

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN (101)

I. Administrative Policies Development

A. Introduction

The American Baptist Churches (ABC) is committed to living out its theological and biblical insights about justice and fairness in employment. It seeks to model these values in the way it hires, compensates, and promotes staff. Those insights speak of maintaining the personhood of individuals. They view the workplace as one of the communities to which persons belong.

As an expression of the church, ABC lifts up the biblical concept of the body of Christ and the concept of the building properly constructed. Every part of the body does what it is intended to do. Every stone in the building gives shape to and bears its share of the weight of the building. Each member of the body exercises his/her gift of the Spirit as she/he fulfills a career. No part of the body is looked down upon. All members perform valuable functions without which the body could not fulfill its mission. When all the members function well, when all the parts of the building bear their share of the weight, the body or the building functions beyond expectation. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Justice and fairness, as well as quality combined with productivity, are values to be upheld. These values recognize that persons should be allowed to grow into their jobs with support from the employing organization.

~~Further, justice and fairness recognize the fact that ethnic minorities and women have been denied equality in the work force. Because of this reality, women and ethnic minorities have not viewed training in many areas of work as a practical direction in which to move. As a result, there is an inadequate work force pool of ethnic minorities and women in the roles required by the ABC.~~

Affirmative Action (AA) goes beyond equal opportunity in that it takes seriously the employment potential of those target groups who have been denied entry on an equal basis. Equal Opportunity implies that persons who have the needed training and experience will be hired without regard to race, gender, age, or physical handicap. Affirmative Action says that where targeted ethnic minorities and women lack full training and experience, but have the potential for gaining such and growing into the positions, they will still be considered for such jobs. Affirmative Action further states that organizations will intentionally commit themselves to adding women and ethnic minorities, using predetermined goal directions as guides.

~~The hiring of high potential people from the targeted groups further implies that the organization will provide incentives for such persons to gain the training and experience levels required by the positions they fill.~~

Finally, Affirmative Action implies that ethnic minorities and women will, within a specified time, be visible throughout all the salary scale levels of an organization's work force. In order to accomplish this goal, the organization will have to be aware of those in the targeted groups who are promotable, as well as follow the guidelines for hiring from outside the organization.

Affirmative Action in the ABC is to be accomplished without jeopardizing the jobs of present staff. Justice and fairness must be shown to people who have committed themselves to working for ABC. Neither does it imply a temporary moratorium in the employing of other over-represented groups in the labor force.

It is toward that sense of wholeness under the Lordship of Christ that the ABC seeks to move. ABC has rich textures in terms of its varied ethnic population and in terms of the many women in its membership. Affirmative Action allows ABC to build a work community in which the variety in ABC can come together to create a new and more richly textured whole.

Implementation of these policies is the task of the chief executives of the four organizations within the "ABC--~~the Office of the General Secretary~~ [American Baptist Churches, USA](#), ~~the Board of National Ministries~~ [American Baptist Home Mission Society](#), ~~the Board of American Baptist~~ International Ministries, and the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board.

Administrative policies are established in the following section to guide the four organizations in their Affirmative Action programs. These administrative policies are designed to provide a framework and common set of guidelines. From these, a commonality will emerge without denying the particularities of each organization.

B. Administrative Policies

1. Affirmative Action Plan Development

Each ABC organization will develop within these guidelines its own Affirmative Action plan. The intent of these policies is to insure that each organization develops a plan that is within certain boundaries and will reflect the cooperation and coordination which are the distinguishing marks of the body of Christ.

2. Accountability

The chief executives of the four ABC organizations are accountable for implementing policies regarding Affirmative Action within their respective organizations. The administrative policies are guidelines for the organizational planning that these organizations must do in response to the ~~General Board's~~ overall policy on Affirmative

Action.

Each of the four chief executives of the ABC will appoint an Affirmative Action officer who will have direct access to the top management of the organization. The major function of the Affirmative Action officer (spelled out in more detail below) will be to monitor the achieving of the organization's Affirmative Action plan. The plan will be the implementation of these administrative policies by the organization given its setting and mission.

3. Affirmative Action Council

The Affirmative Action Council will serve as a subcouncil of the National Executive Council (NEC) of the ABC. The Council shall be comprised of the Affirmative Action Officer of each national organization. Each would serve terms determined by his/her chief executive.

The Chief Affirmative Action Officer of the ABC shall be elected by the members of the Council from among themselves.

The Affirmative Action Council will:

- a. develop and/or review ABC administrative policy in the area of Affirmative Action on an annual basis or upon direct request of the National Executive Council;
- b. share experiences coming from the various participating organizations with the intent to help each other develop more efficient approaches to Affirmative Action;
- c. provide staff work in the area of Affirmative Action for the NEC; and
- d. hear and adjudicate Affirmative Action appeal cases that are unresolvable in the organization in which they originate. The decisions of the Council will be final.

4. The Chief Affirmative Action Officer will be responsible for:

- a. developing the agenda of the Council;
- b. representing the Council before the NEC and their respective ~~General~~ Board upon their request unless the Council has reason to designate another Council member;
- c. being chairperson of the meetings of the Affirmative Action Council unless she/he designates another member of the Council on a temporary basis; and

d. monitoring the implementation of Council agreements.

5. The Affirmative Action Officer of each organization will:

- a. ~~participate in the Job Description Evaluation Process (for hiring, job upgrading, etc.) of his/her organization as equals with others so serving. Her/his signature is required on all descriptions, indicating that he/she, following the Affirmative Action Plan of the organization, agrees with the established occupational requirements and that they do not contain arbitrary standards that are biased or unnecessary in a way that jeopardizes the hiring of women or members of ethnic minorities;~~
- b. ~~monitor monthly reports of interviews, hirings, and terminations of her/his organization to ascertain that they comply with the organization's Affirmative Action Plan (signature on appropriate forms required);~~
- c. participate in the review of Affirmative Action complaints within processes developed by his/her organization;
- d. meet on a regular basis with the Affirmative Action Council of the ABC to fulfill required reporting of Affirmative Action experiences and completion of assignments made by the NEC;
- e. review and remain knowledgeable about Affirmative Action principles as they evolve from sources not only within the church but also within business and government;
- f. direct the establishment of Affirmative Action employment goals for his/her organization;
- g. insure that all vacancies in positions are properly posted; and
- h. prepare various Affirmative Action Plan reports.

~~6. Work Force Analysis and Goal Setting~~

~~In order to develop an aggressive Affirmative Action effort, a data base will be established that will take into account the availability of persons in the local demographic work force. Dates for achievement of goals will be set.~~

7. Compensation

The Affirmative Action concern is that women and racial/ethnic minorities be represented at every salary scale level of the ABC.

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8. Staff Development Among Affirmative Action Target Groups

ABC has a responsibility to be one of the contexts in which the future leadership of the denomination is prepared. One way to accomplish this is to provide in-house training to enhance potential or existing skills of members of under-utilized groups.

~~9. Staff Member Status~~

~~No staff member will be terminated, laid off, or transferred in order to facilitate the hiring of persons who would fulfill the goal requirements of ABC organizations.~~

10. Appeals Process in the Four ABC Organizations

Each organization shall have an Appeals Committee of staff members (plus the Affirmative Action Officer) to hear cases which cannot be resolved between the staff member and supervisor. This will be a peer council, hearing only cases related to Affirmative Action, and will render a recommendation to the organization's chief executive. Although not a legal procedure, at the hearing the staff member may be accompanied by another person.

Should the decision of the chief executive be unsatisfactory to the staff member, a final appeal may be made to an arbitrator mutually agreed upon by the chief executive and the staff member.

11. ~~Recruitment of Personnel~~

~~It shall be the responsibility of the four organizations to contribute potential candidate names and resumes to a master list of women and minorities to be maintained by the ABC Human Resource officer. These names and resumes will become a resource pool of potential ABC executive staff who may not be in American Baptist Personnel Services (ABPS). The ABC HR officer also will serve as staff consultant to the Affirmative Action Council.~~

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~~Further, the Affirmative Action Council, with assistance from the ABC Office of Human Resource Development (HRD), will aggressively seek the involvement of the many groups, organizations, institutions, caucuses, commissions, and programs available for identifying suitable women and minority candidates.~~

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~~II. Affirmative Action Goal Setting~~

~~Each organization will establish support staff Affirmative Action employment goals intended to be accomplished within a five year time frame, using the following procedures:~~

1. ~~From existing employment records, a chart will be created to display the present employment levels in each major position classification within the organization, insofar as they can be ascertained, for the following categories: white males, white females, black males, black females, Hispanic males, Hispanic females, Asian American males, Asian American females, American Indian males, and American Indian females;~~
2. ~~A comparison of actual levels employed from among the above named categories will be made against a data base calculated by averaging the racial and gender composition of (1) the U.S. work force of officials, managers, and professionals; (2) the ABC constituency; and (3) the professionals in the Congregational Profile System and ABC seminarians.~~
3. ~~Goals will be set to achieve a level of employment which would closely approximate the calculated data base. It is understood that these goals are not quotas but desired levels to be attained insofar as practicable.~~
4. ~~Permanent part time employees will be included in the data.~~
5. ~~Goals will be reexamined annually to evaluate the progress made. Data will be available in the ABC HRD Office, and as new data becomes available, goals will be adjusted to reflect indicated changes.~~

A. Recruitment

~~Responsibility for recruiting for support and executive staff candidates for each ABC organization will be centered in its HRD Office, and recruitment for achieving Affirmative Action goals will include the following:~~

1. ~~Insofar as possible, the organizations will forecast their recruitment needs far enough in advance to allow for adequate and effective recruitment.~~
2. ~~Emphasis will be placed upon locating and attracting applicants from among those groups for which Affirmative Action goals have been established.~~
- 2a. ~~The organization will broaden its contacts with sources from which applicants representing groups presently underemployed by it can be secured. Records of results obtained from various sources will be maintained to identify the most productive sources.~~
- 2b. ~~This Affirmative Action plan will be publicized to acquaint potential applicants of its existence and to make the Affirmative Action status of the organization known more widely, so that more applicants from under employed groups will be aware of the employment opportunities available.~~
- 2c. ~~Present staff members will be encouraged to recruit applicants from among~~

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~~under employed groups for which Affirmative Action goals have been established.~~

- ~~3. The Application for Employment form will be relevant, clear, free of discriminatory questions, and easily accessible for any and all applicants.~~

~~B. Selection and Placement~~

~~Selection and placement of candidates is the responsibility of the employing organization, utilizing the following process:~~

- ~~1. Any testing performed as part of the selection process will be based on verified position requirements, and all tests will be examined to ensure that they do not screen out applicants because of cultural or other biases unrelated to the position requirements.~~
- ~~2. Selection by the organization will be made with established Affirmative Action employment goals in mind.~~
- ~~3. In seeking to achieve established goals, selection will include consideration of whether a candidate is potentially qualifiable, and not exclusively on whether a candidate is immediately fully qualified.~~
- ~~4. Reasons for not selecting candidates will be recorded on the monthly activity report.~~

~~C. Employee Orientation~~

~~Orientation of new staff members will be expanded and broadened as a tool in Affirmative Action, to place special emphasis on those aspects of the employment relationship that can enhance the chance of success and advancement of persons recruited from groups currently under employed within the organizations.~~

~~The ABC Office of HRD and the organization will, as part of the orientation process, stress and clarify the Affirmative Action Plan, including the Appeals Procedure, and also will point out that the following areas are administered uniformly without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age:~~

- ~~1. compensation and benefits standards;~~
- ~~2. maternity and pregnancy policy;~~
- ~~3. attendance and absenteeism;~~
- ~~4. performance appraisal;~~
- ~~5. promotion and transfer procedures;~~

~~6. tuition aid program;~~

~~7. training opportunities.~~

~~The staff member will be encouraged to seek advice and counsel from supervisors and the human resources staff in these areas.~~

~~The staff member also will be introduced to the organization's Affirmative Action Officer.~~

~~D. Performance Appraisal~~

~~Each staff member will receive an annual appraisal. Affirmative Action requires the following:~~

- ~~1. Appraisals will be completed on schedule.~~
- ~~2. Appraisals will be factual and objective, indicating both satisfactory and unsatisfactory elements of the staff member's performance in the position.~~
- ~~3. Appraisals will include recommendations for staff improvement and/or development.~~
- ~~4. The appraisal will be discussed with the staff member by the supervisor who prepares it. The staff member will have the opportunity to append a statement of response to the appraisal.~~
- ~~5. Appraisals will be retained in the staff member's personnel file in the ABC Office of HRD and will be available to the staff member and to appropriate representatives of other departments or organizations if the staff member is being considered for promotion or transfer.~~

~~E. Compensation and Benefits Standards~~

~~Affirmative Action requires that:~~

- ~~1. Staff members be compensated according to the grade level of the position they hold, the quality of their performance in the position, and the length of their service, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age;~~
- ~~2. The grade level for each position be determined by an evaluation of its relationship to other positions in respect to an accurate duties listing and factor analysis on a standard position description form;~~

3. ~~Fringe benefits be offered and provided to eligible staff members without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age;~~
4. ~~Merit increases and other means of reward be granted to staff members in recognition of quality of service as indicated on the performance appraisal, without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age.~~

F. Training

~~Training opportunities, as appropriate, may be provided in both on and off the job settings and offered to all staff members. These experiences are to be related to improving the potential for staff members to perform more satisfactorily, as well as to prepare staff members to gain promotion within the organization.~~

~~Affirmative Action requires that:~~

1. ~~The Office of HRD maintain a current resource file of training and development courses and experiences available in the general service area, and that the Office of HRD recommend possible experiences that might help a staff member correct deficiencies indicated by the results of performance appraisals;~~
2. ~~Each Affirmative Action Officer monitor the training needs of staff members within his/her organization, and work with the human resources staff in her/his organization in development and arranging for training;~~
3. ~~Supervisors actively encourage employees to participate in relevant training opportunities as well as to take advantage of the Tuition Aid Program already established by the national organizations (such training will not be mandatory);~~
4. ~~All training successfully completed by a staff member be recorded in her or his personnel file.~~

G. Promotion and Transfer

~~All staff members will receive equal consideration for promotion or transfer, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age. Supervisors will encourage staff members to develop to their full potential and will be supportive of their efforts to move to more desirable positions. To ensure this opportunity when a vacancy occurs or a new position is planned, the supervisor should follow the procedure described in the section titled "Procedure For Filling Executive Staff Position Vacancy."~~

H. Termination/Separation Interviews

~~Prior to the date of any termination/separation of a staff member, the organization's HR staff will conduct an interview with him or her and will prepare a written report of the interview for the permanent files.~~

~~1. The Affirmative Action Officer for the employing organization will review the report of the exit interview and any other appropriate records of the termination/separation to determine whether any bias was involved.~~

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~~2. Any information derived from the interviews that could serve to improve awareness of Affirmative Action principles, remove bias, or upgrade supervisory techniques will be shared by the Human Resource staff and/or Affirmative Action Officer with the organization's chief executive.~~

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I. Appeals Procedure

A staff member who feels discriminated against because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age will have the opportunity to seek redress through a formal appeals procedure. The steps will be as follows:

1. The staff member will discuss the problem with the supervisor involved to determine whether or not the situation can be resolved to the staff member's satisfaction.
2. If the problem cannot be resolved between the staff member and the supervisor, the staff member will discuss the situation with the organization's Affirmative Action Officer, who will assist the staff member to write a brief but complete statement of the problem, and will seek to conciliate the problem with the staff member's supervisor.
3. If the problem remains unresolved and the staff member wishes to pursue the matter further, the Affirmative Action Officer will refer the matter to the Affirmative Action Appeals Committee of the organization.

The organization will appoint an executive staff AA Appeals Committee. It will be composed of four executive staff, with the Affirmative Action Officer of the organization as ex-officio and chairperson. Membership will be representative of the groups in the executive staff work force. The committee will review disputes referred to it and make written recommendations in each case to the staff member, the supervisor, and the chief executive. Although not a legal procedure, the staff member may be accompanied by another person at the Appeals Committee hearing.

4. The organization's chief executive must make a decision within thirty days. Should the decision of the chief executive be unsatisfactory to the staff member, a final appeal may be

made to an arbitrator mutually agreed upon by the chief executive and the staff member.

5. In cases where the appealing staff member is sustained, the staff member must be employed in the same or comparable job within the organization; the staff member shall not suffer any loss of income from the proceedings or from any prior supervisory decision that has been overturned by the final decision.

J. Affirmative Action Audit Plan

~~The following reports and records concerning executive staff members will be maintained by each organization:~~

- ~~1. Monthly reports of accessions, rejections, transfers, promotions, and separations, including indications of membership in under-employed group.~~
- ~~2. Semi-annual reports indicating goals, time tables, and progress achieved, with a narrative account to supplement the statistical data if necessary.~~

~~All reports will be prepared on standard forms developed by the Affirmative Action Council.~~

~~Affirmative Action Reports (semi-annual and annual) will be posted on bulletin boards.~~

III. Glossary of Terms

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| 1. ABPS | American Baptist Personnel Services. |
| 2. Affirmative Action | The execution of a set of specific and result-oriented procedures designed to eliminate both conscious and unconscious discriminatory employment practices in order to insure equal employment opportunity and to compensate for any past discrimination. |
| 3. Affirmative Action Council | A group comprised of the Affirmative Action Officers of each national organization. This is the coordinating body for Affirmative Action and serves as the final appeals group for Affirmative Action complaints. |
| 4. Applicant | Anyone who seeks employment with any of the national organizations, and who completes an Application for Employment. |
| 5. Candidate | An applicant who is referred by the Office of HRD to an employing organization to fill an existing vacancy. |

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| 6. Discriminate | To deny equal opportunity to all phases of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age. |
| 7. Equal Employment Opportunity | The taking of steps necessary to insure employer neutrality with regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, handicap, or age. |
| 8. Executive Staff | A person classified as "exempt" under the wage and hour laws. Included are salaried staff members of a professional, administrative, or managerial nature who are not eligible to be paid for overtime work. |
| 9. Goals | Specific targets which aim to achieve employment parity within an organization in position classifications in comparison with the appropriate demographic work force. |
| 10. Monitor | To evaluate critically on a continuing basis the practice of Affirmative Action under established guidelines and procedures. |
| 11. Office of HRD | The Office of Human Resource Development for the ABC. |
| 12. Targets | Dates by which certain Affirmative Action goals are projected to be reached. |
| 13. Under-employed Group | Any group, identified in demography, whose relative representation among employees at any level of the organization is statistically below that which it enjoys in the designated appropriate demographic work force. |

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR RACIAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION TO EMPLOYEES (102)

All instances of racial harassment or intimidation experienced by employees while exercising their responsibilities shall be considered a violation of the spirit and intention of ABCUSA policies and values. All such instances shall be reported and follow established grievance policies for employees as delineated in the Affirmative Action Appeals Procedure (policy 100 II. I).

In addition, Human Resources shall immediately (i) file a copy of the grievance with the Affirmative Action Committee of the General Board and the Personnel Committee or Human Resources Committee of the appropriate Board or Boards, (ii) promptly initiate and coordinate an investigation into the incident of alleged racial harassment or intimidation, and (iii) issue a report of the findings and conclusion of such investigation.

If, following the investigation conducted pursuant to the above and in the course of the grievance procedure, the appropriate authority within the organization concludes that racial harassment or intimidation occurred, as alleged, the aggrieved employee, supervisor/manager, representative of Human Resources, and representative of the Affirmative Action Council shall develop a plan for addressing the event that restores and affirms the safety, cultural identity and effectiveness of the employee. The plan shall include actions in which all parties shall engage to fulfill the ABCUSA commitment to racial justice.

The response shall indicate (a) a schedule for implementation, (b) a schedule for formal review of the results by the parties mentioned above, and (c) a report to the Affirmative Action Committee of the General Board.

The Affirmative Action Committee shall make a report in summary of the above and recommendations to the General Board Executive Committee

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