.22 OC members must be a card-carrying member of PTU. In order to feel ownership in the OC and PTU, OC members are expected (but not required) to recruit new members to PTU and to the OC. OC members should be willing to take-on roles and action items at each meeting and follow through. OC members must agree to and abide by the code-of-conduct and community agreements. OC members must be willing to participate in diversity/inclusion/education/organizing trainings, as recommended.

4.23 Minutes from Organizing Committee meetings will be made available to all PTU members

4.24 Any Organizing Committee member can be made inactive or can be removed from the OC, for any reason by a 2/3 vote of the entire Organizing Committee

4.25 The OC may make funds available for a particular purpose at its discretion

4.26 The size of the O.C. will be no fewer than 7, and no more than 20. There will be two Co-Chairs (the OC Chair and Vice-chair) with the following responsibilities: Deputized to speak for PTU in various official capacities; but only after seeking permission/clarity from the OC. Keep working group bottom-liners accountable. Ensure that OC meetings are convened according to the bylaws, and have a facilitator and agenda (in partnership with the secretary). Approve expenditures of \$100 or less (pending other future rules/limitations determined in the budget and/or by the treasurer). Oversee/facilitate regular reviews of the OC and OC members. They will serve under the following parameters: One term will be 4 general membership meetings. They cannot serve more than two consecutive

terms. Elected by the general membership. Can be recalled by the OC or (to be determined process of) petition by general membership.

ARTICLE 5: Board of Directors

5.1 The Board executes the democratic will of PTU as articulated by the Organizing Committee.

5.2 The Board includes, but is not limited to: Two Co-Chairs (or Co-Presidents), Secretary, and a Treasurer. Co-Chairs will have the following responsibilities:

- a. Deputized to speak for PTU in various official capacities; but only after seeking permission/ clarity from the OC
- b. Keep working group bottom-liners accountable
- c. Ensure that OC meetings are convened according to the by-laws, and have a facilitator and agenda (in partnership with the secretary)
- d. Approve expenditures of \$100 or less (pending other future rules/ limitations determined in the budget and/ or by the treasurer)
- e. Oversee/ facilitate regular reviews of the OC and OC members

And will serve under the following parameters:

- f. One term will be 4 general membership meetings
- g. Cannot serve more than two consecutive terms
- h. Elected by the general membership
- i. Can be recalled by the OC or (to be determined process of) petition by general membership

5.3 Members of the Board are not to represent or advertise their board membership except for official purposes such as banking.

5.4 Officers of the Board are selected according to the policy determined by the Organizing Committee.

5.5 All members of the Board serve at the pleasure of the Organizing Committee

5.6 Officers of the Board will serve a term of not more than 6 months.

5.7 The President will not serve two terms consecutively.

5.8 The President is empowered only to serve as signatory on official documents that require a President, such as banking documents or state registration documents, with no other powers or privileges.

5.9 The Secretary maintains an up-to-date list of PTU members and OC members in good standing and alerts members when they are close to losing their membership qualifications. The Secretary will make sure major events are well

documented and that notes and records are easily accessible by members. The Secretary will ensure that minutes are made available for meetings of the Board and OC. The Secretary will track the number of OC members required for quorum.

5.10 The Treasurer leads the union's fundraising efforts, helps maintain the list of members' standing by tracking their dues status, provides quarterly reports on the union's finances, and safeguards the union's financial resources. The treasurer will develop budgets with the working groups.

5.11 Minutes from Board meetings will be made available to all PTU members

Article 6: Auxiliary Positions

6.1 There will be an Office Manager, with a discretionary budget of \$100 per month, paid out of petty cash fund.

6.2 There will be a position of Gratitude Officer; For the purpose of emotional support, and organizational health, to resolve internal conflict, organize codes of conduct, community agreements, and processes of accountability.

Article 7: Standing Committees & Working Groups

7.1 There will be a Bylaws Committee that meets at a minimum of twice yearly. The O.C, will appoint the members. Amendment procedures set by Bylaws Committee.

7.2 Any working group or a group of six or more OC members can carry out an action on behalf of PTU using PTU's name, with approval from an OC Co-Chair. The action must be in line with and support PTU's mission and Points of Unity, and must be shared with the OC prior to execution. An action can include direct action, public communication, or an endorsement (not including political candidates). The action should not cost more than \$25 of PTU money, or include an expectation or promise of additional resources in the form of money, time, or effort from other PTU members. These actions can be presented to the OC for consultation or approval, unless required by an OC Co-Chair.