

# CITY OF ASHLAND



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## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

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Adopted by the City Council: January 18, 2005  
Effective: January 18, 2005  
Resolution No. **2005-06**



## INTRODUCTION

The City of Ashland fully supports the concepts and practices of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity as a means to enhance diversity and breakdown barriers in the workplace. We strive to maintain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the population we serve. The City is committed to attaining a work environment that provides equal opportunity to all applicants and employees. All terms, conditions, benefits, and privileges of employment with the city apply to all employees regardless of ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, marital status or familial status.

This Affirmative Action Plan has been designed with the intent of setting reasonably attainable goals and action steps to guide the city in its employment practices. It is the intent of this policy to take positive steps toward recruiting, retaining and advancing women, minorities and persons with disabilities into positions at all levels of Ashland City government. We seek an environment characterized by respect for each individual, where cultural and ethnic diversity are blended by teamwork into an effective workforce.

Our approach to Affirmative Action is consistent with the City's overall philosophy of creating a work environment and community that is inclusive, respectful and free from harassment. We look forward to utilizing this policy to further diversify our workforce and promote Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity principles throughout the organization.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Martha Bennett, City Administrator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **POLICY GUIDELINES**

- Our first priority is to serve the Citizens of Ashland with high-quality services that meet their needs.
- We recognize and honor diversity of viewpoints, cultures, and life experiences. Equal opportunity is adopted to ensure the rights and dignity of each person.
- We promote a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. All persons shall enjoy the benefits of decisions which are free of harassment or discrimination on the grounds of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, health condition, marital status, gender, sexual orientation or age.
- All Personnel actions including recruitment, selection, training, compensation, corrective counseling, promotions, transfers, recreation, layoffs or terminations shall be based upon individual initiative, interests, ability and performance results.
- When qualified applicants or employees with disabilities request reasonable accommodation to participate or perform essential job functions, the City of Ashland will make reasonable accommodation to whatever extent possible without causing an undue hardship on city operations.
- We will work through our elected and appointed staff to educate and promote diversity throughout our organization and the community.



## **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The City of Ashland is an equal employment opportunity employer and is committed to enhancing our work environment by ensuring a proactive approach to diversity development and Affirmative Action in the workplace through focused recruitment and outreach efforts.

It is the policy of the City of Ashland that all employees, elected officials and volunteers have the right to work in an environment where they are treated with respect and dignity and one which is free from harassment, discrimination and bias. All employment actions will be made without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, disability (perceived or known), national origin, or any other basis prohibited by law.

The Human Resource Director has been designated as the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Officer (EEO/AA Officer) for the City and will be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY**

The City will utilize available community labor and population statistics to identify the labor composition in the Rogue Valley and the City of Ashland. An analysis will be conducted on the City's workforce composition compared to the community we serve on an annual basis. The Human Resource Department will track and report annually on recruitment outreach efforts and the composition of our applicant pool. Occupations in which our workforce is not reflective of the level of diversity in the community will be identified. Specific efforts will be taken to achieve a greater representation of minorities in those occupational areas identified as underutilized.

Through focused recruitment efforts, we will proactively recruit qualified minority candidates to fill job vacancies at all levels in the workforce, with greatest emphasis on those identified as underutilized. Reports of this analysis and objectives for ensuring a broader diversity in our workforce will be made to the City Council on an annual basis.



## DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

### A. INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

#### **The City Administrator will:**

Provide positive leadership and direction that will ensure that management and supervisory personnel are held accountable for compliance and implementation of this policy.

#### **The Human Resource Director (EEO/AA Officer) will:**

- Inform all new and current employees of the City's commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and Affirmative Action by distributing a copy of this policy. Subsequent updates to this policy will be distributed to all employees in written form. An electronic version of this policy will be made available on the City's computer network.
- Make training opportunities available that will help employees at all levels of the organization advance their skills.
- Routinely review job descriptions to ensure that they are directly related to actual job content and are set at the minimum level needed for entrance into the job.
- Continually analyze recruitment and testing materials to minimize the potential for disparate impact to minority or disabled job applicants. Wherever feasible, jobs should be restructured to provide easier access by female and minority candidates.
- Ensure that required equal employment opportunity posters are displayed prominently on employee bulletin boards.
- Inform employees of the existence of a grievance process set forth under this policy for handling complaints, questions or concerns about the city's employment practices and/or the EEO/AAP. Ensure that all complaints are investigated and resolved promptly and that retaliation in any form is not tolerated.



**Managers and Supervisors will:**

- Continually publicize the existence of this Equal Opportunity Policy and Affirmative Action Plan within their work areas by discussing routinely at staff meetings and posting on employee bulletin boards.
- Provide a workplace free of harassment and discrimination for all employees, contractors, elected officials and members of the public.
- Ensure that all personnel actions in their area of managerial control are based on interest, ability and performance criteria and free from bias and discrimination.

**Employees will:**

- Treat coworkers, elected officials and members of the public with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Avail themselves of opportunities to learn and understand how diversity can have a positive impact on the work environment.
- Ensure that their conduct in the workplace, and that of their coworkers is not discriminatory or harassing.

**B. EXTERNAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The City will ensure that our policy of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action is communicated to applicants, employees, and those with whom we conduct business in the following ways:

All published employment advertisements and job announcements will contain a statement affirming the city's commitment to attracting and retaining diversity among our workforce.

The City's formal employment application form will contain the following statement: "The City of Ashland is an equal opportunity employer and shall not discriminate against an employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin or mental or physical disability unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification."

Notice of all regular job openings shall be sent to appropriate sources informing them of the City's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Affirmative Action Program.



## **PERSONNEL PRACTICES**

### **Recruitment**

For each vacant position, the Human Resource Director will work with the position supervisor to perform a job analysis and determine the appropriate job market for filling the vacancy. The job description will be reviewed for accuracy and ways in which the job may be restructured to achieve the city's goal of EEO/AA.

When the job can easily be filled in the local job market, recruitment efforts will be made primarily in the Rogue Valley. If the position has been identified as one that has a history of underutilization of female and minority employees, efforts will be made to tailor local marketing efforts to attain a more diverse applicant pool.

For more specialized professional or executive positions that have a broader job market than the Rogue Valley, recruitment trips outside the local area may be made to solicit applications from minorities and women. A minimum of one recruitment resource with a targeted minority audience will be utilized when recruiting for positions in this category. If utilization studies show a greater need for diversification, more resources will be utilized to ensure a broader pool of applicants.

When using a professional recruitment firm to aid in filling a job vacancy, the recruiter will be informed of the city's policy and will be asked to ensure their recruitment efforts provide a diverse candidate pool for participation in the selection process.

Efforts to hire minority and women employees for temporary positions may be made to encourage their interest in full-time employment opportunities with the City.

### **Job Analysis and Restructuring**

Class specifications shall be periodically reviewed to assure they are related to job content and are set at the minimum level needed for entrance into the job. Where feasible, jobs will be restructured to provide easier access by minorities and women.

### **Selection Process**

Depending upon the position, the city may wish to administer tests or screening processes that test a candidate's skills before making a hiring decision. Where appropriate, tests other than paper and pencil varieties may be used. Experimentation with performance testing may be undertaken to ensure our process is fair and well designed. When utilized in the screening and selection process, written tests shall be used as only one of the factors in the selection decision.



Retesting may be permitted as soon as candidates can show reasonable effort to prepare themselves for such a retest. Open competitive exams shall be scheduled as often as appropriate.

The City's employment application forms and interview questions will be regularly reviewed to ensure all questions not related to job performance or which operate to the detriment of minorities and women are eliminated.

Other selection criteria such as physical or education requirements shall be periodically reviewed, and revised to ensure job relatedness. Specifically this includes, but is not limited to, educational degrees, years of work experience, etc.

All participants on the interview panel shall be carefully selected and instructed as to the city's policy for equal opportunity and affirmative action. Where feasible, minority or women should be utilized on the interview panel to ensure a broad perspective is used when considering applicants for hire.

#### **Promotion, Job Assignment and Discipline**

Selection for promotion, job assignment and imposition of discipline shall conform to the practices outlined in this policy.

Where feasible, training shall be set up to enhance upward mobility of minorities and women. No applicant shall be denied a promotion or job assignment on the basis of any prohibited criteria.

Exit interview questionnaires will be mailed to all employees who voluntarily resign from city employment to help us determine if any factors under our control are responsible for their leaving. Questions will be designed to help us improve our operations and elicit feedback regarding our work environment.

All City employees are responsible for maintaining a work environment that is free of harassment that is based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex or sexual orientation. For the purpose of this plan, harassment shall mean unaccepted and/or unwelcome conduct that (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, and (2) is sufficiently pervasive so as to alter the conditions of employment. All managers and supervisory staff are required to take immediate and appropriate corrective action, including but not limited to: affirmatively raising the subject, expressing strong disapproval, and disciplinary action, if appropriate, etc., when informed or otherwise aware of this prohibited misconduct. In addition, managers and supervisors are responsible for following up on the action taken to assure the harassment has been eliminated and no retaliatory conduct has occurred as a result of a complaint being raised.



### **Training**

Whenever the City sponsors any training activity, special attention and consideration shall be given to securing the participation of minorities and women. To the extent feasible, work schedules of minorities and women employees shall be adjusted so as to permit their participation in training programs.

Where jobs can be learned in a short period of time, formal on-the-job training programs may be instituted to facilitate the movement of women and minority candidates with minimum qualifications into these positions. Where formal training is necessary to qualify an individual for a job, in-house training programs may be established.

Supervisory training programs shall be conducted to improve supervisory skills relative to working with women and minority employees. Individual counseling of supervisors by the EEO/AAP Officer shall occur as necessary, particularly for those supervisors responsible for on-the-job training of minorities and women.

Where lack of resources restrict training opportunities that we can offer, we may seek the cooperation of other employers in requesting local educational institutions to set up training programs so as to increase the numbers of qualified women and minorities in the labor force.

### **Compensation**

Pay rates shall be reviewed and adjusted as appropriate, particularly in light of the results of a job analysis, compensation study, labor negotiation outcome and/or reclassification. All like job classifications will be paid the established salary range for the position without regard to the race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin or mental or physical disability of the occupant.

### **Grievance Procedures**

Employees shall be encouraged to informally seek the advice and counsel of the Human Resource Director (EEO/AA Officer) when they suspect they may have been treated in a discriminatory fashion.

The EEO/AA Officer shall accept, investigate and attempt to resolve complaints of discrimination from employees or applicants for employment. Employees who raise concerns or complaints about discrimination or harassment should do so without fear of retaliation by the City or co-workers. Retaliatory behavior of any kind will not be tolerated.

Employees covered by a negotiated labor contract containing a grievance procedure may use it in seeking relief from alleged discriminatory practices.



## **OBJECTIVES**

The EEO/AAP Officer shall conduct a workforce and labor market analysis once a year of City employees by position classification to assess current utilization patterns for women and minorities and labor market availability. The City's action steps to achieving its goal will change from year to year based upon areas of underutilization and those action steps will further be outlined in an annual report.

### **Reporting**

The EEO/AAP Officer will present a report yearly to the City Administrator to show the current status of the workforce as it compares to the previous year and labor market availability. This report will also be provided to the Ashland City Council annually. This report shall become the agenda for a meeting of executive management.

The EEO/AAP Officer shall prepare and submit the EEO-4 report to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as required.

### **Goal**

The goal of the City of Ashland is to employ qualified women and minorities in all job categories in proportion to their availability in the labor market.