

JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY POLICY

EFFECTIVE JUNE 10, 2014
(Updated September 30, 2014)

1. General Statement of Policy

Jefferson County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The County prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against any employee for making a good faith claim or report of discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. This policy applies to recruiting, hiring, promotions, compensation, benefits, training, facilities, assignments, discipline, working conditions, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

2. Workplace Harassment is Prohibited

The County prohibits harassment of its employees on the basis of any personal characteristic outlined above. The County prohibits all forms of harassment of employees, whether committed by supervisors, co-employees, customers, suppliers, members of the public, or other persons present in the workplace.

Prohibited harassment may be spoken, written, or physical. While it is not possible to specify every possible way in which this policy against harassment might be violated, some examples of prohibited behavior include: improper comments perpetuating racial or gender stereotypes; explicit sexual propositions; sexual

innuendo; racially or sexually oriented “kidding” or “teasing;” “practical jokes;” jokes about gender-specific traits or stereotypes; foul, obscene, or vulgar language or gestures; displays of foul, obscene or sexually suggestive printed or visual material; unwelcome advances of a romantic or sexual nature; explicit or implicit promises of favorable employment decisions in exchange for sexual favors; threats of negative employment decisions; unwelcome physical contact such as patting, pinching or brushing against another’s body; display of patently offensive graphic material or physical objects; or abusive words or conduct of any kind, whether or not of a sexual nature, that is undertaken because of the target person’s race or sex. Similar conduct creating a hostile work environment on the basis of religion, national origin, age, disability, or other prohibited basis is also strictly prohibited.

The County maintains a “zero tolerance” policy against workplace harassment. The County prohibits all degrees of harassment, including conduct that may not be severe, pervasive, or repetitive enough to constitute a violation of applicable laws. “I was only joking or kidding” will not be accepted as an excuse.

This policy applies to County supervisors and managers as well as employees. No County supervisor, manager, or elected official has any authority to require employees to submit to unwelcome sexual advances or unwelcome sexual conduct or to tolerate a hostile work environment. Conditioning employment, promotions, raises, or any other terms and conditions of employment on sexual activities or favors

is strictly forbidden. If any manager or supervisor should ever make such an attempt, you should report it immediately as outlined below.

3. Retaliation is Prohibited

The County prohibits retaliation against any employee who, in good faith, files any complaint of any violation of this policy, opposes conduct that violates this policy, or who participates in the investigation truthfully and in good faith. This policy against retaliation prohibits clearly retaliatory employment actions such as termination, demotion, and suspension, as well as more subtle forms of retaliation, such as harassing or ostracizing employees, unfairly denying training opportunities, or unfairly assigning undesirable job duties.

4. How to Report Violations of this Policy

Any employee who suspects that a violation of this policy has occurred, or who in any way feels uncomfortable with the actions of County supervisors, employees, officials, or outsiders, is encouraged to inform the Affirmative Action Officer immediately. Other employees not themselves directly experiencing such conduct are also encouraged to report any suspected violations of this policy to the Affirmative Action Officer. Any employee working in a supervisory capacity is required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy to the Affirmative Action Officer. The Affirmative Action Officer (Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer) is:

Dr. Lisa Burroughs
716 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd. North
Suite A665
Birmingham, AL 35203
Hours: Monday – Friday
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

5. The Affirmative Action Officer Will Investigate Violations of this Policy

The Affirmative Action Officer will conduct a thorough, independent, and fair investigation of all claimed violations of this policy (including allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation) and will recommend appropriate corrective measures as warranted by the outcome of the investigation. All employees are required to cooperate fully and truthfully in such investigation. Any employee who does not cooperate in the Affirmative Action Officer's investigation may be subject to discipline, including termination of employment, pursuant to Merit System Rule 12.2(n).

6. Consequences for Violating this Policy

Violation of this Policy, including its no-harassment and no-retaliation provisions, may lead to disciplinary action up to and including discharge, as appropriate in the circumstances.