

Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA)
Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Central Office Location:
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THDA's Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan
Fiscal Year 2024-2025

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R M Perrey', written over a horizontal line.

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Organizational Profile

Our Mission:

Leading Tennessee Home by creating safe, sound, affordable housing opportunities.

Our History:

The Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) is a State agency that was established by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1973 (TCA 13-23-120): "In order to promote the production of more affordable new housing units for very low, low and moderate income individuals and families in the state, to promote the preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing units for such persons, and to bring greater stability to the residential construction industry and related industries so as to assure a steady flow of production of new housing units..."

Our Goals:

Identified as one of the basic human needs, housing has profound impacts, both social and economic, on individuals and communities. Safe, sound, affordable housing is essential to a healthy household, educational achievement, successful employment, and the stability and safety of the neighborhood. Both housing rehabilitation and the construction of new homes generate jobs and income in the community and produce additional tax revenue.

From this understanding Tennessee Housing Development Agency was instituted in 1973. A fresh review in 2006 developed a new vision: Every Tennessean lives in a safe, sound and affordable home in a viable community. THDA has a broad portfolio of housing assistance programs and is vigorously developing a network of industry and municipal partners for their delivery. Customer Service is more than a watchword; it is a daily effort.

Our Staff:

THDA operates a central office in Nashville, Tennessee, where 99.3% of the staff work from a single location. We have one (1) field office across Tennessee. This field office, that consists of eight (8) employees, is solely focused on administration of the Housing Choice Vouchers and related programs: Federal programs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development that provide rent subsidies for low-income Tennesseans. As of June 30, 2025, we had a total of eight (8) field-office-based staff.

Our Policy and Commitment

THDA is firmly committed to the principle of fair and equal employment opportunities and strives to protect the rights and opportunities of all people to seek, obtain, and hold employment without being subjected to illegal discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the workplace. It is THDA's policy to provide an environment free of discrimination, retaliation, or harassment of an individual because of that person's race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age (40 and over), religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or any other category protected by state and/or federal laws in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs, services or activities.

We continue to work towards maintaining and enhancing our diverse workforce. We continue to create a culture that lets diversity grow, allowing us to better serve citizens of the State of Tennessee and other key stakeholders while attracting great employees who value diversity.

Designation of Responsibilities

For effective administration and positive implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program and the Affirmative Action Plan (AAP), there shall be involvement, commitment and support of executives, managers, supervisors and employees at all levels.

Ralph M. Perrey, Executive Director of THDA, has general oversight of our Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan and programs, and overall responsibility for implementation of the THDA EEO program and AAP. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that management supports and promotes high visibility of affirmative action initiatives and the total integration of EEO concepts into all facets of personnel and program management. If there are any allegations of illegal discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under Federal or State laws involving internal THDA staff, the Executive Director designates the investigator or investigative team to handle the investigation.

Laura Swanson, Civil Rights Compliance and Housing Strategy Advisor, serves as our Title VI Coordinator. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of, and discrimination under federally assisted programs on grounds of race, color or national origin. The intent of the law is to ensure that all people, regardless of race, color or national origin, are afforded the opportunity to participate in federally funded programs.

Jason Redd, Director of Internal Audit, and his Internal Audit staff have responsibility to conduct Title VI investigations. They may conduct other investigations related to discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation if so, designated by the Executive Director.

Cathy Salazar, Chief Human Resources Officer, and the THDA Human Resources staff have responsibility for coordinating outreach recruitment efforts for qualified protected class

candidates; monitoring hiring/promotions/demotions/transfers/terminations; ensuring employees are not disciplined in a discriminatory manner; providing career counseling and guidance for employees; assisting executives, managers and supervisors in arriving at solutions to problems; and coordinating employee-related diversity initiatives and activities, including diversity training. Additionally, any job applicant or employee with a disability who needs an accommodation to perform the essential functions of his/her job will make an accommodation request to the Chief Human Resources Officer or her designee, as explained in THDA's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy.

Jonthany Taylor, Human Resources Generalist, and Meg Palmer, Human Resources Administrative Manager, have been assigned overall responsibility for development, implementation, dissemination and monitoring of our AAP and are responsible for reporting activities and progress to THDA's Executive Director.

Each executive, manager and supervisor will be held accountable for implementing the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies and goals, particularly as they relate to his/her area of responsibility. Executives, managers and supervisors will assist in the identification of problem areas and resolution of these problems as appropriate.

Policy Dissemination

Copies of the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan will be forwarded to the Executive Director and the Chief Human Resources Officer annually.

The AAP will be available for review by any employee or other individual upon request to the Executive Director or the Chief Human Resources Officer. Additionally, the plan will be posted on THDA's intranet and internet sites. Agency staff will be advised of their EEO/AA responsibilities through staff meetings and training. EEO/AA policies will be discussed with newly hired employees during their initial orientations to THDA.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action policy statements will be displayed in all THDA facilities, in accordance with State and Federal law.

Each member of THDA's Board of Directors will be given a copy of the updated AAP annually.

Advertisements and position announcements will bear the following statement regarding EEO/AA: "THDA is an equal opportunity, equal access, affirmative action employer."

Internal Auditing and Reporting System

THDA's auditing and reporting system is designed to:

- Determine the current composition of our workforce;

- Document human resources activities;
- Identify problem areas where remedial action is needed;
- Determine the degree to which THDA's AAP goals and objectives have been met;
- Measure the effectiveness of the EEO/AAP program.

The following human resources activities are reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity for all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age (40 and over), religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or any other category protected by state and/or federal laws:

Recruitment, advertising, and job application procedures;
Hiring, promotion, transfer, demotion, upgrading, downgrading, separation;
Rates of pay and any other forms of compensation including fringe benefits;
Job assignments, job classifications, job descriptions;
Work schedules, flextime, telecommuting, leave usage, leaves of absence;
Training, attendance at professional meetings and conferences, workshops, seminars;
Any other term, condition, or privilege of employment.

The following documents are maintained as components of THDA's AAP internal audit process:

- Applicant flow logs showing pertinent information and actions taken for all individuals applying for job opportunities;
- Statistical data of job offers and hires, promotions, resignations, terminations, and layoffs;
- Other data deemed useful in analyzing THDA's diversity and AAP.

The following reporting procedures are in place:

- Annual update of the AAP and dissemination to the Executive Director, Board of Directors, Chief Human Resources Officer, and others as outlined above.
- Additional reports throughout the year as deemed appropriate.

Training and Recruiting

Every employee of THDA will attend a Respectful Workplace training session. Newly hired employees will be scheduled for this training as part of the orientation and on-boarding process. Managers are required to attend a Respectful Workplace for Managers training session.

THDA will provide its employees with learning and development opportunities to enhance their promotional qualifications. Employees will be notified of learning and training opportunities on a routine basis, and are encouraged to self-identify opportunities, then request participation

through their managers. Selection for participation in these opportunities will be made in an objective and non-discriminatory way.

THDA will continue to announce position vacancies on the Agency's external website (www.thda.org) and by posting on its intranet. Depending on the position, some openings will be advertised internally only, offering current employees the opportunity to move into new roles. The rest will be advertised both internally and externally.

Statistical Review and Analysis – Narrative

As of June 30, 2025, THDA had a total of 302 employees. Of these, 294 worked out of our main office in downtown Nashville, Tennessee. The others worked in the field as follows:

East Tennessee Field Office (Cookeville) – 8

Our total employee make-up included 181 white employees (59.9%), 102 African American employees (33.8%), 6 Hispanic employees (2%). We also had 13 employees (4.3%) identify as Other. We had 218 females (72.2%) and 84 males (27.8%).

Overall, as compared to Tennessee's labor force, THDA staff characteristics in the areas of female utilization and African American utilization show strong representation in our workforce. Challenges lie in utilization of other minority groups (Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Other).

Due to new Federal requirements, we have begun tracking statistics related to qualified Veterans and qualified Individuals with Disabilities. The Federal government has set utilization goals for qualified Veterans at 5.2% of the total workforce and of each job group, and goals for Individuals with Disabilities at 7% of the workforce in aggregate and in each job group. Since we had not previously tracked this information, we began by asking our current staff to voluntarily self-identify, using forms modeled on sample forms by the Federal Department of Labor. An analysis of the results shows:

Overall agency figures for Individuals with Disabilities show an above-utilization in all areas. Overall agency figures for qualified Veterans show under-utilization in all areas.

Identification of Problem Areas

A. Applicant Flow Information

THDA is currently in the process of identifying a new HRIS system. This will help with internal tracking, accessing necessary information for reports, and better identifying our areas that need more focus.

B. Affirmative Outreach to Minorities

A review of THDA's current staffing patterns in relation to Tennessee Department of Labor (TN DOL) labor force statistics from 2024 shows above average representation by females and African Americans in THDA's overall workforce, and especially in the Nashville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). There is room for improvement in representation from Asian and Hispanic individuals.

In our one field office, the following demographics are noted:

East Tennessee (Cookeville) – There were no qualified veterans and there was one (1) qualified individual with a disability represented. It has a female representation of 87.5%, compared to the 47.4% in the area workforce.

Action-oriented Goals

Goal 1: To research and find a new HRIS system that provides us utilize only the sections that are needed to better provide us with necessary information on applicants and staff.

THDA Human Resources staff is working with internal stakeholders to identify a new HRIS system that works best for our agency and external customers.

Goal 2: Audit Job Descriptions and postings to ensure inclusive language and accessibility compliance.

THDA has recently launched an ADA Accessibility Style Guide as it relates to how external customers view our information. Our departmental goal is to ensure that staff across all divisions communicate in a way that reflects the agency's corporate style and ensures consistency.

Goal 3: Attract more qualified candidates around Veterans and individuals with disabilities

We are continuing to find new recruitment resources and sites that reach these populations. These can be used for affirmatively reaching out to minority and veteran populations and people with disabilities.