

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

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Jonesboro, Arkansas

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Affirmative Action Plan is to reflect the City of Jonesboro's commitment to affirmatively increase equal employment opportunities throughout municipal government.

Congressional passage of the 1964 Omnibus Civil Rights Law signalled the nation's commitment to equal employment opportunities. The basic concept of equal opportunity has been modified and extended by subsequent legislation. The original approach of favoring "nondiscrimination" has matured through legislation to the current philosophy of affirmatively promoting equal employment opportunities and opportunities for participating in programs and activities funded in whole or in part by Federal funds.

This Affirmative Action Plan has been prepared as part of the City's Community Development Program which is being carried out with financial assistance under the provisions of Title I of the Housing and Community Act of 1974. This Plan is a companion document to the Section 3 Compliance Plan, dated May 30, 1975, and to its Addendum No. 1, the Affirmative Action Plan for Businesses. Regulations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development as published in the Federal Register on June 9, 1975, namely Sections 570.601 and 570.900, require that cities demonstrate their compliance with the requirements of Section 3 of the Housing Act of 1968 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 regarding equal opportunity in employment and participation in activities for which the City receives Federal financial assistance. Section 3 of the 1968 Housing Act intends to assure that to the greatest extent feasible opportunities for employment and training arising in connection with projects and activities receiving Federal financial assistance be given to lower-income persons within the City benefitted by the Community Development Program; and that to the greatest extent feasible contracts for work to be performed in connection with any projects receiving Federal financial assistance be awarded to business concerns which are located in or owned in substantial part by persons residing in the City being benefitted by the Community Development Program. As amplified by Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the earlier Civil Rights Act and Executive Order provisions regarding equal employment opportunities stipulate that the City affirmatively provide and maintain equal employment opportunities in the areas of employment, upgrading, demotions, transfers, recruitment, advertising, lay-offs or terminations, pay or other compensation, and selection for training. Thus, while a separate plan has been prepared as described above to describe the City's affirmative action policy regarding businesses and contractors, this Plan describes the City's program for affirmative action in equal employment opportunities for employees of the City. Both plans relate to Section 3 of the 1968 Housing Act, Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Finally, the City is required to submit with each year's Community Development Program Application an annual performance report describing progress in selected areas of the Community Development Program, including equal opportunity. A continuing use of this Affirmative Action Plan will be to provide the basis for measuring the City's annual performance in equal employment opportunities.

## II. THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY

### Policy

The City is committed to the concept and practice of equal opportunity employment. This commitment is and will continue to be supported by positive and aggressive practical policies and procedures designed to insure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for racial and ethnic minorities, the employment of disadvantaged, and the employment of women in both securing employment with the City and in promotional opportunities to all job levels.

It has been and will continue to be the policy of the City to provide equal opportunity to all applicants for employment; and to administer all personnel practices such as recruitment, hiring, promotions, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment in a manner which does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, or age (except where sex or age is a bonafide occupational qualification), marital status, or liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States. This policy is in accord with the laws of the United States, and reaffirms the City's continuing commitment to provide equal opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment with respect to selection, terms and conditions of employment, assignments, training, transfers, advancement, and compensation.

The basic affirmative action policy is designed to serve several general objectives, as follows:

- (1) To provide for equal employment opportunity for its citizenry in all matters falling within the purview of the governing body.
- (2) To employ minority persons in numbers related to the percentage of ethnic minority population residing in the City and being in the labor force as reflected in the most recent decennial census.
- (3) To develop and adopt plans and programs oriented toward bringing about equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in employment, project development, planning, public facilities and services, and housing.
- (4) To distribute this employment throughout all job classifications.
- (5) To make continuous planning and monitoring efforts to eliminate and prevent the occurrence of arbitrary discriminatory policies and practices relating to employment or access to promotion within the government of the City.

- (6) To provide educational and training assistance information and guidance for persons who seek entry into the City staff or for those presently on staff who seek upgrading.

### III. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

The affirmative action policy and programs and activities designed to serve the plan's objectives will be disseminated to employees of the City and prospective employees through a variety of channels. Dissemination will be communicated by the following activities:

1. Distribution of policy to all employees on an annual basis.
2. Discussion at management conferences, staff meetings, and employee training sessions.
3. Discussion at employee orientation meetings.
4. Incorporation of appropriate material in supervisory training courses.
5. Inclusion of policy and other related information in City publications and other City media regarding employment opportunities.
6. Notification of recruitment sources and recognized community action groups of Affirmative Action Plan and policies designed to implement the Plan.
7. Meetings to be held at least semi-annually with all department heads to discuss objectives and goals of equal opportunity in employment and advancement.
8. Description of the Plan and progress in meeting Plan's objectives to be incorporated in the City's Annual Performance Report prepared to accompany the Community Development Program Application for Federal financial assistance under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, which Annual Performance Report is to be made public at the time of its preparation and submission.
9. Department heads will be responsible for discussing the policy with all City employees.

#### IV. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING POLICY

The Mayor has the overall responsibility for insuring that the City's equal opportunity policy is carried out by all levels of City administration as described in this Affirmative Action Plan. The Mayor will review the Affirmative Action Plan periodically to insure its completeness and effectiveness.

The fixed responsibilities of the Mayor and as may be delegated to personnel and community development staff persons shall include generally the following:

- (1) Be responsible for administration of Affirmative Action Plan as it relates to employment, training, and promotion of minorities and women.
- (2) Establish, administer, and provide policy direction for the Affirmative Action Plan so that equal employment opportunities exist in each department in all classifications.
- (3) Formulate and disseminate directives to department heads to develop affirmative action goals and timetables, instructing department heads to make complete analyses of their work forces to determine areas which fall below desired program levels.
- (4) Analyze testing procedures and all other aspects of the recruitment and selection process to insure that artificial barriers to hiring ethnic minorities and women applicants or promoting minority or women employees are eliminated.
- (5) Recommend policy changes to the City Council and Mayor.
- (6) Establish goals and timetables for employing minorities and women at specified levels expressed in terms of percentage of group to total number of employees.
- (7) Assist the departments in identification of problem areas and assist in arriving at solutions to problems.
- (8) Conduct orientation sessions with supervisory personnel to emphasize that City administration considers the Affirmative Action Plan to be of major importance.
- (9) Provide counselling to employees on promotional opportunities and encourage minority and women employee participation in promotional examinations and applications.



(10) Administer grievance procedures.

(11) Design and implement audit and recording systems that will (a) ensure the effectiveness of the program, (b) indicate need for remedial action, and (c) determine the degree to which the City's goals and objectives have been attained.

In order to assist the Mayor and designated staff personnel in affirmatively advancing equal employment opportunities, the various department heads shall:

1. Review the qualifications of their employees to insure that minorities and women are given full opportunities for transfers and promotions.
2. Develop and implement training and promotional programs within their department.
3. Semi-annually audit selection and promotion patterns in order to remove any impediments in attainment of equal employment opportunity goals and objectives.

## V. ACTION-ORIENTED PROGRAMS

The following are areas in which definitive, results-oriented activities are to be initiated and sustained in light of this Affirmative Action Plan.

### A. Career Development and Upward Mobility

1. Unnecessarily narrow experience requirements which reduce competition for promotions and transfers both within and between departments of the City are to be eliminated.
2. Capable lower-level employees shall be assisted in planning for career development by offering them counseling and training necessary to qualify for promotions.
3. An inventory of the current skills and abilities of employees shall be maintained to aid in the identification of persons to be trained and promoted.
4. Promotion patterns shall be evaluated in order to broaden areas of consideration and the bases for selection.
5. Promotion requirements, such as supervisory evaluations, oral examinations and written tests, shall be evaluated for any discriminatory patterns.

### B. Recruitment

Recruitment efforts and activities of the City shall be supported by active, vigorous, and continuous efforts to broaden the base of support for the entire concept of equal employment opportunity.

1. Recruitment sources shall be developed through communications with leaders from minority groups and womens groups on a continuing basis.
2. Referrals shall be requested from governmental agencies and programs involving State employment services and special manpower development and training programs.
3. All job applicants shall be invited to file an application for employment. Employment applications will be promptly reviewed and will be either accepted, rejected, or held pending a vacancy, or further evidence of qualifications. Applicants will not be rejected because the position applied for has been filled. Every effort shall be made to determine if another position is available for which the applicant is qualified.

4. Applicants shall be informed promptly of decisions with regard to their applications. If it is felt that the applicant could take certain steps to qualify for employment, the applicant shall be so informed.
5. Applications from applicants, who are not hired immediately but meet necessary standards, shall be retained in accordance with regular practice. Applications from minority group applicants in this category shall be used as an affirmative action tool to increase the minority group applicant flow for later job openings. The use of these minority group applications does not imply the exclusion of consideration of other applicants.
6. The City shall encourage future job applicants by supplying feedback on successful employees to recruitment sources; and by encouraging minority group and women employees to refer friends.
7. The statement "an equal opportunity employer" shall be printed on all recruiting literature and advertising.

C. Selection, Appointment and Placement

1. Selection, appointment, and placement activities shall be carried out in a manner to further the objectives of the Affirmative Action Plan. In this regard, the City shall undertake the following:
  - (1) Applicants shall be fully informed about the nature of the selection process and their chances of gaining employment.
  - (2) The City shall properly validate all selection devices, including written tests, oral exams and ratings of training and experience.
  - (3) Careful job analysis shall be conducted to determine the knowledges, skills, and abilities and other qualifications and requirements around which selection devices will be objectively tailored.
  - (4) Performance standards for each job class shall be identified to assist in test validation.
  - (5) In the administration of testing procedures, the City shall review and adhere to the Federal guidelines on testing.
  - (6) Preferential treatment, quota systems toward arbitrary proportional representation, or reduction in job-related standards solely to increase minority or female employment will be avoided.

- (7) Procedures shall be developed to insure that new employees are properly placed and plans are organized for their career development.

D. Training

1. Training opportunities designed to develop skills needed to improve current performance, to qualify for higher-level positions, or to fill positions which manpower planning projections have identified as likely to be available in the future, shall continue to be provided to all employees on a nondiscriminatory basis.
2. The basis of selection for training or educational leave shall continue to be applied objectively and nondiscriminately.
3. Current and proposed training programs shall be examined to insure their relevance to both the City's present and projected staffing needs and the identified training needs of the employees.

E. Other Personnel Actions

1. Employee communication and participation shall be encouraged.
2. Employees shall be given opportunities to discuss individual problems informally and to obtain needed advice and counselling with confidentiality.
3. All policies and practices relating to employee benefits (including leave policies, retirement plans, insurance programs) shall be reviewed periodically to assure that they are equally applied.
4. Continuing analyses shall be made of the reasons given by supervisors for transfers - either voluntary or involuntary - to help assure that no discriminatory situations exist.
5. A program of conducting exit interviews with terminating employees shall be established to ascertain whether real or imagined discrimination was a factor in their termination.
6. In general, it is the continuing responsibility of all management and supervisory personnel to provide equal opportunity for all employees with regard to work assignments, training, transfers, advancements, and other conditions and privileges of employment. These responsibilities include at least the following:
  - (a) Assistance in the identification of areas in need of improvement and establishment of objectives and goals to implement Affirmative Action Plan.

- (b) Periodic review of hiring and promotion patterns to insure objectives are met.
- (c) Regular discussions with department heads, supervisors and employees to be certain that City policies are being followed.
- (d) Review of the qualifications of employees to insure minorities are given full opportunities for transfers and promotions.
- (e) Provision of guidance to employees to help them adjust to their work surroundings in order that they are able to fulfill their work potential.

## VI. COMPLIANCE WITH SEX DISCRIMINATION GUIDELINES

The following policies and concerns are included in this Plan pursuant to Title 29 of the Federal Regulations establishing sex discrimination guidelines.

1. Job selectivity on the basis of sex is not prohibited when institutional or custodial services can properly be performed only by a member of the same sex as the recipients of the services. However, an analysis of employment requirements for all jobs within the City shall be conducted to determine whether or not sex is a bonafide condition to employment. The Mayor shall make the final determination as to whether or not specific jobs shall be restricted to one sex or another.
2. With the exception of possible restricted jobs as detailed in paragraph 1 above, the City in listing newspaper or other media advertisements for employment will use readings of "male or female" and "male and female".
3. No distinction is to be made whatsoever with regard to sex as it relates to pay rates for males and females performing the same job. All individuals working in the same positions in the City are paid according to the pay range established for that position. Sex has no bearing.
4. No distinction is to be made between married and unmarried members of one sex that is not made between married and unmarried members of another sex with regard to marital status of City employees. If a married male employee is permitted to be hired and placed in a certain job, a married female employee shall be permitted to be hired and placed in the same or similar job. The same is true regards the equality between unmarried employees.
5. There are to be no exclusionary policies regarding women with young children.
6. The City's policy regarding female employees in child-bearing, who must take a maternity leave of absence, is that pregnancy in itself is not a disabling condition for any fixed period of time. The granting of sick leave benefits in pregnancy cases is subject only to the same conditions as all other forms of illness and disabilities.
7. There are no distinctions made with respect to age between males and females as age relates to hiring, promotion, demotion, terminations, or other personnel actions.
8. Physical facilities to support employee needs shall be equally available between females and males, although nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the City from maintaining or constructing separate living facilities or restroom facilities for the different sexes.

## VII. REPORTING

Reports shall be prepared annually to measure the effectiveness of the Affirmative Action Plan's policies for implementation. The Mayor shall have the responsibility for the overall content and completeness of the report.

Reports shall be prepared in a form suitable for inclusion in the City's annual performance report of the Community Development Program.

Records shall be maintained in the Community Development Program file as described in Section 570.907 of the HUD Regulations published in the Federal Register on June 9, 1975. As indicated therein, these records shall display the City's "affirmative action in equal employment opportunity, including but not limited to employment, upgrading, demotions, transfers, recruitment or recruitment advertising, layoffs or terminations, pay or other compensation, and selection for training.

Reports and records pertaining to the City's Affirmative Action Plan for Businesses under Section 3 of the Housing Act of 1968 likewise shall be maintained in the Community Development Program files.