



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Adopted on June 4, 1986 (Resolution No.141-DD)
Amended on December 9, 2015 (Resolution No. 2015-12)
Previous Revision on August 3, 2016 (Resolution No. 2016-12)
Last Revision on June 3, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-16)

1. OVERVIEW

This policy applies to the employees of the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (“LAFCO” or “Commission”). It is not intended to be comprehensive or address all aspects of the topics described below. This Policy supersedes all prior LAFCO employment policies and is intended to supplement, not supersede, current applicable state and federal statutes. Applicable state and federal statutes control if they conflict with any of the guidelines in this Policy.

Employees are expected to read this Policy carefully and know, understand and abide by its contents. LAFCO reserves the right to interpret the Policy’s provisions and make changes to the Policy at any time. This Policy does not confer any contractual rights or guarantee any terms or conditions of employment.

2. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

LAFCO provides equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. LAFCO does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, religious creed (including religious dress and religious grooming), sex (including pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition or information (including genetic information) family care or medical leave status, military caregiver status, military status, veteran status, marital status, domestic partner status, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by local, state, or federal laws.

3. DISABILITY ACCOMODATION

LAFCO is committed to complying fully with state and federal disability discrimination laws. As previously stated, no program or activity administered by the employer shall exclude from participation, deny benefits to or subject to discrimination any individual based on an employee’s actual or perceived disability or based on an employee’s association with someone who has an actual or perceived disability.

LAFCO is further committed to providing reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee. If you believe you are a qualified individual with a disability and that you need a reasonable accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of your job, please notify the Executive Officer. The accommodation process is interactive and allows the applicant or employee to identify possible accommodations. However, LAFCO has the right to choose among effective accommodations.

4. AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT

The employment relationship between LAFCO and its employees is for an unspecified term and may be terminated by the employee, Executive Officer or the Commission at any time, with or without cause or advanced notice. Also, LAFCO reserves the right to transfer, demote, suspend, or administer discipline with or without cause or advance notice. None of the policies, procedures, or contents of this policy is intended to create any contractual obligations which in any way conflict with LAFCO's policy of At-Will Employment. The at-will relationship can only be modified by a written agreement signed by the employee and the LAFCO Executive Officer.

5. POLICY AGAINST HARRASMENT

LAFCO prohibits and will not tolerate harassment of employees, applicants, or persons providing services pursuant to a contract based on factors such as race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, age, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, physical and mental disabilities, veteran or other protected status, including persons perceived to have any of these characteristics or associating with someone who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics. LAFCO will also take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment based on protected status by third parties, such as customers, clients and suppliers. All such harassment is prohibited by LAFCO and is against the law.

5.1 Definition

Harassment is unwelcomed, and inappropriate conduct directed at an employee, based upon one of the characteristics protected under the federal and state anti-discrimination laws, that substantially prevents an employee from performing their duties, serves to threaten or intimidate an employee, and/or produce a hostile work environment.

Prohibited unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior: (1) Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments; (2) Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawing or gestures; (3) Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race or any other protected basis; and (4) Threats, demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors.

5.2 Reporting and Compliant Procedure

An employee who believes that they have been subjected to any form of unlawful harassment should promptly make a complaint, preferably written, to the Executive Officer, or if it involves the Executive Officer, to the Chair of the Commission. Complaints should be specific and should include the names of individuals involved and the names of any witnesses. LAFCO will immediately undertake an effective, thorough, and objective investigation and attempt to resolve the situation. If LAFCO determines that unlawful harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be taken commensurate with the severity of the offense, up to and including termination. Appropriate action will also be taken to deter any future unlawful harassment.

5.3 Retaliation

Employees will not be retaliated against for bringing a complaint in good faith under the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy or the Policy Against Harassment, or for honestly assisting in investigating such a complaint, even if the investigation produces insufficient evidence that there has been a violation, or if the charges cannot be proven. However, disciplinary action may be taken if false or frivolous accusations are made in bad faith. An employee who believes that they have been subjected to any form of unlawful retaliation should promptly make a complaint, preferably written, in the same manner as described above. Complaints of harassment will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken to protect LAFCO employees from any form of unlawful retaliation.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The intent of the performance review process is to create a supportive, safe, professional performance review process and environment that optimizes the employee's ability to receive and actualize constructive performance feedback and that motivates the employee to pursue personal and professional growth/excellence authentically and actively. The Commission's Personnel Policy provides more information regarding staff's annual performance evaluation.

7. PERSONNEL RECORDS

Employees have the right to inspect certain documents in their personnel file, as provided by law, in the presence of a LAFCO representative at a mutually convenient time. Employees may add written versions of any disputed item to their file.

LAFCO will attempt to restrict disclosure of an employee's personnel file to authorized individuals within the organization. Any request for information from the file must be made to the Executive Officer or specific designee. Only the Executive Officer or specific designee is authorized to release information regarding current or former employees. Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources will be limited to the extent allowed by law. However, LAFCO will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state or federal agencies conducting official investigations, with validly issued subpoenas and as otherwise required by law or legal proceeding to be released.

8. EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

The intent of this section is to define employment categories so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at will at any time is retained by both the employee and LAFCO.

8.1 Exempt/Non-Exempt

Each employee is designated as either Exempt or Non-Exempt from federal and state wage and hours. An employee's Exempt or Non-Exempt classification may be changed only upon written notification by the Executive Officer. Generally, Exempt employees (as defined by the Fair Labor Standards of 1938) are not eligible for minimum wage or overtime pay, while Non-Exempt employees are eligible.

8.2 Employment Categories

In addition to information above, each employee will belong to one of the following employment categories:

- Regular Full Time – Employees who are not in an extra help status and who are regularly scheduled to work LAFCO's full-time schedule. Generally, they are eligible for LAFCO's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.
- Part Time – Employees who are not assigned to an extra help status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. While part time employees do receive all legally mandated benefits (such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance), they may be ineligible for some of LAFCO's other benefit programs.
- Extra help – Employees who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Extra help employees retain that status unless and until notified of a change in writing signed by the Executive Officer. Extra help employees are ineligible for LAFCO's benefit programs unless otherwise required by law.
- Intern – LAFCO may utilize the services of paid student interns. Interns are used to supplement the LAFCO work force and provide opportunities for local students to gain local government work experience. Employment is for a specified period of time. Interns are ineligible for LAFCO's benefit programs.

9. JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

The intent of this section is to define job descriptions so that employees understand their employment duties and responsibilities. Job descriptions identified in the following section summarize typical tasks but may comprise further responsibilities not listed.

9.1 Executive Officer Classifications

- Position Responsibilities: Under general supervision of the Commission to conduct and perform the Commission's administrative and advisory services, to supervise the daily activities of the Commission staff, and to act as a liaison between the Commission and governmental agencies and the general public.
- Typical Duties: Analyze and evaluate information on administrative and policy matters and advise the Commission on recommended action; conduct studies on governmental reorganization; comply with all legal requirements relating to the Commission's hearings; staff advisory committees to the Commission; prepare correspondence; supervise the maintenance of the Commission's files; attend all Commission meetings; attend City Council, County Board of Supervisors, and Special District Board meetings as necessary; perform as liaison officer between

the Commission and cities, special districts, the County, State institutions and the general public; prepare the annual budget for the Commission; supervise the Commission's staff; review proposed local and state legislation, and appear at legislative hearings to represent the position of the Commission.

9.2 Commission Clerk

- Position Responsibilities: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Commission Clerk provides a full range of administrative and secretarial services to Santa Cruz LAFCO involving a variety of matters that are complex and technical. Other roles include planning, organizing, and managing office activities, and performing other related duties as required. This "at will" position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the LAFCO Executive Officer and the Commission.
- Typical Duties: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Commission Clerk completes various tasks and duties including but not limited to: (1) Assembling LAFCO meeting agenda packets and notices of meetings; recording LAFCO meetings and preparing resulting documents including minutes and resolutions; (2) Developing, maintaining and updating LAFCO files and records systems for tracking applications, project activities, contracts, and other records; (3) Ordering supplies and services and maintain records of expenditures; (4) Preparing and reviewing correspondence, memoranda and other written materials; (5) Tracking correspondence, filings, and materials with deadlines and expiration dates; (6) Handling a wide variety of correspondence which requires knowledge of policies and procedures and research skills; (7) Answering and screening telephone calls and visitors; (8) Maintaining the LAFCO Website; and (9) Serving as liaison between the Executive Officer, officials and staff, and the public and interacting with Commissioners.

9.3 Administrative Analyst

- Position Responsibilities: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Administrative Analyst conducts analyses and special studies, and make recommendations on local agency boundary change proposals to the Commission; collect data relating to proposals; and process proposals in accordance with state law, the Commission's procedures, and the Commission's policies.
- Typical Duties: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Administrative Analyst performs a variety of routine to complex professional and analytical assignments. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. Positions at this entry level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at higher levels but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgement. Work is usually supervised more closely while in progress and fits and established structure or pattern.

10. HIRING AND STAFFING

To attract and retain qualified staff for LAFCO, it is the policy of LAFCO to use a criterion-based recruitment process and behavioral-based interview process to ensure the most qualified candidates are hired.

10.1 Recruiting

Recruiting applicants will be aggressive enough to assure an adequate supply of qualified candidates. The recruitment process may include, but is not limited to, the use of professional recruitment firms, referrals from current or past employees, walk-in applicants, and/or web-based postings.

10.2 Interviews

The employment interview is a major element in the selection process. It allows the applicant an opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities to perform the job and provides information to the candidate about the position. Interviews may be conducted by telephone or in face-to-face sessions. All interview questions must be job-related and have direct bearing on the tasks of the position. Interviews and questions are standardized so that all applicants are evaluated equally. Questions that express (directly or indirectly) any preference, limitation, or general reference to race, national origin, sex, age, physical handicap, or any other protected category are prohibited.

10.3 Probationary Period

All LAFCO new hires will have a twelve-month probationary period beginning on the first day of employment. The LAFCO staff will provide job training during this time period and the employee will be evaluated every three months during the probationary period. LAFCO may terminate an employee during this twelve-month probationary period or at any point in time therein. Nothing in this provision shall alter the at-will status of any employee.

11. SALARIES

The salaries of all employees shall be set by resolution adopted by the Commission. The salary resolutions for all employees except the Executive Officer shall include provisions for merit increases, if deemed appropriate by the Commission. The Executive Officer shall conduct annual performance reviews and determine if the merit increases are granted. The process for the Executive Officer's performance and compensation review is found in LAFCO's Personnel Policy.

12. WORKING HOURS

LAFCO offices shall be open on all days and the hours that Santa Cruz County offices are open to the public for business. Full-time employees shall work 40 hours per work week and part-time employees shall work at least 20 hours per week.

"Overtime" means authorized time worked in excess of 40 hours in a one week work period. The Executive Officer must authorize employees' overtime work. Paid time off from work for any purpose shall not count as time worked for purposes of overtime. Overtime shall be paid at the rate of one and a half times the employee's regular hourly salary or as otherwise required by applicable federal or state law. The Executive Officer must approve regular and overtime work schedules. The Executive Officer is an exempt employee and is not eligible for overtime compensation.

13. EXPENSES AND TRAVEL

Employees shall be reimbursed for all actual and necessary expenses incurred in the transaction of LAFCO business in accordance with LAFCO's Financial Policy.

14. PAID LEAVES

The following paid leaves shall be provided to LAFCO employees:

- Executive Officer: The Executive Officer shall receive the same paid leave benefits as those provided to appointed Santa Cruz County department heads including vacation, sick leave, administrative leave, bereavement leave, and holidays.
- Other LAFCO Employees: Employees, except the Executive Officer, shall receive the same paid leave benefits as those provided to Santa Cruz County employees in the General Representation Unit including annual leave, bereavement leave, and holidays.

15. RETIREMENT AND INSURANCE

LAFCO employees will receive health insurance, dental insurance and other insurance depending on their particular classifications. These insurance benefits will generally be the same as provided to County of Santa Cruz employees. The Commission will review and establish the benefits annually at its discretion.

15.1 Retirement

LAFCO contracts with the California Public Employees' Retirement System ("CalPERS") to provide pension benefits to full-time and half-time employees. Employee retirement contributions to CalPERS shall be set by resolution adopted by the Commission.

15.2 Insurance

The following insurance benefits shall be provided to LAFCO employees:

- Executive Officer: Insurance benefits which are provided to appointed department heads of Santa Cruz County shall be provided to the Executive Officer. These benefits are health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, and long-term disability insurance.
- Other LAFCO Employees: Insurance benefits which are provided to Santa Cruz County employees in the General Representation Unit shall be provided to LAFCO full-time employees other than the Executive Officer. These benefits are health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, and long-term disability insurance.
- Annuitant Employees: LAFCO annuitants who retired through CalPERS may enroll in a CalPERS' health plan as provided under the Public Employee's Medical and Hospital Care Act and CalPERS regulations. Eligibility and annuitant contribution amounts are set by the Commission's health insurance contract.

15.3 Health Insurance

Employees' health insurance contributions shall be the same as the contributions made by employees who hold comparable jobs with Santa Cruz County.

15.4 Deferred Compensation

LAFCO shall provide a deferred compensation program for employees. LAFCO shall not make employer contributions to the deferred compensation program.

16. SAFETY

Every employee is responsible for safety. To achieve our goal of providing a completely safe workplace, everyone must be safety conscious. Employees should report any unsafe or hazardous condition directly to their supervisor immediately. In case of an accident involving a personal injury, regardless of how serious, employees should notify the Executive Officer or LAFCO Chair immediately. Failure to report accidents can result in a violation of legal requirements and can lead to difficulties in processing insurance and benefit claims. If an employee is injured on the job, they will be entitled to benefits under the state workers' compensation law in most cases. LAFCO carries workers' compensation insurance and will assist employees to obtain all benefits to which they are legally entitled.

17. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

LAFCO is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of violence and the threat of violence. LAFCO will not tolerate any violent or dangerous behavior of any kind, whether through physical abuse, threats of any kind, intimidation, coercion, stalking or otherwise, defacing LAFCO'S property or causing physical damage to the facilities, bringing weapons or firearms of any kind onto LAFCO'S premises, parking lots, or while conducting business, or any other behavior that suggests a propensity towards violence.

LAFCO strictly prohibits employees, consultants, customers, visitors, or anyone else on LAFCO premises or engaging in a LAFCO-related activity from behaving in a violent or threatening manner. Employees may report all incidents of direct or indirect violence or dangerous behavior to the Executive Officer or LAFCO Chair as soon as possible. Reporting incidents and concerns early can help prevent a situation from escalating and becoming even more dangerous. Employees should never attempt to handle a potentially dangerous situation by themselves. Any LAFCO employee that violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, as well as potential legal action.

18. OFFICE INSPECTION

Although desks, cabinets and shelves are made available for the convenience of employees while at work, employees should remember that all desks, cabinets and shelves remain the sole property of LAFCO. Moreover, LAFCO reserves the right to open and inspect desks, cabinets, and shelves, as well as any contents, effects, or articles in desks, cabinets, and shelves. Such an inspection can occur at any time, with or without advance notice or consent. An inspection may be conducted before, during, or after working hours by the Executive Officer or designee.

Employees have no expectation of privacy in any of these items. Prohibited materials, including weapons, explosives, alcohol and non-prescribed drugs or medications, may not be placed in a desk, cabinet or shelf. Employees who, if requested, fail to cooperate in any inspection will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. LAFCO is not responsible for any articles that are placed or left in a desk, cabinet, or shelf that are lost, damaged, stolen or destroyed.

19. THEFT OR LOSS OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT

The use of any LAFCO-related equipment (computers, cell phones, laptops, or other office-related equipment) outside of the LAFCO offices must be approved by the Executive Officer. LAFCO employees are fully responsible for the care and safekeeping of all office equipment offsite. Should an item be stolen or lost offsite while under the care of a LAFCO employee, the LAFCO employee is responsible to reimburse LAFCO for the replacement cost of all lost or stolen items. Any loss or theft of the LAFCO equipment must be reported immediately to the Executive Officer, and the employee is responsible to reimburse LAFCO for the replacement cost of the device.

20. OFFICE PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

LAFCO is committed to encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response. LAFCO strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. All employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. All employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism. If there is a disagreement concerning established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, employees may express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. No one will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with LAFCO in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure.

21. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Any employee whose employment is terminated by LAFCO for any reason shall be entitled to two weeks' notice or two weeks' pay in lieu of notice.