

**SANTA ROSA COUNTY
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM
AND POLICY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION,
HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION**

Effective Date: 3/28/2002

Revision Date: 12/11/2014

STATEMENT OF POLICY

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners, Santa Rosa County, prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and strives to ensure that all aspects of County employment are free of such unlawful conduct, and that County employment is equally available to all persons regardless of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, genetic information, veteran/military status, and any other characteristic or status protected by applicable law;

WHEREAS, the County believes that special measures and efforts are appropriate to prevent and correct unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation within its organization, and will accordingly engage in a determined and sustained effort in support of this belief, which will include the provisions outlined in this Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the goals of this program and policy, all management and supervisory personnel will share in the responsibility for implementation and management performance in the area of equal employment opportunity, which will be evaluated in the same way that performance in other assigned duties are evaluated; and violations of this Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation will meet with appropriate action;

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of each member of management to give this Program and Policy their full support by leadership and personal example; in addition, it is the duty of every County employee to create a job environment, which is conducive to the provisions contained herein; and the overall County responsibility for the direction of this Program and Policy, and implementation, will reside with the Human Resources Director, who will serve as the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Santa Rosa County hereby enacts this Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation.

For the purposes of this Program and Policy, the terms "Santa Rosa County" or "the County" may be used interchangeably with the term "Board of County Commissioners."

I. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

A. GENERAL EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

There shall be no discrimination with respect to race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, genetic information, veteran/military status, and any other characteristic or status protected by applicable law, with respect to the recruitment, examination or appointment of applicants, or in any personnel decisions affecting employees, including but not limited to evaluation, training, promotion, and disciplinary actions. Harassment based on any of the aforementioned statuses or characteristics is a form of discrimination prohibited by this policy, and retaliation against an employee for complaining about such discrimination or harassment (or supporting a complaint of alleged discrimination or harassment) is also prohibited. Details regarding the County's commitment to preventing and correcting unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation, including the procedure for making complaints about such conduct, are set forth in the Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation.

Santa Rosa County will take affirmative steps to ensure the proper implementation and enforcement of its Equal Employment Opportunity Program in accordance with applicable law.

B. RESPONSIBILITY FOR AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

The Human Resources Director is hereby designated as the Program Coordinator and is responsible for the Program. The Coordinator has the support of the Commissioners and County Management and is identified as the responsible official for internal and external communications which relate to the Program. These responsibilities include:

1. Developing and revising this Program and devising techniques for communicating the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation both internally and externally.
2. Assisting in identifying any problem areas concerning the placement of minorities and female workers.
3. Assisting County management in devising solutions to any areas identified as potential problems with respect to the placement of minority and female employees or applicants.
4. Implementing appropriate systems for measuring the impact of the Program, the need for remedial action, and the degree to which goals and objectives have been attained.
5. Serving as liaison between the County and minority and women's organizations and community action groups concerned with employment opportunities for minorities and women.
6. Ensuring that the County Commission remains informed of issues regarding equal employment opportunity, discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

In addition to these responsibilities, the Human Resources Director is also to provide for periodic review of applicable recruitment, training programs, hiring and promotion practices, and other applicable personnel policies to remove any impediments that may exist for minorities and

females. This review shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Holding regular discussions with managers and supervisors to assure that the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation are being followed.
2. Reviewing the qualifications of all employees seeking promotions or transfers to ensure that qualified minorities and women are given equal consideration.
3. Periodic review of such matters as:
 - (a) proper display of EEO posters and notices;
 - (b) the comparable quality of facilities provided for both sexes;
 - (c) the opportunity of all employees to participate in any County sponsored recreation and social activity;
 - (d) equal opportunity to attend County-sponsored training, seminars, etc;
 - (e) seeing that the needs of disabled employees and applicants are addressed in accordance with the law;
4. Ensuring that supervisors understand that their work performance is being evaluated, among other criteria, on the basis of their efforts to comply with this Program and the results of such efforts.
5. Ensuring that supervisors adequately address and respond to any reported and/or observed unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation of employees, including any reported and/or observed comments, jokes, cartoons, etc., which are intended to be derogatory to minorities, females or the disabled.
6. Ensuring that the overall selection process will be reviewed continually, including the training, transfer and promotion procedures, to ensure freedom from bias toward or stereotyping of minorities and women.
7. Ensuring that all personnel involved in the recruitment, screening, selection, promotion, disciplinary and related processes are carefully selected and trained to ensure that commitments to the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation are fully implemented.
8. Ensuring that qualified minorities and women are given careful consideration for all available positions.
9. Ensuring that efforts will continue to be made to find qualified minority and female applicants through local recruitment organizations and other organizations created to promote the employment opportunities for minorities and females.

C. DISSEMINATION OF PROGRAM

Santa Rosa County recognizes that knowledge and understanding of the Program is crucial to its effective implementation. Therefore, the County will take steps to disseminate its Equal Employment Opportunity Program to the workforce and the community.

1. INTERNAL DISSEMINATION

- a. Notice of the Program will be disseminated to all County employees on County bulletin boards and will be included in revisions to the Personnel Rules, Regulations and Policies.
- b. Relevant provisions from the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation will be included as appropriate in any applicable union agreements.
- c. The County Administrator will discuss the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation at management training programs and at other appropriate meetings. During these discussions, the County's commitment to the Program will be stressed. All participants will also be encouraged to use the Complaint Procedure in situations where it is applicable and will be assured that use of the procedure will not result in retaliation.
- d. Notice of any changes to the Program, as well as a copy of the Program, will be posted on the County's website and intranet.
- e. Through the above and other such steps, the County will communicate to the employees the existence of the Program in order that employees may know of and avail themselves of its benefits.

2. EXTERNAL DISSEMINATION

- a. In those instances when the County seeks employees from external sources, those sources will be informed of the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination and Retaliation.
- b. The County will notify vendors, community organizations, community leaders, schools and colleges of the County's Program as appropriate.

D. RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESS

1. RECRUITMENT

- a. The Human Resources Office will ensure recruitment efforts are adequate, to provide an applicant pool sufficient to represent county minority groups. It is understood that if the County labor force is not approximate to the demographics of the county at-large, then the pool of minority applicants on registers should exceed employment needs. It will be the purpose of this recruitment effort to allow the County to select the best-qualified applicant for a given vacancy.

b. Advertising efforts of the Human Resources Office for entry-level positions will include, but will not be limited to the following sources:

Workforce Escarosa, Escambia County, N.A.S. Pensacola Transition Assistance Office, Naval Air Station Whiting Field (Family Service Center), Pensacola Junior College (Attn: Placement Offices), The University of West Florida (Attn: Career Center), The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Santa Rosa County's Web Site, Lockin_Technical Center, City of Pensacola, all Divisional offices of Board of County Commissions/Appointing Authorities/County Libraries.

This distribution scheme will also be used for internal Promotional Registers.

c. Where appropriate, Human Resources may also advertise in:

The Pensacola News Journal (Regional Newspaper) (to be utilized when normal recruitment efforts will not be sufficient)

2. HIRING

a. Human Resources will ensure that:

(i) All questions on the employment application are job related.

(ii) No tests or other screening criteria have an unlawfully discriminatory impact on minorities or females.

(iii) Job titles are descriptive of job content.

(iv) Job description and qualification standards do not cause inadvertent unlawful discrimination and are free from bias related to gender or other protected statuses or characteristics.

(v) Job requirements are known by all members of management involved in the recruitment, screening, placement and promotion process.

II. POLICY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to inform interested persons of the policies and procedures of Santa Rosa County relating specifically to unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation, and complaints about such conduct. This policy complements the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Program and applies to all persons employed by the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners.

B. DISCRIMINATION

Consistent with its role as an Equal Employment Opportunity employer, the County prohibits employees, including management, from taking any action against others or making any employment decision based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Those found to violate this provision will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

C. HARASSMENT

As an Equal Employment Opportunity employer, the Company prohibits workplace harassment. The County expects all employees to help us accomplish this goal. Harassment can take many forms, and any form of harassment is unacceptable. Those found to violate this provision will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge. Examples of harassment prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Jokes, insults, threats, and other unwelcome actions about a person's race, color, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.
2. Unwelcome sexual advances, flirtations, sexually suggestive comments or conduct, requests for sexual favors, and other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
3. The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.
4. Comments or conduct suggesting that an employee's cooperation with – or refusal of – sexual harassment or other harassing conduct will have any effect on the employee's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, career development, or any other term or condition of employment.
5. Verbal or physical conduct that disrupts another employee's work performance or creates a fearful or hostile work environment (e.g., bullying).

D. RETALIATION

The County will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any employee who reports alleged discrimination or harassment prohibited by this policy, is a witness to the alleged discrimination or harassment, or who participates in an investigation of such conduct. Those found to violate this provision will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

E. COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

If any employee believes that he or she has experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment or retaliation prohibited by this policy, the employee must immediately submit a complaint to the Human Resources Director.

The County recognizes that there may be circumstances in which an employee making a complaint under this policy is uncomfortable submitting the complaint to the Human Resources

Director for some reason, such as the employee's belief that the Human Resources Director is involved in the alleged wrongful conduct, or the employee's belief that the Human Resources Director will not adequately respond to the complaint. For this reason, the County has adopted the following reporting procedure for submitting complaints of alleged discrimination, harassment or retaliation under this policy: if the employee is not comfortable submitting the complaint to the Human Resources Director, the employee must submit the complaint to the County Administrator. If the employee is not comfortable submitting the complaint to the County Administrator, the employee must submit the complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of County Commissioners.

Note that for complaints under this policy that allege wrongful conduct by a County Commissioner, the complaint must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Board of County Commissioners. If the complaint alleges wrongful conduct by the Chairperson of the Board of County Commissioners, the complaint must be submitted to the Vice-Chairperson.

To aid the County's investigation of reports of alleged discrimination, harassment and retaliation under this policy, reports of alleged violations of this policy must be made in writing, signed by the reporting employee, and should contain the following information:

1. The name, address and telephone number of the person filing the complaint.
2. The name(s) of the person(s) who allegedly committed the act of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, and the name(s) of the alleged victim(s).
3. A clear and concise statement of the facts, including pertinent dates, and any other documentation in support of the complaint.

Upon receipt of a complaint of alleged discrimination, harassment or retaliation under this policy, the County will promptly conduct an investigation. Each investigation will be handled with as much confidentiality as is feasible considering the need to adequately investigate the allegations. If, following the investigation, the County concludes that its policy against discrimination, harassment and retaliation has been violated, appropriate action will be taken (i.e., discipline, up to and including discharge) with respect to those who have violated the policy. Following the investigation, the County will follow up with the reporting employee regarding the investigation and discuss the investigation results.

Any questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the Human Resources Director. If an employee is not comfortable consulting with the Human Resources Director about a question, the employee should address his or her question to the County Administrator.

F. RECORDS OF INVESTIGATION AND DISPOSITION

No information regarding the filing or investigation of a complaint under the Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation will be placed in the personnel file of the subject of the complaint until a decision is made by the County that discipline is warranted. Only substantiated findings will be placed in the file. The subject of the complaint will be afforded the opportunity to place a rebuttal of the findings in his or her personnel file or any other records

retained by the County regarding the investigation and disposition of the complaint.

III. PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Santa Rosa County will review its Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation on a periodic basis and as required by applicable law. This review will include an update of the statistical data gathered for purposes of the Equal Employment Program. The purpose of the County's periodic review process will be to promote the County's continual commitment to equal employment opportunity. Any deficiencies or necessary corrections, determined during review, will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for their approval and vote on changes to this document.

The provisions in this Equal Employment Opportunity Program and Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation shall not be construed as creating or granting any rights, expectation of rights, or other property interest for any applicant, potential applicant or employee.