

MEMORANDUM ORDER

No. 21
series of 2024

SUBJECT: UPDATED POLICY ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs) ON RECRUITMENT SELECTION AND PLACEMENT (RSP)

1. Introduction:

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce where all individuals, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), have equal opportunities to contribute their skills and talents. This policy outlines the BPI's commitment to ensure accessibility and eliminate barriers throughout the recruitment, selection, and placement process for PWDs.

2. Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the BPI to:

- Prohibit discrimination against PWDs in any aspect of employment, including recruitment, selection, promotion, training, and other conditions of employment.
- Provide reasonable accommodations to qualified PWDs to fulfill the essential functions of their jobs.
- Promote a culture of awareness and understanding of disability issues among BPI staff.
- Continuously improve efforts to create an accessible and inclusive work environment for PWDs.

3. Accessibility in Recruitment:

- Job Descriptions: Use clear and concise language, avoiding jargon and complex sentence structures.
- Online Applications: Ensure application forms and websites are accessible for users with assistive technologies like screen readers.
- Alternative Application Formats: Offer alternative methods for applying, such as email or telephone, for candidates who face barriers with online forms.

- **Accessibility Statement:** Include an accessibility statement on the BPI website outlining available accommodations and how to request them.

4. Accessibility in Selection:

- **Interview Accessibility:** Provide qualified interpreters, notetakers, or other accommodations for PWDs during interviews.
- **Accessible Testing Materials:** Ensure all tests and assessments are available in accessible formats, such as braille, enlarged print, or digital versions compatible with assistive technology.
- **Accommodations during Testing:** Allow for extended testing times, breaks, use of assistive technology, or alternative testing methods as needed.

5. Accessibility in Placement:

- **Workplace Accessibility:** Conduct regular accessibility audits of BPI facilities and remove any barriers hindering PWD employment.
- **Assistive Technology:** Provide necessary assistive technology, such as screen readers, ergonomic keyboards, or adaptive software, to PWD employees based on their specific needs.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Offer flexible work schedules or remote work options to accommodate PWD employees with limitations related to transportation or mobility.
- **Training and Awareness Programs:** Conduct regular training for BPI staff on disability awareness and inclusion, covering PWD needs, appropriate accommodations, and creating an inclusive work environment.

6. Implementation and Monitoring:

- A designated BPI team will oversee the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- The team will develop guidelines for providing accommodations, manage resource allocation for accessibility enhancements, and conduct regular reviews of the policy's effectiveness.
- Feedback from PWD employees and stakeholders will be actively sought and incorporated into policy updates and improvement plans.

**(Please refer to ANNEX A for the Policy for Implementation and Monitoring of Accessibility Initiatives)*

7. Communication and Training:

- This policy will be widely communicated to all BPI staff through various channels, including employee handbooks, training sessions, and internal communications platforms.
- Regular training sessions on disability awareness and inclusion will be conducted for all BPI staff to ensure effective implementation of the policy.

8. Non-Discrimination:

Violation of this policy will be considered a form of discrimination and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

9. Continuous Improvement:

The BPI is committed to continuous improvement of this policy. The policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect changes in relevant regulations, technology, and best practices.

10. The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) Equal Employment Opportunities for PWDs Policy is hereby also further extended to encompass the other three core HR pillars: Performance Management, Learning and Development (L&D), and Rewards and Recognition (R&R):

A. Performance Management:

- **Accessibility in Goal Setting:** Collaborate with PWD employees to set accessible and achievable performance goals that consider their specific needs and limitations.
- **Accessible Performance Reviews:** Provide accessible format options for feedback and self-evaluations, such as audio recordings or braille documents.
- **Accommodations during Reviews:** Offer qualified interpreters, notetakers, or assistive technology during performance reviews for PWD employees who require them.
- **Focus on Ability and Contribution:** Assess performance based on individual merit and contribution to the team, disregarding any factors related to disability.

B. 2. Learning and Development (L&D):

- **Accessible Training Materials:** Ensure all training materials, including online modules, handouts, and presentations, are available in accessible formats (braille, enlarged print, audio recordings, etc.).

- **Accessible Training Delivery:** Offer diverse training methods like online platforms, in-person sessions with sign language interpreters, or individual coaching tailored to PWD learning preferences.
- **Assistive Technology for Training:** Provide access to necessary assistive technology during training sessions for PWD employees.
- **Individualized Learning Plans:** Develop personalized L&D plans for PWD employees that cater to their specific needs and career goals.

C. 3. Rewards and Recognition (R&R):

- **Inclusive Nomination and Selection Process:** Ensure the R&R nomination and selection process is accessible and free from bias against PWD employees.
- **Accessible Award Formats:** Consider alternative award formats, such as gift certificates for online shopping platforms or accessible experiences, to cater to PWD preferences.
- **Public Recognition Practices:** During public recognition events, utilize assistive technology like sign language interpreters or audio descriptions to ensure inclusivity for PWDs.
- **Celebrate Diverse Achievements:** Highlight and celebrate the achievements of PWD employees and their contributions to the organization.

This policy demonstrates the commitment of BPI to creating a truly inclusive and welcoming workplace for all employees, regardless of ability. Moreover, the policy aims to create a level playing field for PWDs and establish the BPI as a leader in promoting equal employment opportunities. By fostering a culture of inclusion and accessibility, the BPI can benefit from the diverse talents and skills of all individuals, regardless of their abilities.

This order shall take effect immediately and shall supersede all other order inconsistent herewith.


GERALD GLENN F. PANGANIBAN, Ph.D.
 Director  

ANNEX A: Policy for Implementation and Monitoring of Accessibility Initiatives

Policy for Implementation and Monitoring of Accessibility Initiatives

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the framework for implementation and monitoring of accessibility initiatives for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) within our organization. The goal is to ensure the policy's effective execution, continuous improvement, and alignment with the needs and feedback of PWD employees and stakeholders.

2. Implementation Structure

- **Accessibility Committee:** A designated BPI team, the Accessibility Committee, will oversee the implementation and monitoring of this policy. The committee will include representatives from Human Resources, IT, Facilities, Finance, and PWD employees.
- **Accessibility Coordinator:** The committee will appoint an Accessibility Coordinator to manage day-to-day operations, facilitate communication, and handle resource allocation for accessibility enhancements.

3. Implementation Procedures

- **Guidelines for Accommodations:** The Accessibility Committee will develop clear and comprehensive guidelines for providing reasonable accommodations to PWD employees in various areas, including:
 - **Workplace modifications:** Physical workspace accessibility, assistive technology, and software accessibility.
 - **Job duties and tasks:** Adjustments to work assignments, communication methods, and performance evaluations.
 - **Training and development:** Accessible training materials, formats, and delivery methods.
 - **Events and meetings:** Accessible venues, communication tools, and alternative participation options.
- **Resource Allocation:** The Accessibility Coordinator will manage resource allocation for accessibility enhancements, including:
 - **Budget allocation** for assistive technology, training, and infrastructure modifications.
 - **Prioritization** of accessibility projects based on need and impact.

- Seeking additional funding if required.
- Regular Reviews: The Accessibility Committee will conduct regular reviews of the policy's effectiveness at least annually. These reviews will include:
 - Data analysis on accommodation requests, accessibility incidents, and employee/stakeholder feedback.
 - Evaluation of accessibility compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
 - Assessment of resource utilization and budget needs.
- Feedback Mechanisms: The policy will establish accessible and confidential feedback mechanisms for PWD employees and stakeholders to provide input on:
 - Accessibility barriers and challenges encountered.
 - Suggestions for policy improvements and accommodation options.
 - Feedback on implemented accessibility initiatives.

4. Communication and Awareness

- The Accessibility Committee will develop and implement communication strategies to raise awareness of the policy, accessibility initiatives, and available resources among all employees and stakeholders.
- Training will be provided on the policy, PWD awareness, and best practices for inclusive workplaces.

5. Continuous Improvement

- The Accessibility Committee will actively incorporate feedback from PWD employees and stakeholders into policy updates and improvement plans.
- Regular reviews of the policy and implementation procedures will ensure continual evaluation and adaptation to evolving needs and best practices.

6. Accountability and Compliance

- The Accessibility Committee is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and relevant laws and regulations.
- Regular reporting on progress and achievements will be provided to relevant stakeholders.

This policy is subject to periodic review and revision to reflect best practices and changing needs.