



**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

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**Press Release**

07-21-2023

# **Houcorp, Inc. to Pay \$50,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit**

Fast Food Restaurant Franchise Agrees to Provide ASL Interpreters for Applicants and Employees

SEBASTIAN, Fla. – Houcorp, Inc. (Houcorp), a fast-food restaurant franchise operating seven restaurants in Indian River and Brevard Counties, will pay \$50,000 and provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to applicants and employees, upon request, for interviews, orientations, trainings, and performance reviews to settle a disability discrimination lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's suit, an applicant advised Houcorp's hiring and training manager she was hard of hearing and asked for an ASL interpreter for her orientation with the company. The manager responded by stating Houcorp does not provide ASL interpreters, which made it impossible for the applicant to attend orientation and start her job.

Such alleged conduct violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which prohibits discrimination based on a disability. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, West Palm Beach Division (EEOC v.

Houcorp, Inc., Case No. 2:23-cv-14191-AMC) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

In addition to the monetary relief, the three-year consent decree requires Houcorp to update its job postings and hiring advertisements, revise its anti-discrimination policies, post a notice regarding this lawsuit, and report on the handling of requests for reasonable accommodations. Houcorp will also provide live training to owners, managers, and human resources personnel on the ADA, as well as training designed specifically to raise awareness about issues affecting the deaf community and dispelling stereotypes associated with hiring deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals. Finally, Houcorp will conduct an internal audit to identify potential obstacles and to make the workplace more accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing applicants and employees.

“We commend Houcorp for working proactively with the EEOC,” said EEOC Regional Attorney Robert Weisberg. “The company’s willingness to provide training and implement changes reflects a good faith effort to resolve this matter, and the Commission is pleased with the resolution.”

“Houcorp should be commended for agreeing to a consent decree early in this litigation,” said EEOC Miami District Director Evangeline Hawthorne. “This settlement includes provisions that ensure deaf and hard-of-hearing applicants and employees will have the benefit of ASL interpreters going forward, and we appreciate Houcorp’s commitment to improvement.”

For more information on disability discrimination, please visit

**<https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination>) and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGVmlmhj5KI&list=PL65EFmHB\\_s4B3qYBjr-0pT\\_0121x4QoNf](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGVmlmhj5KI&list=PL65EFmHB_s4B3qYBjr-0pT_0121x4QoNf) ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGVmlmhj5KI&list=PL65EFmHB\\_s4B3qYBjr-0pT\\_0121x4QoNf](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGVmlmhj5KI&list=PL65EFmHB_s4B3qYBjr-0pT_0121x4QoNf))**

The Miami District Office’s jurisdiction includes Florida, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information is available at **[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/>)**. Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our **[email updates](https://public.govdelivery.com) (<https://public.govdelivery.com>)**

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