Bylaws of the
Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT)

Effective July 26, 2016 (unless otherwise noted)

Article I. Name and Address

The name of this organization is the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT). Currently and until changed by ACT’s officers, ACT’s office shall be located in the basement of 135 Prospect Street, Cambridge, MA 02139; its mailing address shall be Post Office Box 391078, Cambridge, MA 02139; its telephone number shall be (617) 499-7031; its email address shall be tenants@earthlink.net; and its website shall be www.ACTcambridge.org.

Article II. Purposes

A. The overall purpose of ACT is to improve life for low income tenants, particularly in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and, more specifically, the purposes include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Share information amongst tenants affected by policies of the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and other agencies;

(2) Review and seek appropriate revisions to CHA policies and programs;

(3) Participate in the development of new CHA policies and programs; and

(4) Support and strengthen existing tenant associations, provided, however, that ACT shall not diminish the authority of any tenant association both recognized by the respective management entity and functioning democratically.

B. ACT is an organization of lower income tenants. Therefore, ACT shall

(1) Work for the wider interests of lower income people and the rights of tenants in general;

(2) Strive for participation of lower income tenants from all communities in its work and focuses its efforts on those communities that may currently be underrepresented;

(3) Work to empower those who have been disempowered, such as women; ethnic, racial, and language minorities; and young families; and

(4) Work to develop participation and leadership of lower income people, especially tenants, in the social and political life of their communities.
Article III. Membership

The head of household (of any age) and every adult (age 18 years or older) who is currently listed on a CHA public housing lease or who is a CHA voucher tenant shall be a member of ACT. Voucher tenants are all participants in a CHA leased housing program (including but not limited to the Section 8 housing choice voucher program, Mass. Rental Voucher Program, and state Alternative Housing Voucher Program) and include the heads of household as well as authorized household members, whether they reside in Cambridge or outside of Cambridge. Membership automatically terminates when the person is no longer a CHA public housing or voucher tenant, with one exception. If you were a CHA public housing or voucher tenant on May 16, 2009 or after, but are residing in a building that was converted to a different subsidy type such that you are no longer a CHA tenant, you may remain a full member of ACT.

Article IV. Governing Board

A. Effective as of the next election after the adoption of these bylaws, the governing board of ACT shall consist of up to fourteen (14) members, of which up to seven (7) shall be CHA public housing tenants and up to seven (7) shall be CHA voucher tenants.

The CHA’s different voucher programs include participants (i) in the federal Section 8 housing choice voucher program, the Mass. Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), and the state Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP); (ii) in the tenant based and unit-based vouchers programs; and (iii) with Cambridge Housing Authority vouchers who live outside of the City of Cambridge.

The CHA’s public housing tenants include those with Section 8 project-based or other assistance who live in CHA-controlled developments that had formerly been state or federal public housing.

CHA tenants who are full-time CHA employees are ineligible to serve on the ACT Governing Board.

B. Effective as of the next election after the adoption of these bylaws, there shall be citywide voting for both public housing and voucher Board members as follows: Each voter shall have the option to cast up to three votes for candidates from CHA’s public housing and/or voucher programs. In the case that there are more candidates elected from one housing program, the top vote-getters representing each program will be seated, resulting in an equal number of public housing and voucher representatives.

C. Duties of Board Members - The duties include the following:

1. Represent the interests of all low income tenants.

2. Represent the interests of all CHA public housing and voucher tenants.

3. Attend regularly scheduled meetings as well as any special meetings of the Board.
(4) In addition, Board members are strongly encouraged to participate in the life of the community; and to conduct outreach, particularly, to low income tenants, to increase awareness of ACT.

D. Term: The term for each Board member shall be three (3) years, except for the 2014-2016 Board whose term shall be extended six (6) months (April 21, 2014 – October 21, 2016).

E. Resignation: A Board member may resign at any time by delivering a written resignation letter to the co-chairpersons. The resignation may also be emailed to the ACT office (at tenants@earthlink.net). If a resignation is communicated in a voice mail message, then the ACT co-chairpersons shall write a letter to the resigning Board member asking him/her to confirm in writing the resignation in two weeks’ time and if no written confirmation is timely received, he/she will be deemed to have resigned effective as of the date of the voice mail message.

F. Suspension:

   (1) Board members may be suspended by a majority vote of the officers for repeated and/or substantial violations of the Board norms (Attachment A) that impede the work of the organization. Unless the Executive Committee decides otherwise, suspension is defined as the cessation (for a specified period of time which is generally at least a month) of a member’s rights to attend and speak at ACT Board and ACT Committee meetings; vote on appointments, policy positions and other issues that come before the Board; volunteer in the ACT office; participate in ACT trainings, workshops, and other events; and act as a representative of the organization.

   (2) The suspended Board member has the option to appeal the suspension to either (a) the full Board or (b) a special (temporary) committee. Whatever body is selected by the appealing Board member is the final level of appeal. After providing the suspended Board member the opportunity to present relevant information, the Board or special committee (whichever was chosen by the appealing Board member) may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the officers or may consider alternative resolutions (such as requiring the Board member to apologize or make reparation). The special committee shall be comprised of three Board members (who have volunteered to serve on these committees) chosen at random. The officers shall not be allowed to serve on any special committee charged with reviewing a suspension.

G. Removal:

   (1) The Board, by a majority vote, may remove a Board member if

       (a) the member substantially fails to perform his/her duties as a Board member;

       (b) the member acts contrary to any order voted and passed at a Board meeting;
(c) the member severely abuses his/her power or otherwise engages in serious malfeasance; and/or

(d) the member acts in serious contravention of ACT’s by-laws (including but not limited to Articles XI and XII of these Bylaws).

(2) The Board shall remove a Board member if they are no longer a member of ACT (as defined above in Article III.).

(3) Prior to any Board vote to remove a Board member for cause, the co-chairpersons shall send all Board members at least two weeks written notice of a Board hearing to consider the removal. The notice shall specify the reasons and facts for the proposed removal and shall inform the affected Board member of his/her rights to attend and present information at the hearing. The affected Board member has the right to attend this hearing and to present any relevant information (including from others). If the Board member does not attend the duly noticed hearing, the Board may still vote on the removal.

H. Vacancies:

(1) If a Board member resigns or is removed for cause, the Board may appoint a public housing or voucher tenant, as the case may be, to complete the term of the Board member who resigned or was removed.

Candidates who are not elected to the Board at the last election will be contacted immediately after the election by the co-chairpersons and asked to respond in two weeks’ time to indicate their interest in serving as an alternate in the event there is a future vacancy on the Board. The candidates who received the most votes will be considered first for appointments.

If this does not result in any appointments, then the Board shall solicit suggestions first from members of the citywide public housing and voucher leadership conferences and then from affected constituencies (public housing or voucher tenants) for appointments to complete the term of the Board member; and, in conducting such process, the Board will seek out the most qualified people who can best serve ACT at the time, with consideration to skills, experience, and language capacity. In any event, at least one half of the remaining Board members must approve the appointment.

(2) If the Board does not appoint a tenant to complete the term (as described above), then a public housing or voucher tenant, as the case may be, shall be elected for the vacant position at the next scheduled election of ACT (regardless of the expiration of the term of the person who created the vacancy).

I. Change in Status: If an elected Board member transfers from CHA public housing to the CHA’s voucher programs or vice versa, the Board member shall continue to be eligible to finish his or her term.
Article V. Election Process for Governing Board Members

A. Every head of household (of any age) and every adult (age 18 or older) who is currently a member of ACT (as defined above in Article III.) is eligible to vote for the ACT Board members.

B. The Election Committee shall be responsible for soliciting nominations, organizing and supervising the elections, producing and distributing the ballots, conducting publicity and outreach about the candidates and the elections, developing guidelines and logistics, and securing whatever outside participation may be necessary for an open and democratic election process for Board members. The Election Committee may include persons who are not CHA tenants who can provide legal and/or technical advice. Current board members and non-board members of ACT who are candidates may participate in the Election Committee but only for the purposes of helping to get the word out about the election, developing written information about ACT, and distributing/posting fliers. The Election Committee shall comply with the outreach activities listed in Attachment B so as to encourage as broad and democratic election as possible.

C. The Election Committee shall plan an open house/informational night to be held at the ACT Office and Jackson Gardens Community Room.

D. Eligible voters may cast their votes in person by secret written ballot on election day (in late October effective after the adoption of these bylaws on 7/26/2016) or by mail by secret written ballot to the ACT post office box. Write-in nominations are permitted.

E. The collection and counting of ballots shall be handled, or overseen, by an independent third party. Upon request, said third party shall provide a certificate attesting to the fairness of the election.

F. In the case of ties, the independent third party shall randomly draw the names of the candidates receiving the same number of votes one by one to sequentially develop a list of potential Board members and any position filled from this list, shall be filled sequentially starting with the first name randomly drawn. Thereafter, the Election Committee shall ensure that the potential Board members meet the minimum qualifications as set forth in Article III.

G. Recall Election: A recall election shall be held if at least 10% of the ACT membership sign a petition requesting such a recall election (and upon the Board’s receipt of this petition, the Board members last elected are removed from the Board and a new election for those seats shall be held). The recall election shall be supervised by an independent third party with experience in supervising elections.

Article VI. Officers

A. Composition: Effective immediately after the next election after the adoption of these bylaws, ACT Board members shall elect from its members:

(1) two chairpersons (one public housing and one voucher tenant)
two treasurers (one public housing and one voucher tenant)

No two officers may be close relatives (parent, sibling, or child) or live in the same household.

B. Duties: The officers shall have the following duties and, in addition, such other like or necessary duties as the officers may assign:

1. Co-Chairpersons: The co-chairpersons shall be the chief executive officers of ACT and shall share presiding over meetings of ACT and its officers. They shall act as the contact persons between ACT and the Cambridge Housing Authority and the public; oversee the other officers’ performance of duties; and meet with existing local tenant organizations as needed.

2. Co-Treasurers: The co-treasurers shall be the custodians of all funds (including petty cash if available) of ACT; shall be responsible for making deposits, writing checks, and balancing bank accounts; shall prepare and present monthly reports for ACT; shall prepare any necessary financial reports.

C. Additional Duties:

1. At least one of the co-chairpersons or their designee shall attend the Cambridge Housing Authority’s Board of Commissioners’ meetings. (At present, these are generally held at 5:30 PM on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, with the agenda posted on the CHA’s website on the previous Friday).

2. At least one officer shall be a member of each of the standing committees of ACT which are described in Article VII below.

3. The Officers, meeting as an Executive Committee, shall act as a liaison with the Cambridge Housing Authority for the purpose of nominating tenant representatives to serve on the CHA’s hearing panels, including the Grievance Panel, the Conference Panel, and the Hardship Review Committee. These duties shall include establishing the requirements for tenants to be included in the pool of tenant panelists and ensuring that the process for selection for and service on the panels operates fairly.

4. The Officers, meeting as an Executive Committee, shall have the power to act for the organization and make urgent decisions between meetings of the Governing Board when such decisions are necessary. All such decisions shall be reported to the next meeting of the Governing Board.

D. Term: Each officer shall serve a three-year term.

E. Resignation: An officer may resign at any time by delivering a written resignation to one of the co-chairpersons. The resignation may also be emailed to the ACT office (at
tenants@earthlink.net). If a resignation is communicated in a voice mail message, then the ACT office shall write a letter to the resigning officer member asking him/her to confirm in writing the resignation in two weeks’ time and if no written confirmation is timely received, he/she will be deemed to have resigned effective as of the date of the voice mail message.

F. Suspension and Removal of Officers:

(1) The Officers, meeting as an Executive Committee, may suspend any Officer for acting contrary to decisions of the Executive Committee or Governing Board. The votes of three officers shall be necessary to suspend or to restore an officer suspended for such cause. Votes to suspend shall be reported to the next meeting of the Governing Board for approval. The Board may restore the officer, sustain the officer’s suspension, or consider the suspension as a cause for removal under Section VI (F) (2).

(2) The Board, by a majority vote, may remove an officer if (a) the officer does not attend three consecutive meetings of ACT without good cause; (b) the officer substantially fails to perform his/her duties as an officer; (c) the officer acts contrary to any order voted and passed at a Board meeting; (d) the officer severely abuses his/her power or otherwise engages in serious malfeasance; or (e) the member acts in serious contravention of ACT’s by-laws (including but not limited to Articles XI and XII of these Bylaws; and shall remove an officer if (f) the officer is no longer a CHA public housing or voucher tenant.

(3) Prior to any Board vote to remove an officer for cause, one of the co-chairpersons or the ACT office shall send the affected officer at least two weeks written notice of a Board hearing to consider the removal. The notice shall specify the reasons and facts for the proposed removal and shall inform the affected officer of his/her rights to attend and present information at the hearing. The affected officer has the right to attend this hearing and to present any relevant information (including from others). If the officer does not attend the duly noticed hearing, the Board may still vote on the removal.

G. Vacancies: If an officer resigns or is removed for cause, the Board shall promptly appoint, by a majority vote of its members, another Board member to complete the term of the officer who resigned or was removed; provided that if the vacancy was created by resignation or removal of a voucher tenant, then the appointment shall be from among the voucher Board members and if the vacancy was created by resignation or removal of a public housing tenant, then the appointment shall be from among the public housing Board members.

Article VII. Standing Committees

There shall be the following standing committees of ACT. Membership is open to any CHA public housing or voucher tenant. However, Standing Committees shall have the right to require specific commitments from their members, to exclude those who do not make such commitments, and in general organize themselves in ways appropriate to their mission. There shall be at least one ACT Board member on each Standing Committee. Each Standing Committee shall be responsible for doing outreach to ACT members whose primary language is not English. Each Standing Committee shall report its activities at the meetings of ACT Board
on a regular basis. Standing Committees are not limited to those listed below. The Board may create (an) additional Standing Committee(s) by 2/3 majority vote of those present at a regular Board meeting, provided advance written notice is given with the agenda for that Board meeting.

A. **Policy Advocacy Committee**: The Committee shall review, analyze, and comment on the CHA’s existing and proposed policies including but not limited to the CHA’s Moving to Work (MTW) activities in the Annual MTW Plan/Report; engage tenants in advocating for changes in policies; participate in working groups with the CHA staff revising policy documents and developing new programs.

B. **Tenant Advocacy Committee**: This Committee shall assist and advocate for ACT members in disputes with CHA or their management company to preserve their rights as tenants. Upon request, the committee will provide assistance with rent recertification, reasonable accommodation requests, apartment inspections, continued occupancy, grievance hearings, conference panels, and other tenant concerns.

C. **Election Committee**: This Committee shall organize and oversee the election of Board members as more fully described in Article V above.

D. **Executive Committee**: The ACT officers shall constitute the Executive Committee and as such carry out the duties described in Article VI and Article XIII. Additionally, the officers may establish a Finance Subcommittee.

**Article VIII. Ad Hoc Committees**

The officers shall establish such other committees as appropriate, provided that notice of any proposed committee is included in the agenda for the upcoming meeting. The Ad Hoc Committees may include committees to review and make recommendations for revisions to the bylaws, conduct outreach to tenants, and make connections with community organizations representing CHA tenants for whom English is not their first language.

There shall be at least one ACT Board member on each Ad Hoc Committee.

**Article IX: Tenant Leadership Meetings**

ACT shall sponsor citywide meetings of tenant leaders. ACT shall not seek to incorporate these meetings into its own governance structure.

**Article X. Meetings**

A. **Board Meetings**: The ACT Board shall meet on a regular basis, at least four (4) times annually and more often as needed. Generally, the Board will not meet in July and August. The ACT Board shall hold meetings at a consistent and accessible location. Special meetings may be called by a majority of the Board or the officers. All CHA public housing and voucher tenants may attend any meeting and will have a reasonable opportunity to make known their views on matters of common interest. Persons who are not CHA tenants (including CHA staff) may attend
only by invitation of one of the ACT Board co-chairpersons. Until amended by the officers, Attachment A sets forth the current norms for Board meetings. A record of board meetings, which shall include the agenda and materials in the board packet, the attendance sheet, any votes taken at meetings, financial and other reports, shall be kept at the ACT office. It shall be the responsibility of the co-chairpersons to make sure that this information is collected. The co-chairpersons may designate a volunteer to take notes at board meetings and/or maintain files for the ACT board.

B. Officers Meetings: Generally, the officers shall meet monthly and more often as needed. All CHA public housing and voucher tenants may attend any meeting of the officers. Non-CHA tenants (including CHA staff) may attend only by invitation of one of the ACT Board co-chairpersons.

C. Committees Meetings: Standing and Ad Hoc Committees shall meet as needed. All CHA tenants may attend any committee meeting and non-CHA tenants may attend by invitation of that Committee.

D. Notice: Unless there is an emergency, at least three (3) days advance written notice of all regular and special meetings of the ACT Board, officers, and committees shall be provided to each Board member of ACT and any other CHA tenant who has requested such advance notice by notifying the ACT office. Said notice shall contain the date, time, location and, where available, the proposed agenda or topics for discussion.

E. Voting: Each Board member shall have one vote. Members of the Board may vote only in person. Votes cast by proxy are not permitted. Except as otherwise provided, all decisions shall be made by a majority of those present at the meeting provided that there is a quorum.

F. Quorum: For Board meetings a quorum shall consist of the number of members present at the meeting so long as there are at least two (2) officers present. For meetings of the officers, a quorum shall consist of three (3) officers.

G. No one shall be permitted to electronically record any meeting without permission of the chairperson or other person presiding over the meeting.

H. Executive (Private) Session: The Board and the officers may meet privately only if the meeting was first convened in open session, the presiding officer cites the purpose for an executive session, a majority of the Board members present have voted to go into executive session, and the presiding officer has stated before the executive session begins whether the public meeting will resume after the executive session. Executive sessions may be held only for the following limited purposes: (1) to discuss ACT personnel matters; (2) to discuss strategy concerning negotiations with the CHA or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiations or litigation; (3) to investigate charges of criminal misconduct or discuss the filing of criminal complaints; (4) to consider and interview applicants for employment with ACT or CHA if an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on obtaining qualified applicants; and (5) to meet with a mediator provided that the decision to participate in mediation shall be made in an open meeting session.
Article XI. Sexual Harassment Policy

A. Attachment C is incorporated by reference. It shall apply to ACT Board members, ACT members, and invitees. It shall apply at ACT meetings, events, or activities; in connection with any ACT-related business; and between ACT board members, ACT committee members, and ACT office volunteers that affect an ACT member’s participation in ACT.

B. Any ACT member who has been found to have committed an act of sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or removal in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article IV, Sections F and G and Article VI, Section F of the ACT By-Laws.

C. Any non-member of ACT who has been found to have committed an act of sexual harassment may be removed from ACT’s premises and proceedings and may have any contract with ACT terminated.

Article XII. Non-Discrimination

ACT shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of class, source of income, race, color, ethnic or national origin, language, immigration status, religious status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, education, political beliefs, or housing status/tenure.

Article XIII. Expenditures

The officers shall draft a proposed annual budget for ACT based on actual or anticipated expenses of the ACT office, Board, and committees. The budget and any significant amendment shall be approved by the Board. Expenditures shall be made only in accordance with such approved budget or amendment.

All expenditures over $100 must be approved, in advance, by the officers. The person requesting permission to make the expenditure shall provide a signed authorization form to the co-treasurer. Two officers’ signatures are required on all checks over $100 except for regular expenditures that have been approved by the officers (i.e. monthly internet bill).

Article XIV. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall be the calendar year (January 1 through December 31).

Article XV. Amendments

Except as provided in Article X (A) (regarding Board norms), these bylaws may be amended, added to, or repealed by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Board members present and voting at a duly noticed regular Board meeting of ACT. There shall be reasonable advance notice to ACT membership of any meeting (including the date, time, place, and purpose) at which votes may be taken to change the bylaws. The following actions, all
completed at least ten calendar days prior to the meeting, shall constitute reasonable advance notice: (1) posting notice of the meeting and purpose in a public place at CHA’s offices; (2) posting the proposed amendments, together with notice of the meeting, on ACT’s website; and (3) sending (by mail, email, or otherwise) a copy of the proposed amendments together with notice of the meeting to all current Board members, any ACT member who regularly receives notice of Board meetings; and any ACT member who so requests in advance by notice to a co-chairperson, or the ACT office.

Article XVI. Conflict

These bylaws and any duly adopted rule, procedure, or policy of the Board or any committee of the Board shall take precedence over Robert’s Rules of Order or other parliamentary procedure guides. However, Robert’s Rules of Order shall apply if there is any issue not resolved by reference to these bylaws or any such duly adopted rule, procedure, or policy of the Board or Committee.

ADOPTED by 2/3 vote of Board members at a duly called Board Meeting on February 13, 2016.

Attachments
A: ACT Board Norms
B: Outreach Plan for ACT Governing Board Elections
C: Sexual Harassment Policy
Attachment A to the ACT Bylaws

ACT Board Norms

To preserve a safe place for ACT members to be heard, and to create the conditions for successfully carrying out the work of the organization, we will make our best effort to follow these norms at ACT board meetings.

1. We will arrive on time for meetings. We will be respectful of one another’s time.
2. We will stay focused on the topic that is being discussed.
3. We will raise our hands and wait to be recognized by the chair before we speak.
4. We will not interrupt or speak over others.
5. We will not hold side conversations when someone has the floor.
6. Cell phones will be turned off or placed on vibrate during meetings.
7. We will practice active listening.
8. Yelling is unacceptable.
9. Personal attacks will not be allowed.

10. Threatening verbal or physical behavior will not be allowed. The chair will enforce this rule by requesting that the offender leave the room. If they do not leave the room voluntarily, the chair may assign a person or committee to escort the offender out of the room and the building. In the event that the offender refuses to leave, building security or the police will be called.

11. We will not disclose confidential information about other tenants.
12. We will not make false accusations against ACT members.
13. We will not disclose to the CHA any internal ACT business discussed at board meetings.
14. We understand that ACT meetings are not an appropriate setting for resolving personal problems.
15. ACT will try its best to provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities.
16. ACT shall strive to have scent-free meetings and events in consideration of individuals with multiple chemical sensitivity and/or fragrance sensitivity. Board members are strongly encouraged to refrain from using chemical-based scented products.
17. Disciplinary action will be taken against ACT board members who are responsible for repeated and/or substantial violations of board norms that impede the work of the organization.
Attachment B to the ACT Bylaws
Outreach Plan for ACT Governing Board Elections

The Election Committee’s outreach plan shall include:

- Developing written materials about the election and ACT, and translating all materials.

- Creating fliers to post/distribute at public housing, RAD, formerly public housing, and voucher developments, community organizations and agencies, and other locations.

- Posting election information on the ACT and CHA websites.

- If possible, coordinating with CHA mailings to tenants.

- Having a person who is responsible for absentee voting (i.e. maintaining a log of requests, mailing ballots, keeping completed ballots in a lock-box, etc.).

- Having a person who is responsible for responding to calls and emails received by the ACT office from tenants (or the public) with questions about the board election.

- Holding an open house/informational night at the ACT office and Jackson Gardens Community Room. Sending emails to tenants and community groups and agencies to get the word out about the election.

- Using local media (print, web, CCTV) and social media to publicize the election.

- Providing rides to voters on election day.
Attachment C to the ACT Bylaws

Sexual Harassment Policy

Purpose

The Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT) strives to maintain a cooperative and respectful working environment free from hostility and misconduct, including sexual harassment and retaliatory behavior prompted by an allegation of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment and retaliatory behavior will not be tolerated by ACT. The function of this policy is to define sexual harassment, describe ACT’s reporting and investigation procedures, and to communicate the penalties and consequences of any violations of ACT’s sexual harassment policy.

Scope

This policy shall apply to ACT board members, ACT members, and invitees. It shall apply at ACT meetings, events, or activities; in connection with any ACT-related business; and between ACT board members, ACT committee members, and ACT office volunteers that affect an ACT member’s participation in ACT.

1. Definition of Sexual Harassment

1.1. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
   (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implied as a term or condition of an individual’s membership,
   (b) such advances, requests, or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s membership performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive work environment.

1.2. Examples of behavior that ACT may consider as sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following:
   - Unwelcome sexual advances—whether they include physical touching or not;
   - Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct;
   - Comments on an individual’s body or appearance;
   - Comments about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
   - Showing or displaying sexually explicit graphics, cartoons, pictures, photographs, or objects;
   - Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
   - Inquiries into another’s sexual experiences;
   - Discussion of one’s sexual activities;
• Statements or threats, which imply a link or could be reasonably construed to imply a link between a member’s sexual conduct and his or her status or treatment within ACT.

2. All ACT members should take special note that retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is unlawful and will not be tolerated by ACT. Such retaliation will result in suspension or removal.

2.1. Retaliation is defined as threatening, intimidating, or harassing behavior directed at an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, or an individual who is cooperating with or facilitating an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint.

3. ACT Member’s Responsibilities
3.1. All ACT members are forbidden to engage in any form of sexual harassment or retaliatory behavior as defined in sections 1 and 2 above.

3.2. ACT board members will ensure that this policy is made known and accessible to all ACT members who regularly participate in ACT-related business including committee meetings and the ACT office.

4. Reporting and Investigation Procedures
4.1. Raising a Complaint of Sexual Harassment or Retaliation
4.1.1. Any ACT member who believes that they have been subject to any form of sexual harassment or retaliation has the right to file a complaint.

• A verbal or written complaint of sexual harassment or retaliation can be raised with the Reporting Members.

• The ACT officers shall select two Reporting Members and an Alternate to serve for two years’ time. One of the Reporting Members will be a current board officer. The other Reporting Member and the Alternate may be a current or former board member or a member of a tenant organization affiliated with ACT. The Reporting Members will agree to follow the procedures outlined in ACT’s Sexual Harassment Policy and to participate in required trainings.

• In the event that the complaint involves one of the Reporting Members, a verbal or written complaint may be submitted to the person designated the Alternate.

4.1.2. A written complaint of sexual harassment or retaliation may also be filed with the external agency listed below. The use of ACT’s complaint process does not
preclude an ACT member from filing a complaint with this agency, nor does it toll
the statute of limitations for filing with them.

- The Cambridge Human Rights Commission
  51 Inman Street
  2nd Floor
  Cambridge, MA 02139
  (617) 349-4396

4.1.3. Unless the complainant requests in writing that no further action be taken
following the complaint, complaints of sexual harassment or retaliation will be
investigated within 30 days of the complaint by the Reporting Member of ACT, in
conjunction with a member of the governing board who is designated for such
investigations.

4.1.4. A complainant’s written request to not proceed with an investigation will not
preclude the complainant from pursuing the complaint at a later time.

4.1.5. To the extent possible, the confidentiality of the individual(s) submitting or
named by the complaint shall be maintained. However, investigations of sexual
harassment or retaliation may include interviews with witnesses or the individual
charged, and may necessitate the submission of written statements by involved
parties.

4.1.6. If the allegation of sexual harassment is unsubstantiated, the matter shall be
closed and no disciplinary action will be taken against the alleged harasser or the
complainant provided the complaint was made in good faith. Also see Board norm
number 12.

5. Penalty for Violation of Sexual Harassment Policy

5.1. Any ACT member who has been found to have committed an act of sexual harassment
or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or
removal in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article IV. Sections F and G and
Article VI. Section F of the ACT Bylaws.

5.2. Any ACT member who hinders an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint may
be disciplined.
5.3. If a member has been found to have engaged in any form of sexual harassment, a record of this finding shall be kept in a confidential file that will only be accessible to the Reporting Member, the ACT Executive Committee, and affected ACT members.

5.4. Any non-member of ACT who has been found to have committed an act of sexual harassment may be removed from ACT’s premises and proceedings, and may have any contract with ACT terminated.