

	<b>COOK COUNTY BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	
<b>Religious Accommodation Policy</b>		
<b>Approved: April 30, 2018</b>	<b>Effective: May 3, 2018</b>	<b>Page 1 of 4</b>

**A. OVERVIEW**

In accordance with applicable law, the Cook County (County) Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) will make reasonable accommodation(s) for employees and applicants for the observance of sincerely-held religious, ethical or moral beliefs as necessary.

**B. INTENT**

This policy is intended to be interpreted consistent with and subject to applicable law. It supersedes all previous policies and/or memoranda that may have been issued from time to time on subjects covered in this policy. This policy is not intended to supersede or limit the County from enforcing provisions in any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Should any provision in this policy conflict with a specific provision in the Personnel Rules, the provision(s) in this policy shall take precedence.

**C. SEVERABILITY**

If any section or provision of this document should be held invalid by operation of law, none of the remainder shall be affected.

**D. JURISDICTION**

BHR is authorized to develop and issue policies for the effective management of County employees, pursuant to Section 44-45 of the Cook County Code of Ordinances.

**E. AREAS AFFECTED**

This policy applies to all County employees and applicants in Departments under Offices of the President and/or covered by the County Employment Plan.

**F. NONDISCRIMINATION**

Cook County prohibits the discriminatory application, implementation, or enforcement of any provision of this policy on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military discharge status, source of income, housing, or any other protected category established by law, statute or ordinance, as provided in Section 44-53 of the Cook County Code of Ordinances.

Additionally, Cook County shall not discipline, fire, refuse to hire, deny benefits, or retaliate against an individual who requests a religious accommodation, participates in an approved accommodation or otherwise engages in protected conduct under this policy.

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**G. EMPLOYEE, MANAGEMENT AND APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees are expected to communicate their need for accommodation(s) for purposes under this policy to their supervisor and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer, and to engage in a good faith exchange with their supervisor and/or the EEO Officer to determine a reasonable accommodation.

Supervisors and managers are expected to engage in a good faith exchange with the individual and/or the EEO Officer to determine a reasonable accommodation, and to provide temporary accommodation(s) as necessary.

Applicants should inform the Recruiting and Selection Analyst of any need of an accommodation. While the Recruiting and Selection Analyst may discuss the accommodation with the EEO Office as necessary, in no event should the Recruiting and Selection Analyst disclose the accommodation to the hiring department or interview panel.

The County’s EEO Officer will promptly respond to accommodation requests and monitor County practices to ensure compliance with the information presented in this policy. Any questions or complaints concerning this policy should be directed to, and will be addressed by, the EEO Officer.

**H. DEFINITIONS**

**Applicant** means an individual who:

- Applies for a specific position with the County for which the County is seeking qualified applicants;
- Is considered for Employment by the County;
- Meets the minimum qualifications of the position;
- Is invited by a representative of the Hiring Department for a personal interview at a designated County location regarding the position (note that additional interviews with representative(s) from the County’s hiring department may be warranted); and,
- Does not withdraw from consideration for the position.

**Employment** means hiring, promotion, transfer, reclassification, or demotion.

**Recruiting and Selection Analyst** means a County employee responsible for managing applicant communications, validating qualifications, and facilitating the hiring process as outlined in the County’s Personnel Rules and/or Employment Plan.

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**I. POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Cook County shall provide reasonable accommodation(s) to individuals whose religious beliefs and practices conflict with their job, work schedule, or other aspects of employment.

1. **Request.** An Applicant or employee seeking reasonable accommodation(s) pursuant to this policy should submit a completed Religious Accommodation Request Form to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer in BHR. Such request should be submitted at least thirty (30) days in advance, if practicable. Employees are encouraged (but not required) to consult with their supervisor and/or the EEO Officer prior to submitting their request. The individual may be required to provide other documentation or information in support of the request.
  
2. **Assessment.** Accommodation requests will be evaluated by the EEO Office on a case by case basis, taking into account such factors as the essential functions of the employee’s job, the requirements of the department, the duties of others in the department, any impact of the accommodation on the department, the duration of the requested accommodation, and the availability of alternative accommodations.
  
3. **Notice.** Once a determination is made, the EEO Office shall immediately notify the Applicant or employee of the decision, using the Cook County Religious Accommodation Determination Notice. Copies of the Determination Notice shall be distributed to the Applicant or employee making the request and his/her Department Head (or designee).
  
4. **Absences.** Employees may be required to use accrued paid time off (excluding sick days), existing [paid] break time or meal time, and/or take additional [unpaid] break time, in accordance with the County’s Time and Attendance Policy and Personnel Rules, for purposes under this policy. If the employee chooses to take unpaid break time for purposes under this policy, then he/she may also choose to make up the amount of time used during the unpaid break time(s), by working Flextime and/or an Alternative Work Schedule, in accordance with the County’s Time and Attendance Policy.

**J. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Cook County maintains confidentiality of information, to the extent required by applicable law.

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**APPENDIX A**

**SAMPLE RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM**



## COOK COUNTY BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES REQUEST FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

This form is to be completed by any Cook County employee or applicant who is requesting a religious accommodation pursuant to the Cook County Religious Accommodation Policy.

When complete, this form must be submitted to the Cook County Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer at 118 N. Clark St., Room 834, Chicago, IL 60602, by email at [EEO@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:EEO@cookcountyil.gov), or by fax at (312) 803-9654. If you have any questions, you may call the EEO Office at (312) 603-6577.

### EMPLOYEE/APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:

Best Contact Number:

Work Phone:

Job Title:

Department:

Work Location:

**IF NECESSARY, PLEASE USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS FOR ANY OF THE INFORMATION REQUESTED.**

### QUESTIONS TO DOCUMENT THE REASON FOR THE REQUEST

Please identify the religious practice or belief for which you are seeking accommodation:

Please describe the way in which your religious practice or belief conflicts with a County policy, practice, or schedule:

**QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY THE ACCOMMODATION REQUEST**

What specific accommodation are you requesting? (For example, time or space for prayer during work day, leave for a religious holiday or to attend a religious observance, modification to dress code or uniform, etc.) Please describe in detail.

Please state the date[s] or frequency of the requested accommodation (For example, daily, weekly, a specific date):

**By signing below, I attest that the religious practice or belief for which I am seeking accommodation is sincerely held by me. Further, I affirm that the information provided in this document is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and that any intentional misrepresentation contained in the request may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge.**

Employee/Applicant Signature:

Date: