

**CALHOUN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
POLICY STATEMENT**

SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & CIVILITY	DATE APPROVED: 9/7/2023	EFFECTIVE: Immediately	POLICY NO. 328
		REPLACES: NEW	

PURPOSE: Calhoun County is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as civility in the workplace. For this reason, the County condemns all acts of discrimination, prejudice, harassment, and bullying. The collective formation of individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities and talent of Calhoun County employees represents a significant part of the County culture, reputation, and success. These are directly connected to the County’s mission of developing a better County through responsive leadership and is critical to ensuring the well-being of employees and the public being served.

RESPONSIBILITY: The County Administrator/Controller is responsible for administration of this policy.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all County employees at every level of government, regardless of title or role.

POLICY: Calhoun County’s diversity, equity, inclusion, and civility requirements and initiatives are focused on ensuring the workplace provides equal opportunity for employees to succeed regardless of their backgrounds and identities. Calhoun County is committed to developing and maintaining a diverse workplace that provides an inclusive environment with equitable treatment for all employees and the public it serves. As such, Calhoun County strives to:

- Identify and address acts of discrimination, prejudice, harassment, and bullying.
- Build, develop, and sustain a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and civil work environment where employees are safe, welcomed, valued, respected, appreciated, heard, and feel they can bring their authentic selves to work.
- Seek and welcome the insights and perspectives of diverse individuals and groups.
- Identify, review, reflect and adjust inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services as we strive to remove barriers for current and prospective employees.
- Lead with respect, compassion, empathy, and tolerance, as well as to ensure workplace interactions and everyday practices meet the expectations of this policy.
- Promote teamwork and employee participation that permits representation of all groups and employee perspectives.
- Provide on-going educational and training opportunities regarding related topics.
- Motivate and empower employees to take responsibility for their actions and to positively influence behavior.
- Require civility in the workplace and quickly address issues that occur.
- Build trust among employees, supervisors, the County, and the public through prioritizing fairness, mission-centered work, and justice.

- Hold each other and the organization accountable for our words and actions.
- Educate ourselves on justice, diversity, equity, inclusion best practices
- Engage others in this work through discussion, understanding, and reflection.
- Foster an environment where all employees and community members feel they belong and are supported regardless of their backgrounds, identities, or affiliations.
- Survey employees to gauge employee satisfaction and progress with initiatives.
- Review and update organization progress and identify additional opportunities for success.

DEFINITIONS:

Diversity:

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. Diversity means having a range of people with various racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds and various lifestyles, experience, interests, ideas, perspectives, and values.

Inclusion:

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. Inclusion is authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power

Equity:

Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Equity includes increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources.

Civility:

Civility is treating others with dignity and respect. Civility is approaching others with trust and mutual respect, even if one disagrees with these views. Civility is asserting one's identity, needs and beliefs without degrading someone else's. All Calhoun County employees are required to maintain civility in the workplace and with the public being served.

Justice:

The process of moving from an unfair, unequal, or inequitable state to one that is fair, equal, and equitable. Proactive enforcement of policies, practices, and attitudes that produce equitable access, opportunities, treatment, and outcomes for all regardless of the various identities that one holds.

Incivility: Workplace incivility occurs when an employee is disrespectful or rude to others in the workplace. It's usually less intense than workplace bullying but has the possibility of turning into bullying if it's not addressed by a manager. Prohibited incivility in the workplace includes, but is not limited to:

- socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities
- gossip, spreading negative information, or making unfounded accusations
- showing up late repeatedly to meetings and/or failing to pay attention in meetings
- ignoring employees as they talk

- interrupting or not allowing a person to talk and provide input
- microaggressions: everyday slights, insults, putdowns, invalidations, and offensive behaviors that people experience in daily interactions with generally well-intentioned individuals who may be unaware that they have engaged in demeaning ways
- withholding important work-related information
- rudeness that is repetitive and targeted at another person(s)
- trivializing views and opinions, or making unsubstantiated allegations of misconduct
- intimidation, mocking, ridicule, threats, insults or sarcasm
- yelling at, humiliating, or demeaning a person including doing so in front of others
- cruelty, belittlement, degradation or excessive/unjustified criticism
- encouragement of others to turn against a targeted employee
- name calling that is hurtful, insulting, or humiliating
- sabotaging someone's project or assignment

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES: Department Heads and other management/supervisory employees at all levels are required to implement the provisions of this policy as part of their day-to-day management (including recruitment, interview, selection, discipline, and development) of employees and in applying policies and practices in a fair and equitable manner. Recognizing and addressing known incivility in the workplace is also required. Failure to embrace the notions and/or requirements of this policy may result in remedial training, demotion, or discipline, up to and including termination.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES: All employees of Calhoun County have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect, and to maintain professional behavior and civility while at work. All employees are also expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion of others during work, at work functions on or off the work site, and at all other County-sponsored and participative events.

COMPLAINT PROCESS: Generally, complaints or violations of this policy should initially be made to the employee's supervisor. Employees may also choose to contact the Human Resources Director, or designee, for assistance, who will investigate promptly. The investigation findings and a recommendation shall be reported to the Administrator/Controller or designee, along with Corporation Counsel, who will make a final decision on the appropriate course of action. If the matter involves an employee of an Elected Official, the Elected Official or designee shall be included in the investigation and decision-making process.

VIOLATIONS: Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Retaliation against an individual for reporting a claim or for participating in an investigation, is also prohibited conduct under this policy. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately to the Human Resources Director or designee and the investigation will be handled in the same manner as identified above. Substantiated claims of retaliation will be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

OTHER RELATED POLICIES: Policy #315 – Equal Employment Opportunity and Policy #326 - Harassment