

OCCUPY RENO MASTER CHARTER

Final revisions ratified Earth Day, April 22, 2012

Article 1. Purpose and Principles

A. Statement of Purpose:

Occupy Reno exists to promote justice and the well-being of everyone in our community.

B. Mission:

Government no longer represents the people. We demand, by the exercise of our unalienable rights and those rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution, to restore power to the people. We share responsibility for the current state of affairs and commit to inspire and create change in the best interest of our society.

C. Vision:

Occupy Reno is a component of the global effort to restore social, political, and economic justice to the good people of our community. Occupy Reno continues to enhance the general welfare of all citizens. It is our belief that all people are created equally, and we remain steadfast in our desire for equal rights for all. Together we are creating an environmentally sustainable community in which all voices are heard regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or economic standing.

D. Values:

1. We are dedicated to the principles of nonviolence.
2. We support the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights of the United States of America, and the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. We stand in solidarity with all peoples of the world who seek to reclaim the power to decide their own destiny.

4. Every person has an equal voice but no one person alone speaks for Occupy Reno.
5. Occupy Reno does not support or endorse any political party, candidate or organization.
6. We respect the value and dignity of our fellow human beings and our conduct as an organization demonstrates those values.
7. We support the right to self-determination, the right to legal due process, and the right to the fruits of our own labor. We recognize the need be accountable for our actions and inactions.
8. We commit to the stewardship of our planet and all the resources we utilize.

Article 2. Organization Design

A. Organization Structure includes but is not limited to the following:

1. General Assembly Description and Purpose

- The General Assembly (G.A.) represents Occupy Reno (O.R.) as a whole: Charter, Committees, Working Groups, Declarations, Principles, Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values and Goals.
- The General Assembly embodies the relationship between Occupy Reno and the Occupy Movement
- The General Assembly makes financial and strategic decisions related to Occupy Reno and the Occupy Movement as a whole.
- Guidelines for writing, gaining support and improving proposals are in Article 6: Decision Making.

B. Committees and Working Groups

1. Guidelines for the creation of Committees and Working Groups is discussed in Article 7: Roles and Responsibilities (below)

2. Guidelines for Roles, Responsibilities, Rights and Duties are specified in Article 7: Roles and Responsibilities (below)

C. Legal Entity

The form of legal entity for Occupy Reno must be approved at the General Assembly and will be consistent with the Purpose and Principles state above.

D. Bylaws

Bylaws will be written in order to align with the chosen form of legal entity.

E. Key Strategic Goals

1. Educate the public and generate awareness about the corrupted nature of our governing institutions and how they benefit the top 1% of the population.
2. Offer alternative forms of social organization that better promote the health and well-being of the people with specific appreciation for human dignity and a sustainable environment.
3. Provide support to existing organizations that advance the aforementioned ideals.
4. Empower individuals to transcend injustice with peace.
5. Facilitate discussion, debate and dialogue over issues in a warm, friendly and open atmosphere where individuals feel free to speak their personal views.

F. Strategic Plan:

The action/implementation plan for each of the above Strategic Goals will be included as an Addendum to the Charter upon completion.

G. Collective Work:

Occupy Reno is dedicated to the elimination of the overwhelming influence that moneyed interests have over our elected officials and our political processes. We want to strengthen the concept of "one person, one vote" and we think that constituents who elected public officials should have power over them, not those who contributed the most money. We are fighting for a true and free participatory democracy.

Article 3. Operating Agreements

A. *Code of Conduct*

(The Code of Conduct for the Occupy Reno site is published at the Occupy Reno website.)

B. *General Expectations for Participants of Occupy Reno*

1. Participants are expected to actively contribute to discussions and the work of Occupy Reno, including participation in meetings, committees and working groups as necessary.
2. Participants are expected to attend General Assemblies and committee and working group meetings where they have agreed to participate.
3. Participants who miss meetings are obligated to update themselves on the content of the missed meeting.
4. Participants are expected to conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards. Participants may not use Occupy Reno for either direct or indirect accomplishment of personal gain, to further personal or political agendas that are not in support of the common good of Occupy Reno.
5. People participate on the basis of strict equality. No one person holds greater power or influence than any other. Participants listen to and respect the contributions of each and every person.
6. When voicing criticism or negative opinions of a matter under consideration, a participant is obligated to offer a constructive proposal as an alternative.

7. In meetings, participants do not engage in “side-talk” while another person has the floor and is speaking.
8. Participants communicate with each other directly, openly and honestly.
9. Participants refrain from engaging in verbally or emotionally abusive or passive-aggressive behavior.

C. Accountability

1. Participants are obligated to uphold the principles and values set forth in this Charter in addition any other formally approved O.R. General Assembly, Committee or Working Group procedures or guidelines.
2. Persons who agree to perform tasks or take actions on behalf of Occupy Reno, the O.R. General Assembly, its Committees and Working Groups are obligated to not only accomplish such tasks and actions but to report regularly on their progress.
3. Occupy Reno, the O.R. General Assembly, and the Committees and Working Groups are responsible for coordinating with and reporting regularly to all stakeholders on issues and actions relevant to those stakeholders.
4. The O.R. General Assembly, Committees, Working Groups are empowered to take action to sanction Occupy Reno participants who consistently fail to uphold the Expectations and Code of Conduct specified above.

D. Conflict Resolution

1. Persons are individually and collectively responsible and accountable for addressing conflict in a constructive and timely way.
2. Conflict between and among participants will be addressed directly between and among the parties involved in a private discussion away from non-involved parties.
3. Assistance in conflict resolution can be requested from the Facilitation Committee.

4. The General Assembly serves as the final arbiter of any unresolved conflicts.

Article 4. Stakeholders

A. Definition of Stakeholder

Stakeholder is any individual or group that is or will be impacted by the activities of Occupy Reno.

B. Identification of Stakeholders

The O.R. General Assembly and each Committee and Working Group will be responsible for compiling and maintaining a list of stakeholders and adding them to a master list for Occupy Reno. Communication with each stakeholder will be conducted on a regular basis in order to address mutual expectations and reconcile differences. Expectations of each stakeholder for O.R. and the expectations of O.R. for each stakeholder will be taken into account in interactions and in planning upcoming actions.

C. List of Stakeholders

The List of Occupy Reno Stakeholders will be reviewed and updated monthly at the General Assembly and to be posted and maintained online.

Article 5. Resources

A. Asset Procurement

Asset procurement is the responsibility of a Committee or Working Group under guidance of the O.R. General Assembly to obtain food supplies, equipment, fixed and moveable structures and furnishings and provide maintenance as needed;

B. Legal Issues

Issues related to the legal status of the organization, permits, review of proposals for legal impacts, etc. are charged to the *Legal Committee* is empowered to seek pro-bono outside advice as necessary. The General Assembly has direct oversight for this Committee.

C. Money and Asset Management

The *Finance Committee* will be appointed and charged by the General Assembly to be responsible for credit union accounts, budgets, financial review and reviewing the fiscal impact of formal proposals coming before the General Assembly. The O.R. General Assembly has direct oversight for this Committee.

D. Information needs

Storage and archiving of O.R. data and documents, O.R. stats, participant data, legal data, etc., and the technology infrastructure to support storage, archiving and facilitate the internal and external O.R. communication function are assigned to the *Technology Committee*.

Article 6. Decision Making

A. Decision Making for Occupy Reno At Large

No person alone can make decisions or speak for Occupy Reno. This is the purview of the General Assembly. Most work and decisions within Occupy Reno are handled by individuals and groups within the Occupation. If you want to do something, do it. You do not need permission from the General Assembly (G.A.) for most actions. But some decisions—official statements, organizational changes, major resource commitments -- require broad support. Such items must be brought to the G.A. as a Proposal.

B. Passing a Proposal

A proposal that passes the General Assembly of Occupy Reno represents the will of Occupy Reno (O.R.). It is important that every proposal has a fair hearing and as many interested people as possible can contribute. Proposals can only be passed at regularly scheduled General Assemblies (G.A.'s). All formal proposals should be posted on the Occupy Reno Webpage at least one day in advance of a G.A.

A proposal should be cleared by the Facilitators before it is presented at the G.A. The proposer is expected to follow the Proposal Checklist. The checklist is intended to avoid wasting time in the G.A. This process is not required, but it is understood that proposals cost many people's time and every persons time is valuable. Therefore, anyone not utilizing the specified process for submitting a proposal to the G.A. *will* be asked to explain why their time is more important than other participants of the G.A. Detailed steps of the Proposal Checklist are provided below.

C. The Role of the Facilitators in Proposal Consideration

The Facilitation Committee can help you complete a Proposal Checklist, advise you of people to talk with, other proposals to examine, and possible side effects of the proposal. For help developing and finalizing a proposal, seek input from an appropriate Committee or Working Group or after a General Assembly, find someone wearing an armband with a "Facilitator" badge. They will be able to assist you in this important process. You will be expected to submit a written version of your current Proposal to the General Assembly Facilitators prior to a G.A. that will consider your Proposal.

D. Required Steps for Submitting a Proposal to a General Assembly

1. Post your completed proposal "Proposal" on the Occupy Reno Webpage at least a day before voting. If you cannot e-mail it, find someone with access to e-mail.
2. If any changes occur in your proposal after you submit it electronically, repost the changed proposal as soon as possible. At a minimum you must notify the G.A. Facilitators prior to the beginning of the meeting.
3. You must also provide a written version of your current proposal to the General Assembly Facilitator at the beginning of the meeting.
4. Proposals will be discussed and considered at the time scheduled on the agenda.
5. Votes for the proposal will be tallied at the end of discussion of said proposal.

E. Drafting a Proposal

1. Is the proposal written correctly? A proposal should be written as:
 - a) Background and Rationale: Why the G.A. needs to pass the proposal.
 - b) Short Form: A one-sentence summary of the proposal.

c) Long Form: The full statement, action, delegation, or rule that the G.A. will pass. Be clear and specific enough that others can interpret it without confusion. Also estimate the necessary resources required, identify potential impacts, and discuss implementation.

d) Resources: Identify the resources required to implement your proposal: human power, money, materials, etc.

e) Impacts: Are their risks related to approving your Proposal? Can you identify intended or possible unintended consequences related to you Proposal?

f) Implementation: How this proposal will be implemented or enforced. If work is required by groups, they must already exist and agree to the proposal. Do not just assume that someone else will implement it.

2. Is the proposal an appropriate topic for the G.A.? It should be either:

a) A formal statement or endorsement by O.R.;

b) A direction of significant O.R. resources, either money, supplies, or people;

c) A significant change in the legal or organizational structure of O.R.,

d) A creation, removal or change in mandate of power to an individual or smaller group, or

e) An internal rule or external action that requires consensus of all of O.R. to achieve.

f) *Note: You do not need a proposal to start a group, perform an action, or tell someone what you believe or why you are here.*

F. *Gaining Support, Improving and Finalizing a Proposal*

1. Have you discussed this proposal with the most relevant group(s) and updated the proposal based on their input?

Normally you should make a proposal only after getting input from the most relevant Working Group(s); other people interested in the area can help find omissions or unintended consequences or refer you to related work or ideas.

2. Have you discussed this with people with opposing views? By considering opposing views prior to the G.A., you might avoid blocks that will cost assembly time and create unnecessary conflict. A good proposal is the product of consensus before it has reached the G.A. Ironing out all foreseeable wrinkles before they come up at the G.A. will be what gets the proposal passed.

3. Have you considered how it relates to past and planned proposals? Does it duplicate or conflict with other proposals? Working with the writers of such proposals will help you reach consensus.

4. Do you believe the Proposal will pass? Do not use a Proposal merely as an opportunity to have your voice heard. All voices of O.R. will be heard in solidarity; the procedure of the proposal checklist is to ensure that the G.A. is operated in the most orderly manner possible, and to make sure that allotted time is given to the more reasonable and thoroughly thought out proposals. If in your better judgment your proposal is unlikely to pass the G.A., bring it up for discussion outside of the G.A. in an effort to further understand the dilemmas inherent with said proposal

G. Bringing a Proposal to the General Assembly

1. After all the steps specified above have been completed, the Proposal may be brought to the General Assembly for consideration.

2. The author is expected to state their Proposal and explain it and to answer questions and receive feedback

3. If there are a number of comments a "stack" will be taken so that everyone who wishes may share their idea about the proposal

4. The Facilitators may take a “weather check” of “jazz fingers” to determine if those participating want to vote on the Proposal or send it back to a Committee or Working Group for further work.

5. If the General Assembly votes of the Proposal and it is not approved, there is further discussion and a request for a modified proposal to be voted upon

6. If the modified proposal is not approved after the second vote, the proposal is tabled for that G.A. and recommendations are made by those present regarding what the author should do next regarding to gain support for their Proposal in the future.

H. Selecting a Decision Making Process for Committees and Working Groups

Each Committee and Working Group will adopt a process for decision making which includes a mix decision-making strategies that is most suitable for their respective group and for the decisions that must be made. Decision making strategies include Consensus, Democratic elections, Collaboration, Consultations (e.g., seeking the advice of external professional expertise).

I. General Assemblies and Consensus Decision Making

1. For the Occupy Movement, the preferred decision making process is Consensus because this process is considered the most equitable. Everyone is entitled to have their thoughts on any issue heard

2. The hallmark of Consensus decision making is to be respectful and listen to the ideas of others, and to not be afraid to share your own ideas and opinions.

3. Think before you speak, listen before you object, listen to other people’s objectives and consider them carefully before pressing our point.

4. Consensus is not the same as a democratic election. Nor is the expectation that anyone will necessarily get their preferred outcome for any issue. The ideal behind

consensus is empowerment not overpowering, trying to reach an agreement versus majorities/minorities and partisan politics.

5. Consensus achieves a decision that everyone can live with, that everyone can accept and support.

Article 7. Roles and Responsibilities

A. *Coordination and Communication*

Each Occupy Reno Committee and active Working Group may select a *Coordinator* as a delegate. These delegates comprise the *Coordinators Committee* through which the needs and issues of O.R. Committees and Working Groups are communicated and coordinated on a regular basis.

1. The Coordinators answer to their constituents and are responsible for representing them in the Coordinators Committee and when appropriate at the General Assembly (G.A.).
2. Coordinators or their designate often facilitate Committee and Working Group meetings
3. Coordinators or their designate report the business of their respective Committee or Working Group to the G.A.
4. When appropriate, the Coordinators or their designate, may serve as a participant of a Spokes Counsel to report to the G.A. regarding a particularly critical issue or provide input on an important decision.

B. *Crisis Management*

In emergency or crisis situations when decisions and in person communication is needed between General Assemblies the Coordinators Committee may have the power of interim decision making until the time when the next General Assembly meets. When and if a situation necessitates an action or decision on the part of the Coordinators Committee on behalf of the General

Assembly, the utmost care must be taken to ensure that the Principles and Values of Occupy Reno (stated herein) are protected and upheld.

C. Roles and Responsibilities of Facilitators

1. Clearly understood and executed roles and responsibilities are the heart and soul of effective meetings. There are key roles that are critical for every meeting but each meeting attendee also has a critical role to participate and to help the meeting to succeed.
2. Successful facilitation is critical to keeping a meeting on track and flowing smoothly. Facilitators can make the difference between a meeting where issues are discussed, proposals considered, decisions made and people leave committed to actions or a chaotic meeting where frustrated participants leave wondering whether their time was well spent attending at all.
3. To assist in remembering the critical roles in facilitating a successful meeting, Occupy Reno has adopted the following acronym: **MFTGRS**: (M – Moderator, F – Facilitator, T – Timekeeper, G – Greeter, R – Ranger, S – Scribe). These roles can be adapted and applied generically to all meetings. Some of the **MFTGRS** roles can be performed concurrently by one person but the specific responsibilities under each role must still be covered. Descriptions of the MFTGRS roles are provided below.
4. Moderator
 - a) In the context of Occupy Reno, the Moderator schedules, organizes and leads meetings (General Assemblies, Working Groups, Committees, etc.).
 - b) The Moderator, in consultation with all appropriate individuals, sets the meeting time, date, and location and insures that all necessary arrangements are made, notices sent, invitations extended, etc.
 - c) The Moderator, working with other appropriate individuals, drafts the meeting agenda and

determines the approximate time required for each item. Typically a meeting should last about an hour.

d) The Moderator ensures the agenda is posted and publicized at least 2 hours in advance of the meeting.

e) The Moderator calls the meeting to order as close as possible to the scheduled start time of the meeting and introduces and welcomes any guests.

f) The Moderator briefly reviews the agenda for the meeting, points out the time set aside for each agenda item, agenda items that might need extra time, agenda items that require decisions, and agenda items where guests will be presenting.

g) The Moderator asks if there are any agenda items to be added and adds them if necessary.

h) The Moderator introduces the Facilitator, the Timekeeper, the Greeters, the Rangers and the Scribe and makes a few brief comments on the role of each.

i) The Moderator briefly reviews the meeting ground rules and points out that even though it is the Facilitator's role to ensure ground rules are adhered to, it is also the responsibility of all meeting attendees to observe ground rules and ensure they are followed.

j) The Moderator follows the meeting agenda until the conclusion of the meeting.

5. Facilitator

a) During the meeting, the Facilitator monitors the interpersonal dynamics of the meeting and the overall meeting environment.

b) As a rule, the Facilitator only intervenes when necessary, when participants of the group do not take the opportunity to do so themselves.

c) Any interventions are conducted with maximum courtesy to the individual and minimum interruption to the meeting. The watchwords for facilitator interventions are quick, clear, and courteous.

d) The Facilitator ensures adherence to the ground rules, and redirects group discussion when it deviates from the agenda.

e) The Facilitator asks for additional clarification when an item under discussion seems to be generating confusion and/or asks for someone to paraphrase the item in order to check for understanding.

f) The Facilitator makes note of individuals indicating a desire to speak in a discussion and ensures that they have an opportunity to do so.

g) When the "Stack" protocol is being used, the Facilitator manages the "Stack."

h) As appropriate, the Facilitator may ask individuals who have not been participating in discussion to share their thoughts.

i) The Facilitator notes the tone and sentiments of participants and assesses when group discussion is moving toward consensus. At the appropriate time the Facilitator asks for a clear proposal to be framed so that participants can either approve or reject it.

j) The Facilitator attends to the physical environment (temperature, light, distracting noise, etc.), ensures that speakers' voices are loud enough to be heard, and that speakers are visible to all attendees.

k) When feasible the Facilitator tries to establish and maintain a circular shaped meeting structure in order to give everyone equal visual access and to equalize spatial influence during deliberations.

6. Timekeeper

- a) The Timekeeper's function during the meeting is to keep track of the time allotted to each portion of the agenda, to provide 5 and 2 minute warnings when allotted.
- b) The Timekeeper helps the Moderator and Facilitator to track time spent on items and to help keep the meeting moving.

7. Greeter

- a) The role of the Greeter is to identify people who are new to the meeting, welcome them, give them a brief background on what is taking place and introduce them to others as appropriate.
- b) At the conclusion of the meeting, the Greeter asks the new people for their perceptions of the meeting, if there was anything they would like clarified, and asks them to please feel free to come back.
- c) An additional role of the Greeter is to keep an eye out for any possible troublemakers and to alert a Ranger if necessary.
- d) Ranger(s) and Greeter(s) work as a team to support the other Facilitators to keep control of the meeting.
- e) The number of Greeters may vary; normally one per 20 people at a meeting is advisable.

8. Ranger

- a) The role of the Ranger is to provide immediate assistance in the case of exceptional circumstances such as medical or other emergencies, verbal or physical hostility, vandalism, etc.
- b) The communicated with the Greeter and help to handle any behavioral hot spots.
- c) Ranger(s) and Greeter(s) work as a team to support the other Facilitators to keep control of the meeting.

d) The number of Rangers may vary; normally one per 20 people at a meeting is advisable.

9. Scribe

a) During the meeting, the Scribe makes brief notes about what is discussed in the meeting. Notes follow the agenda. They need not be formal “minutes” or a direct transcription but rather are a brief summary with particular attention to timely announcements, decisions that are made, outcomes, and when appropriate, commitments to action items.

b) At the end of the formal meeting the Scribe quickly reads back their notes to the G.A. to confirm their accuracy.

c) Following the meeting, the Scribe types up the minutes from their notes using a format that parallels the agenda emphasizing announcements, decisions and action items. These minutes are then posted on the Occupy Reno webpage.

D. Committee/Working Group Roles and Responsibilities

1. All Committees and Workings Groups fall under the general decision making jurisdiction of the General Assembly.

2. Shortly after their creation, Committees and Working Groups should define their purpose or mission, their rights and responsibilities, membership, key personnel and stakeholders. This information should be reported to the General Assembly as soon as possible.

3. Normally the Committees are created through the General Assembly and the Working Groups are either created through the General Assembly or they are “start ups” when one or more Occupiers recognize the need to conduct some function or action for O.R.

4. Committees and Working Groups must report on a regular basis to the G.A. Standing Committees and active Working Groups will be encouraged or when appropriate, required to post their minutes and other materials on the Occupy Reno webpage.

5. The G.A. has the power to charge duties to existing Committees and Working Groups when appropriate and to monitor their progress.

Article 8. Performance Management

A. Committees and Working Groups are responsible for reporting issues and actions to the General Assembly (G.A.). The G.A. is responsible for posting minutes on the Occupy Reno webpage after every G.A. and for charging Committees and Working Groups to carry out the necessary functions and actions of Occupy Reno. When requested by the G.A., Committees and Working Groups should track current and outstanding Actions using the tracking form provided online.