



CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

Religious Accommodation Policy for Employees & Applicants

10.14.2025

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I. Introduction

A. Overview & Purpose

The Chicago Park District (“Park District”) is an equal opportunity employer that provides equal opportunities in its recruitment, hiring, promotions, and other employment actions. The Park District prohibits discriminatory employment actions based on numerous factors, including religion, and any other category protected by federal, state, or local law. The Park District is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to allow Employees and Applicants to exercise their sincerely held religious beliefs or practices.

The Park District will make, on request, an accommodation for an Employee’s sincerely held religious beliefs and practices when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship for the Park District.

A reasonable accommodation may include:

- A change in work schedules, assignments, or duties;
- In addition to time off granted for Park District holidays set forth in the [Employee Handbook](#), using paid benefit time or other applicable available excused absences to participate in religious observances and practices;
- Allowing an exception to the dress and appearance expectations that does not affect work safety requirements; or,
- Accommodations for other aspects of employment.

This Religious Accommodation Policy for Employees & Applicants (the “Policy”) is intended to be interpreted consistent with and subject to applicable law. It supersedes all previous policies and 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 Park District from enforcing provisions in any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

B. Definitions

Applicant: An individual who:

- Applies for a specific position for employment with the Park District via the Park District’s official hiring platform for which the Park District is seeking qualified applicant, whether part-time, full-time, or seasonal;
- Is under consideration for employment by the Park District;
- Meets the minimum qualifications of the position;
- Is invited by a representative from the Human Resources Department for an interview at a designated Park District location regarding the position; and,
- Does not withdraw from consideration for the position.

Employee: An employee of the Park District, including part-time, full-time, and seasonal.

HR Manager: A Park District Human Resources Manager

Park District: The Chicago Park District.

C. Scope, Applicability & Limitations

This Policy applies to Employees and Applicants. Nothing in this Policy is intended to nor shall be construed to create a private right of action against the Park District or any of its Employees. No part of this Policy shall be construed to create contractual or other rights or expectations.

Nothing therein is intended to affect the right of any person to make a charge of discrimination at the Chicago Commission on Human Relations or to any state or federal agency with jurisdiction over such claims, raise a grievance under an applicable collective bargaining agreement, or consult a private attorney.

II. Requesting a Religious Accommodation

An Applicant or Employee who seeks a religious accommodation due to the conflict between their sincerely held religious beliefs or practices and (1) for Applicants, their interview for a position with the Park District; or (2) for Employees, work schedules, assignments, or duties; or with the Park District's expectations for work dress and appearance; or with other aspects of employment; must submit a written request for such an accommodation to their the Human Resources Department, as outlined in paragraph A (for Applicants) and paragraph B (for Employees) of this Section.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The immediate supervisor of the Employee requesting an accommodation under this Policy shall not require that an Employee provide proof of their religious affiliation.

A. Accommodation Process for Applicants

1. Submitting a Request: Applicants shall inform the relevant HR Manager in writing of any need for a religious accommodation to participate in the hiring process. The HR Manager shall consult with the Human Resources Department to determine what accommodation, if any, may be provided to the Applicant.
2. Notice: The HR Manager shall provide the Applicant with a written response to their accommodation request as soon as is practical.
3. Confidentiality: In no event should the HR Manager inform the hiring interviewers, or anyone associated with the hiring sequence of the Applicant's request or any accommodation granted. If the HR Manager needs to advise the interviewers of a schedule change, the HR Manager must do so without disclosing the religious accommodation or request for accommodation.

B. Accommodation Process for Employees

1. Submitting a Request: Employees are encouraged, but not required, to use the *Employee Request for Accommodation for Religious Practice* form to request an accommodation for religious practices or observances. Employees who do not wish to use the *Employee Request for Accommodation for Religious Practice* form shall submit their request in writing.
 - a. Written requests must include:
 - i. Identification of the religious practice or sincerely held belief for which the Employee is seeking accommodation;
 - ii. A description of how the religious practice or sincerely held belief conflicts with the Employee's duties, work schedule, or Park District policy; and,
 - iii. A detailed description of the accommodation that the Employee is seeking, including, if applicable, the dates or duration that the accommodation is needed, and expected frequency (i.e., daily, weekly, or specific dates).
 - b. The Employee shall submit their completed form or written request for accommodations to the Human Resources Department at HR@ChicagoParkDistrict.com. The Human Resources Department shall share the request with the Employee's supervisor and the Labor Relations Manager.
2. Assessment & Interactive Process: Upon receipt of an accommodation request, the Human Resources Department shall promptly initiate an interactive process with the Employee to determine whether a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the Park District and could address the conflict between the Employee's sincerely held religious belief and the Employee's work schedules, assignments, duties, or Park District policy.
 - a. Employees shall engage in a good faith exchange with the Human Resources Department to determine whether a reasonable accommodation can be secured.
 - b. Supervisors shall engage in a good faith exchange with the Employee requesting the accommodation and the Human Resources Department to determine whether a reasonable accommodation can be secured.
 - c. The Human Resources Department, in consultation with the Employee requesting the accommodation and their supervisor, may provide a temporary accommodation while engaging in the interactive process and before a determination is made.
 - d. The Human Resources Department may consult with the Employee's supervisor or other appropriate departmental managers regarding the request as needed, but shall not inform anyone who is not directly involved in determining whether an accommodation should be granted or what an appropriate accommodation should be.

3. Determination Timeline: The Human Resources Department shall complete the assessment of the accommodation request within thirty (30) days of receiving the request; or as soon as practicable.
4. Denials of Requests: If the Human Resources Department, in consultation with the Employee's supervisor, find that the request would create an undue hardship for the Park District, the request may be denied, and alternative arrangements may be discussed with the Employee.
5. Notice: Once a determination is made, the Human Resources Department shall immediately notify the Employee of the decision in writing. The determination shall be shared with the Employee's supervisor or designee. The determination shall be stored in the Employee's personnel file.
6. Informing New Supervisors: If an Employee transfers to a new department or location, it is the Employee's responsibility to inform their supervisor of their accommodation.

III. Reporting Concerns

The Office of Prevention and Accountability ("OPA") is tasked with enforcing the Park District's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and this Policy. Any violation of this Policy or any concerns regarding the implementation of this Policy should be reported to OPA. Retaliation against any person who makes a report concerning potential violations of this Policy, or assists OPA in enforcing this Policy, is forbidden pursuant to the terms of this and other Park District policies.

An Employee or Applicant who believes that their rights as set forth in this Policy have been denied may contact the Office of Prevention and Accountability at OPA@ChicagoParkDistrict.com or 312-742-5OPA (312-742-5672).



Employee Request for Accommodation for Religious Practice Form

Chicago Park District

Instructions

- Complete all requested information. Email the completed form to HR@ChicagoParkDistrict.com.
- Human Resources will inform your supervisor and the Labor Relations Manager of this request and engage in the interactive process to determine the outcome of this request.
- Contents of this request will be shared only as necessary to consider the request for a reasonable accommodation.
- You will be notified if more information is needed.
- Please consult the *Religious Accommodation Policy for Employees & Applicants* for further information about religious accommodation requests.

Employee Information (to be completed by the Employee)

Date:

Name of Employee Requesting Religious Accommodation:

Title:

Department/Unit:

Phone Number:

Email:

Mail Stop Address:

How would you prefer to be contacted?

Email

Phone

Supervisor Information (to be completed by the Employee)

Name of Immediate Supervisor:

Supervisor's Title:

Phone Number:

Supervisor's Email:

Human Resources Manager Information (to be completed by the Employee, if known)

Name of Human Resources Manager (if known):

Phone Number:

Email:

Questions to Document the Reason for the Request (to be completed by the Employee)

1. Please identify the religious practice or sincerely held belief for which you are seeking an accommodation:

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