



# Taylor County

## Board of County Commissioners'

### Policy Manual

Policy #:	Title:	Effective Date:
4.01.02	Equal Employment Opportunity Plan	05/19/2013

#### PURPOSE

This plan is intended to reinforce the merit principle in public employment. It should not be interpreted as granting "preferential treatment" to specialized population groups, nor to hiring under-qualified candidates for employment. It is intended to provide equal opportunity to all who seek employment and promotions within the County and to provide diversity in the County's workforce. This program is a working tool which promotes the use of purely job-related employment practices and prohibits all non-job related barriers to employment.

The purpose of the County's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan is:

1. To convey the on-going commitment of Taylor County to equal opportunity for all individuals. This plan is intended to establish fair and equal opportunity for all persons to compete for available jobs, regardless of their race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, military status, genetic information, or other legally protected status. The on-going emphasis on equal opportunity in employment recognizes that projected demographics reflect the changing character of Taylor County with a growing representation of women and minority groups in the population and labor market. As a public entity, it is the County's duty and responsibility to meet the needs of constituents by anticipating and addressing these changes and making efforts to ensure adequate representation of women and minority groups in the County's workforce.
2. To establish measurable standards by which the results of the Plan may be monitored.
3. To provide a plan that aids in meeting the goal of equal opportunity in all employment practices.

All employees of Taylor County are reminded that the equal employment opportunity concept is an essential and meaningful part of all employment practices. Every employee is responsible for supporting these concepts and practices and maintaining a work environment conducive to achieving the goals included in this Plan. Obstruction of the intent or process of equal opportunity employment will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## REFERENCE

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The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. It is also illegal to discriminate against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

## POLICY

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The Board of County Commissioner's Equal Opportunity Plan will be posted on the bulletin board in the County Annex Mailroom. Copies of the Plan are available upon request through the Human Resources Department.

The substance of the Plan is communicated to all new employees during new hire orientations. Additionally, the County's equal employment opportunity practices are referenced in the Personnel Section of the Administrative Code. The practices and Plan will be reviewed periodically at Department Director meetings. The Board of County Commissioners will continue to include the clause "An Equal Employment Opportunity Employer" on all job advertisements. Posters, if required by the EEOC, relative to Equal Employment Opportunity, will be displayed in the County Annex Mailroom.

A copy of the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan will be provided to Department and Division Directors upon hire and upon update to the Plan.

## GOALS

The goal of the Taylor County Board of County Commissioners is that all employees and applicants receive equal and equitable consideration in hiring, promotion and all employment practices.

The objective of this Plan is to achieve protected group representation in the County's workforce such that it reflects the recruitment population of Taylor County. The Human Resources Department will comply with all EEOC reporting requirements, compiling reports accordingly and tracking protected group representation in the County's workforce.

The County encourages managers to use equal opportunity principles when making decisions on hiring, promoting, transferring and training. EEO tracking may be used to encourage correction within departments with underutilization as hiring opportunities present themselves.

A continuing activity within the County is the on-going review of employment practices to ensure policies, practices and terms and conditions of employment do not impede the achievements of the Plan's objectives. This section summarizes the methods used in implementation of the Plan and highlights those actions or projects undertaken to enhance the effectiveness of the Plan.

## **RECRUITMENT**

The Human Resources Department will strive to recruit the maximum number of qualified applicants and ensure that protected class applicants are well represented. The Taylor County Board of County Commissioners will identify the organization as an equal opportunity employer to all recruitment sources and continue to use the following methods to increase the number of applicants received for job openings:

1. All external job postings will be listed on the County's website and be open for all Interested applicants.
2. All external job postings will indicate the County's status as an Equal Opportunity Employer.
3. When a need for specialized professional or technical recruitment arises, those agencies likely to have access to the most qualified applicants will be contacted.
4. Continue to seek qualified referrals from Taylor County.
5. Recruit and advertise through Workforce Florida website.

## **EXAMINATION, SELECTION, HIRING AND CLASSIFICATION**

The County's employment examination, selection and hiring practices will continue to be evaluated to determine that the best qualified applicants for a position are identified, regardless of sex, race, color, age, religion, national origin, citizenship, physical or mental disability, military status, or genetic information. Any practice which is determined to have a discriminatory effect will be eliminated.

The Human Resources Department will periodically review minimum requirements for positions in conjunction with subject matter experts to ensure there are no barriers to equal employment opportunity.

All standards used in the selection process must be valid and realistically relevant to job and professional requirements.

Goals and current utilization may be reviewed with department staff when the Human Resources Department receives a request to fill a vacancy. Additionally, the County, on an on-going basis, continues to:

1. Review and revise job descriptions when appropriate to ensure reflection of current work behaviors and requirements.
2. Review and revise job requirements when appropriate to ensure accuracy of minimum job qualifications for job performance.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The County recognizes that through appropriate training programs, employees are given the opportunity to increase their effectiveness in their current position and develop skills necessary to successfully compete for promotional advancement. All County sponsored or funded training will be made available to employees without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, military status, or genetics. The County will survey employee training needs periodically, as a basis for establishing

training priorities and programs. Continuing education is an effective means of ensuring employees are provided the opportunity for upward mobility.

Training is used to educate managers regarding their responsibility in the area of Equal Employment Opportunity. Basic training on the important of the County's EEO policy is provided at the orientation for all new employees. Training shall be provided as needed and may be arranged by Human Resources. Additional training efforts may include: providing EEO information in every new employee orientation session; continuing to schedule EEO presentations at management meetings; formulating EEO intervention strategies as appropriate; and continuing to brief interviewing managers and supervisors on valid non-discriminatory interviewing techniques.

## **PROMOTION AND UPWARD MOBILITY**

When a promotional position is identified, the County will analyze the in-house employee pool for those employees who may be potential candidates from within our workforce. EEO objectives shall be considered as one factor in filling such openings. If it is determined that an insufficient number of qualified candidates exists within the County's employee population, the position will be posted externally on the County's website. All procedures relative to promotional opportunities will adhere to those standards established for open recruitment.

For all positions, established minimum education and experience standards exist. All standards used in the promotion of employees will be realistically related to the position. All promotion requirements will be applied in a non-discriminatory manner. All transfers and promotions will be based on skill, knowledge, abilities and the recommendations of the supervisor and hiring manager in accordance with established transfer and promotion policies.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS**

The County's existing disciplinary practices, policies and procedures are based exclusively on actions justifying disciplinary measures; all disciplinary actions are conducted free of discrimination. The Human Resources Director will be advised of all disciplinary actions where any employee alleges, by way of defense, that the disciplinary action proposed is due to the employee's inclusion in a protected class.

## **EMPLOYEE SEPARATION: VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY**

The Human Resources Director will closely examine every instance of involuntary separation to determine if any discrimination, overt or concealed, is a factor in the decision to terminate. The Human Resources Director will conduct reviews and analyses of all employee separations to identify adverse impact of protected classes and recommend corrective action if such impact exists. The Human Resources Department will maintain records of employee separations, including documentation of the reason for separation, to identify any adverse impact.

Exit interviews will normally be offered for full-time separating employees in order to determine the reason for an employee's separation. In these interviews, the individual will be given the opportunity to confidentially discuss elements of his/her job and reasons for separation, recognizing that any records kept of the discussion become public records under appropriate State record laws.

## **DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE**

Any individual who believes he/she has been the subject of discrimination should report the alleged act to the appropriate authority, as outlined in the complaint process below. Any employee filing a complaint will be entitled to the protection provided under State and Federal law regarding their employment. A formal complaint process is provided below and may be used by any individual in lieu of the informal process if he/she desires.

Any individual who feels that he or she is being harassed or discriminated against must immediately report the offensive conduct to his or her direct supervisor. However, if the employee's direct supervisor is in any way involved in the alleged inappropriate behavior or is unavailable, the employee should report the conduct directly to the Human Resources Director. Finally, if the employee's direct supervisor and the Human Resources Director are involved in the alleged inappropriate conduct or are unavailable, the employee should immediately contact the County Administrator.

The initial formal complaint may be oral or written. However, a written and signed statement of the complaint must be submitted to one of the two officials named above by the complaining employee in order to initiate a formal investigation into the matter.

Copies of the signed statement shall be made available to the Department Director and the Human Resources Director. In the case of an oral report, the Human Resources Director or designee may gather the pertinent information concerning the allegation and prepare a written summary for the approval and signature of the complaint.

Within seven (7) working days of receipt of the signed, written complaint the individual conducting the investigation shall proceed as follows:

1. The investigator shall contact the person(s) who allegedly engaged in discrimination and inform him/her the basis of the complaint and give the individual an opportunity to respond. With direction from the Human Resources Director, the investigating individual shall have the ability to conduct an independent investigation prior to contacting the individual who allegedly engaged in discrimination.
2. The person who allegedly engaged in discrimination shall have seven (7) working days to respond to the complaint orally, in writing or both. The response shall be directed to the complaint investigator. In the case of a verbal response, the investigator may prepare a written statement for the approval and signature of the person who allegedly engaged in discrimination.
3. Upon receipt of the response, the investigator will again review, research and investigate as necessary to determine whether discrimination has occurred. The investigation may be expanded to include interviews, witnesses and supervisors as appropriate. The investigation shall be completed as soon as reasonably possible following receipt of the response.
4. Within seven (7) days of completion of the investigation, the Department Director and Human Resources Director shall meet to review the findings and consider the appropriate action to be taken. Actions may include discipline up to and including termination. The Human Resources Director represents the final level of investigation and complaint resolution.

## RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

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The Taylor County Board of County Commissioners provides policy direction by the adoption of an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. The County Administrator shall be responsible for the overall development, monitoring and implementation of the Plan.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for developing and maintaining a personnel system fostering equal employment opportunity. The Human Resources Department manages recruitment and selection efforts, interacts with all other departments in matters of employment policies, and monitors the County's on-going Equal Employment Opportunity efforts.

The Human Resources Director is designated as the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer and, is responsible for all aspects of this Plan, including planning, coordinating, implementing, monitoring, updating and reporting. On an on-going basis, the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer will identify problem areas and establish corrective measures which Department Directors will be expected to implement. Furthermore, the Human Resources Director is responsible for making this Plan available to all employees, informing management of current developments in the equal opportunity area, and arranging any necessary training.

Management personnel and first line supervisors are responsible for giving the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan full support through leadership and personal example. Managers and supervisors are also responsible for making employment decisions that are consistent with the objectives of the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. Line supervisors are made accountable by informing their workforce of current and projected developments in equal employment opportunity. Obstruction of the intent or process of equal opportunity employment may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The ultimate responsibility for the success of the program lies with all the employees of the Board of County Commissioners. This Plan commits all managers, supervisors and employees to follow the intent of Equal Employment Opportunity and to support its objectives.

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**Sunset Date:**