



# Harris County, Texas



## Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan

## **Section 1 – Purpose**

Harris County (the County) is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees. Accordingly, the County assesses applicants and employees on individual merit and qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. The only exceptions are based on bona fide occupational qualifications.

The purpose of this Plan is to identify the County's commitment and delineate certain practices that will confirm that commitment and to comply with requirements such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title 28 C.F.R. subpart E, § 42.301 et. seq. (for law enforcement grants) and Title 41 C.F.R. § 60-2.24 (for HUD grant recipients).

This Plan supersedes any previous Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plans. This Plan applies to every employee of the County and the Harris County Flood Control District unless an elected or appointed official promulgates a different written policy on the subject applicable only to the official's employees.

## **Section 2 – Prohibitions**

Employees must not, in their official capacity, discriminate in employment practices against any person because of the race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. "Employment practices" as used in this Plan means all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, recruiting, advertising, screening, classification, selection, appointment, hiring, assignment, transfer, promotion, demotion, discipline, layoff, termination, leave practices, rates of pay, fringe benefits, or other forms of pay or credit for services rendered, and access to and use of county facilities. In addition, discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class for programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance is also prohibited.

Any intentional or unintentional conduct of discrimination that is based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Retaliation against persons alleging discrimination and persons involved in the act or investigation process is also prohibited. Except as required by law, all employment is "at-will" and employees have no job tenure in County employment; accordingly, the County may terminate them at any time.

## **Section 3 – Evaluation by the Harris County Human Resources & Risk Management Department**

*The Harris County Office of Human Resources & Risk Management Department evaluates employment opportunities under this Plan and in so doing:*

1. Identifies and analyzes any problem areas inherent in the utilization or participation of all qualified persons in employment phases (recruitment, selection, and promotion), since identification and analysis are necessary prerequisites to the successful development and implementation of this Plan.
2. Analyzes and identifies problem areas separately for recruitment, selection, and promotion of minorities and women. All racial or ethnic data collected to perform evaluations under this Plan is cross-classified by sex.
3. Analyzes present representation of minority persons, including women, in the eight job categories identified by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
4. Analyzes recruitment and employment selection procedures, such as job descriptions, application forms, recruitment methods and sources, interview procedures, test administration and test validity, education requirements, referral procedures, and final selection methods to ensure that equal opportunity is being afforded in all job categories.
5. Analyzes seniority practices, promotion procedures, lateral and vertical transfer procedures, and formal and informal training programs to ensure that equal opportunity is being afforded to all qualified individuals.
6. Maintains a job classification record clearly indicating each job classification or assignment and the number of employees within each respective job category by race, sex, and national origin (for example, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaskan Native); and maintains a record of job descriptions (describing essential job functions or duties) and the rate of pay for each classification. Where the rate of pay is based on length of time in the job or other factors (including abilities), notes the maximum rate of pay for each.
7. Maintains statistical records of the number of individuals by race/color, sex and national origin (if available) applying for employment through the Human Resources & Risk Management Department within the preceding fiscal year and the number by race, sex, and national origin (if available) of the applicants who were offered employment and those who were actually hired.
8. Obtains statistical data from the Department of Justice, the Texas Workforce Commission, or other reliable entity regarding the characteristics of the pertinent labor markets within this statistical area, including total population, total workforce, and existing unemployment by race/color, sex, and national origin.
9. Conducts an ongoing evaluation program to ascertain whether recruitment, selection, or promotional policies cause a disparate impact on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class.

## Section 4 – Enforcement

*In addition to other duties, the Director of the Human Resources & Risk Management Department (the "Director") administers and enforces this Plan by:*

1. Disseminating this Plan to all Department Heads making it available to all applicants and the general public.
2. Ensuring that this Plan is available on the intranet web page to all employees for viewing and printing.
3. Including the EEO statement and policy in the Harris County and Flood Control District, Personnel Policies & Procedures employee handbook.
4. Completing necessary evaluations and making recommendations to the Harris County Commissioners Court on any changes that are needed in the Harris County and Flood Control District, Personnel Policies & Procedures. Where changes are recommended, the Director shall set forth in written detail the specific steps that should be taken to achieve equal employment opportunity. As an example, if through evaluation, it is determined that certain selection practices and procedures (i.e. minimum educational levels) are not validly related to the performance of the essential functions of a specific job or position and that said practices may cause a disparate impact on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class, then the Director recommends that the practice or procedure be changed.
5. Presenting the EEO statement and policy as part of the Harris County Office of Human Resources and Risk Management New Hire Orientation program.
6. Coordinating the presentation of grievances. People who believe they have been adversely affected by any act or practice prohibited by this Plan may file a grievance. Employees must file a grievance in accordance with the Harris County and Flood Control District, Personnel Policies & Procedures. Other persons may seek to redress their grievances by filing a grievance directly with the Commissioners Court. In the latter case, the person or his counsel may appear before the Commissioners Court and make an oral or written presentation of his/her grievance in open court. The Court may, in its discretion, grant any and all relief allowed by law.
7. Ensuring that this Plan is available on the internet to all applicants, persons of interest, vendors, and the general public for viewing and printing.
8. Including the EEO statement and policy on all job boards, written job announcements, applications and postings for open job opportunities.
9. Receiving notice from County departments of new or available employment opportunities.
10. Instituting a program for attracting minorities through the dissemination of job postings, use of advertising media patronized by minorities, use of minority group contacts and community relations programs. However, nothing in this Plan is operated in a manner that excludes any person or group from equal employment opportunity and the program tries at all times to disseminate information to all persons or groups in the community - minorities, majorities, men and women alike.
11. Ensuring that this Plan is readily available to any interested party via hard copy in the Harris County Human Resources & Risk Management Department.