

Advantages of Southeast AR, Inc. Affirmative Action Plan

Advantages, Inc. management staff, in response to Advantages, Inc. Policy number 201, has developed an Agency Affirmative Action Plan to ensure compliance with all Equal Employment Opportunity mandates. The Plan will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Cultural Competency and Plan:

It is the policy of Advantages, Inc. to recruit and provide equal employment opportunity to all its' employees and applicants for employment and to ensure that there will be no discrimination against any person because of citizenship, race, creed, color, marital status, disability, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, political affiliation or beliefs. This policy also extends to person's whose native language is not English. This policy extends to all areas of employment including, but not limited to, the following: recruitment, interviewing, selection and placement, working conditions, benefits, privileges of employment, compensation, training, advancement, transfer, demotion and termination.

Advantages, Inc. recognizes, embraces and seeks to provide services and employment opportunities to all cultures represented within our service delivery system. The Affirmative Action Program requires management to conduct a utilization analysis of employees and persons who are served and establish goals in areas identified for improvement. Advantages, Inc.'s employment workforce includes persons of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds that is representative of persons served in each of our programs and communities.

Programs, staff and consumers within Advantages sponsor events that embrace and provide awareness to staff, consumers and various stakeholders of the various cultural, language, and ethnic backgrounds and customs, represented with Advantages and our local communities.

Further, it is the policy of Advantages, Inc. to inform all sources that have contracts with Advantages, Inc. of our EEO policy and to require that all subcontracts and/or contracts through Advantages, Inc. agree to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by legislation in 1972, and other applicable federal laws governing EEO regulation and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to that title, and shall agree to comply with the Department of Labor's regulations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, so as to insure that during the performance of the contract there will be no discrimination against any person because of race, creed, color, marital status, disability, national origin, sex, age, political affiliation or beliefs.

Advantages, Inc. is committed to comply with all Federal, State, and local legislation, presidential executive orders and court decisions relating to EEO and will work with the appropriate parties and/or agencies within the community so as to cooperate in further development of community acceptance

and adoption of non-discrimination practices to insure that minorities and women are afforded full employment opportunities.

Affirmative Action Program

Executive Order 11246 requires Advantages, Inc. to develop and maintain an affirmative action program. The Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contracts Compliance Programs, regularly monitors the Agency's monitoring and evaluation of their Affirmative Action Program. The Assistant Director of Finance & Human Resources shall act as the Affirmative Action Compliance Officer and shall be accountable to the Executive Director for coordination and implementation of the EEO and Affirmative Action Program policies.

Affirmative Action Officer:

The Affirmative Action Officer will coordinate, monitor, and review all Grievances filed or received within the organization, related to a violation of the Affirmative Action Policy, and will advise and assist key personnel and staff to officially serve as a focal point for complaints and to submit reports as needed.

The Agency Affirmative Action Officer will keep a record of all grievances filed and appropriate documentation will be kept on each grievance. Grievance Procedures are found in the employee, parent and consumer handbooks.

The Affirmative Action Officer will coordinate investigations with the Corporate Compliance Officer and will present a report of all grievances and outcomes to the management team. The Team will assist in tracking trends and will develop an Agency plan of correction, as needed.

Communication and Dissemination of Affirmative Action Plan:

Internal and external communication of the Advantages, Inc. EEO policy will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Notice of the policy will be placed in plain sight in the office or at work sites for the benefit of interested parties.
2. Special meetings will be arranged and conducted as needed with the organization's staff and key personnel in order to explain the intent of the EEO policy and responsibility of the individual.
3. Advertisements to fill vacancies shall carry the phrase "Equal Opportunity Employer".
4. Advantages will announce and publicize the EEO policy through dissemination of information to local media, as appropriate, and copies of the EEO policy of providing full and equal opportunity will be made available to interested parties and/or agencies on request.

5. Will include EEO statement on all advertisements for bids.
6. All required employment posters outlining rights will be displayed in a prominent place at all service locations (Discovery Skills Center, Discovery Children's Center Monticello, Crossett, Star City and the administration office).

Recruitment:

Recruitment procedures will be reviewed and monitored to insure that no discriminatory practices exist. The following recruitment methods will be utilized to reach both male and female minority groups and in seeking qualified individuals to fill job openings:

1. Current staff will be encouraged to seek out and refer qualified applicants.
2. Recruitment from existing staff for positions that constitute upgrading for staff will be conducted to ensure that existing staff will be considered for higher positions for which they may be qualified.

Selection, Appointment, and Placement:

Selection and appointment of employees will be made on the basis of merit. Educational and job related experience requirements are to be established, and all candidates will meet these before appointment to a position. Applications for vacant positions will be received and the candidates will be ranked according to their qualifications. Open competition, whenever practical, will exist for all appointments. However, to facilitate the career employment of individuals with disabilities, completion may be limited to such persons. If open or limited competition is not practical, non-competitive appointments may be made.

Cultural Training:

Upon orientation, all employees will receive training on cultural competency in accordance with Advantages' Affirmative Action Program, federal regulations, Developmental Disabilities Services standards, Office of Long-Term Care guidelines and CARF accreditation standards. An annual review will be conducted each year for all Advantages employees.

Monitoring and Evaluations:

The Asst. Director of Finance & Human Resources, or designee, has been delegated the authority and responsibility for review and analysis of the Affirmative Action Policy and Plan. A review of employment practices and the Affirmative Action Plan will be conducted at least annually and the plan will be revised to adjust to equitably, economic and social changes with particular emphasis being placed on the status of minorities, women, the disabled, and older workers, establishing new objectives and timetables for the following year.

The review and analysis of the program plan shall include:

1. Developing and implementing audit and reporting systems designed to:
 - a. Continually measure the effectiveness of the plan;
 - b. Identify deficiencies and needs for remedial action;
 - c. Determine the degree to which goals and objectives have been reached.
2. Human Resource personnel will prepare a quarterly employment report to be presented to the Board. The report will include information regarding race, sex and ethnicity of new-hires, terminated employees, and voluntary resignations. The reason for termination or resignations will be monitored.
3. Making a periodic review of the plan and submitting recommendations for expansion and improvement of the plan where applicable.
4. Serving as liaison between the Agency, advocacy groups and community action groups.
5. Assisting in the identification of problem areas and establishing specific goals and objectives.
6. Holding regular discussions with supervisors and key personnel to insure that EEO policies are being followed and involving department staff in a goal setting process.

Advantages will make reasonable accommodations whenever a language barrier exists, provided the applicant can perform essential job functions of the position with or without an interpreter.

Corporate Compliance Officer: Angie Sowell, Corporate Compliance Officer
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