



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

Legislation Text

File #: 20-27, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Human Resources

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Adoption of County Policies Regarding Anti-Nepotism and Non-Fraternization, Abusive Conduct, and Lactation Accommodation

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached resolutions approving the following policies:

1. Anti-Nepotism and Non-Fraternization;
2. Abusive Conduct; and
3. Lactation Accommodation.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

DISCUSSION:

The County of Humboldt has a commitment to fostering a professional work environment where all employees are treated fairly, impartially, and with respect. Human Resources is in the process of creating and updating countywide policies to further this commitment. This process includes collaboration with all county departments and involved labor groups. Countywide policies provide a valuable resource to clearly establish conditions of employment at the County of Humboldt, rights and protections of employees, and the procedures to follow related to each topic.

The first policy addresses nepotism and fraternization. Nepotism involves favoritism in employment matters based upon a family relationship. The proposed policy creates guidelines to protect the County of Humboldt, and individual employees, by providing a set of rules to follow to eliminate participation in behavior that could be perceived as nepotism and could result in favoritism or biased treatment of employees. Under the policy an employee is restricted from influencing any employment decision related to a member of their immediate family. Fraternization is a relationship that falls outside of normal work-related interactions; usually romantic or sexual in nature. Relationships of this nature between supervisors and subordinates can create a lack of objectivity toward a subordinate's job performance, the perception of favoritism by other employees, and the potential for sexual harassment or discrimination complaints. The proposed policy prohibits supervisors from participating in intimate relationships with subordinates that report to them directly or indirectly.

The second policy deals with abusive conduct. The proposed policy prohibits malicious conduct that a reasonable person would find hostile, offensive, and unrelated to the county's legitimate business interests. The policy provides employees with clear definitions of what constitutes abusive conduct and a complaint procedure to follow if they believe such conduct has occurred.

Lastly, Senate Bill (SB) 142 recently amended California law to expand the responsibilities of employers related to accommodating employees who desire to express breast milk for their infant child. The proposed third policy complies with the county's expanded responsibilities under SB 142 by providing for private lactation locations, access to a sink and cooling devices, and required notice provisions for employees. The policy also details the request and complaint process.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expanded lactation accommodation requirements may require some departments to purchase refrigerators or coolers and/or update the layout of their work locations. The financial impact is unknown at this time as departments have varying levels of access to refrigeration and private locations that meet the requirements specified in SB 142.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by investing in county employees.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board may choose not to adopt these policies and direct staff to consider alternatives or revisions; however, this is not recommended for the lactation accommodation policy as it is needed to address new legal requirements.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution adopting an Anti-Nepotism and Non-Fraternization Policy (policy is attachment A to resolution).
2. Resolution adopting an Abusive Conduct Policy (policy is attachment A to resolution).
3. Resolution adopting a Lactation Accommodation Policy (policy is attachment A to resolution).

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A