ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

1. Purpose and Commitment

The Sustainable Homestead Institute is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes dignity, respect, fairness, and equal opportunity for all individuals. As an educational nonprofit serving the community, the organization recognizes the importance of ensuring that its educational programs, services, activities, and organizational practices are accessible and free from unlawful discrimination.

The organization shall maintain an environment in which participants, students, employees, volunteers, applicants, instructors, contractors, and other individuals associated with its programs are treated fairly and respectfully.

2. Policy Statement

The Sustainable Homestead Institute prohibits discrimination in its educational programs, activities, employment practices, and organizational operations.

The organization shall not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, military status, or disability, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

This policy applies to all aspects of the organization's operations, including program eligibility, educational participation, admissions, hiring, recruitment, compensation, promotion, volunteer opportunities, and access to organizational resources and services.

3. Scope and Application

This policy applies to:

- Members of the Board of Directors

- Employees and prospective employees
- Volunteers and prospective volunteers
- Students, participants, and program applicants
- Instructors, educators, and program facilitators
- Contractors, consultants, and representatives
- Partners and other individuals participating in organizational activities

All individuals acting on behalf of the organization are expected to uphold the principles and requirements of this policy.

4. Prohibited Conduct

Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and retaliation are prohibited.

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Denying access to educational programs or services on a discriminatory basis.
- Treating individuals differently in admissions, participation, employment, or organizational opportunities because of a protected characteristic.
- Engaging in discriminatory harassment, derogatory conduct, or discriminatory communications.
- Creating or maintaining an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or workplace environment.
- Retaliating against individuals who report discrimination, participate in an investigation, or exercise rights protected by law.

5. Equal Access to Educational Programs

The organization shall administer its educational programs and services in a fair and equitable manner.

Program eligibility, selection, admissions, participation, and access to educational resources shall be based upon legitimate, nondiscriminatory criteria consistent with the organization's mission and program objectives.

The organization shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that educational opportunities are accessible to individuals with disabilities and shall consider reasonable accommodations consistent with applicable law.

6. Reasonable Accommodations

The Sustainable Homestead Institute is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, as required by applicable law.

Requests for accommodations shall be considered individually and in good faith. The organization shall engage in an appropriate interactive process when necessary to identify reasonable accommodations that facilitate access to educational programs, activities, or employment.

7. Reporting Discrimination

Any individual who believes that discrimination, harassment, or retaliation has occurred is encouraged to report the concern promptly to:

Designated Policy Contact: Scott Vernon
Email: Scott@sustainablehomestead.com
Telephone: 276-226-9104

Reports may be submitted verbally or in writing.

Individuals are encouraged to provide relevant information concerning the alleged conduct, including dates, locations, individuals involved, and any supporting documentation.

8. Investigation and Resolution

The organization shall review reports of discrimination promptly, impartially, and appropriately.

When warranted, the organization shall conduct an investigation, take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of individuals involved, and implement appropriate corrective or disciplinary measures.

The organization shall maintain records of complaints, investigations, and resolutions in accordance with applicable record keeping requirements.

9. Prohibition Against Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports discrimination, participates in an investigation, requests an accommodation, or exercises rights protected under applicable law is strictly prohibited.

Any individual found to have engaged in retaliation may be subject to corrective action or disciplinary measures.

10. Responsibilities of Leadership

The Board of Directors, executive leadership, employees, and program administrators share responsibility for implementing and maintaining this policy.

Organizational leadership shall:

- Communicate this policy to relevant individuals.
- Promote compliance with applicable nondiscrimination laws.
- Respond appropriately to reports of discrimination.
- Provide appropriate training and guidance.
- Periodically review the policy and its implementation.

11. Enforcement

Violations of this policy may result in appropriate corrective action, disciplinary measures, suspension, termination of employment or volunteer service, removal from programs, or termination of contractual relationships, consistent with applicable law and organizational procedures.

12. Legal Compliance

This policy shall be interpreted and administered consistently with applicable federal, Commonwealth of Virginia, and local laws and regulations governing nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, accessibility, and civil rights.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to limit any individual's rights under applicable law.

13. Review and Amendment

The Board of Directors shall review this policy periodically and revise it as necessary to ensure continued effectiveness, relevance, and compliance with applicable legal requirements.

Reviewed and adopted by the Board of Directors of Sustainable Homestead Institute on Nov 16, 2026.