



# **Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors & Therapists**

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## **2015-17 Affirmative Action Plan**

3218 Pringle Road SE, #250  
Salem, Oregon 97302

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# I. DESCRIPTION OF THE BOARD & AGENCY

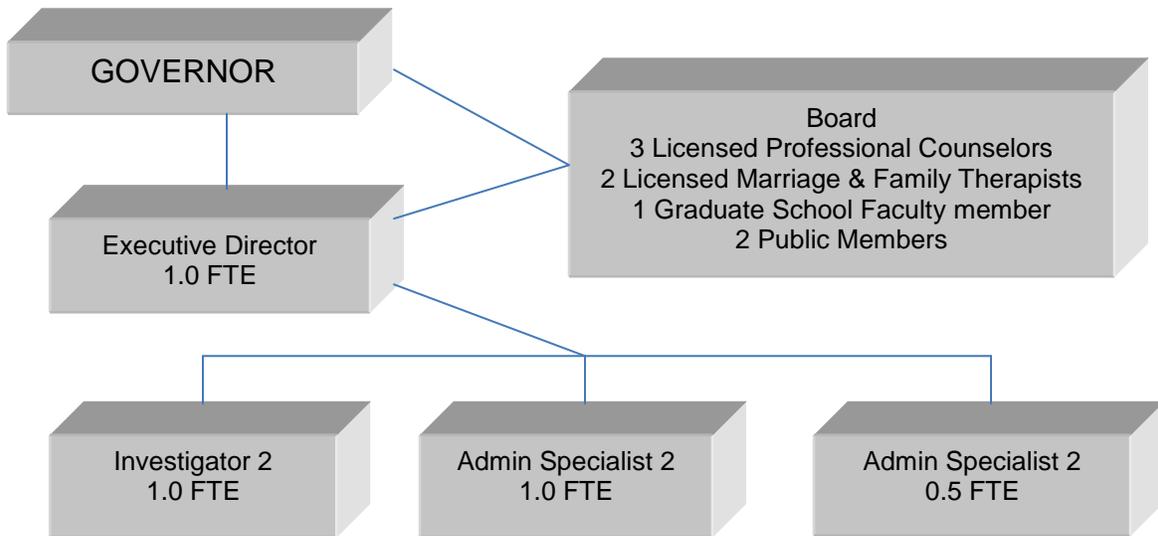
Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors & Therapists

## A. Mission and Objectives

The Board's primary mission is consumer protection and accomplishes that mission by setting clear education, experience and exam standards for licensing; establishing a code of ethics by which licensees must abide; impose discipline for unethical, negligent or illegal practice; and require licensees to provide each client with a professional disclosure statement.

- B. Agency Director (Interim) Randy Harnisch, (503) 378-5499
- C. Governor's Policy Advisor for your agency Mike Bonetto/Sean Kolmer (503) 373-1558
- D. Affirmative Action Representative (Interim) Randy Harnisch
- E. Diversity & Inclusion Representative (Interim) Randy Harnisch

## F. Organizational Chart



# II. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

## A. Agency Affirmative Action Policy Statement

### Agency Affirmative Action Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists that no person shall be subjected to any discriminatory action because of race, religion, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, or mental or physical

disability. The work environment shall be free from any form of discriminatory harassment.

Diversity is a core value for the State of Oregon. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer that champions a culturally diverse and competent work place.

Accordingly, the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors will:

1. Maintain a policy of equal treatment and equality of opportunity in employment for all applicants and employees in its employment decisions, which include, but are not limited to: hiring, promotion, demotion, transfer, termination, layoff, training, compensation, benefits, and performance evaluations.
2. Apply all terms, conditions, benefits, and privileges of employment with the agency to all applicants and employees regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, disability, or any other reason prohibited by the law or policy of the state or federal government.
3. Adopt and disseminate the Board's Affirmative Action Plan that describes the agency affirmative action steps to ensure equity of employment in a work environment that is free from discrimination.

#### ***A. Agency Affirmative Action Policy Statement***

The Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (OBLPCT) is committed to achieving a workforce that represents the diversity of Oregon's population and to providing fair and equal employment opportunities. OBLPCT is committed to an affirmative action program that provides equal opportunities for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, age or disability. OBLPCT provides an environment for each applicant and employee that is free from sexual harassment, as well as harassment and intimidation because of an individual's race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status or disability. OBLPCT employment practices are consistent with the State's Affirmative Action Plan Guidelines and with state and federal laws, which preclude discrimination.

#### ***B. Agency Affirmative Action Policy Statement for Individuals with Disabilities***

OBLPCT will not discriminate or tolerate discrimination against any applicant or employee because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the known applicant for employment is qualified.

OBLPCT agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat known qualified individuals with disabilities without regard to their physical or mental disabilities in all human resources selection and decision

practices, such as: advertising, benefits, compensation, discipline (including probation, suspension, and/or termination for cause or layoff), employee facilities, performance evaluation, recruitment, social/recreational programs, and training. OBLPCT will also continue to administer these practices without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status or disability. All applicants and employees are protected from coercion, intimidation, interference, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation under this policy.

**1. Agency Affirmative Action Policy Affirmative Action Policy for Members Uniform Services (ORS 659A.082)**

OBLPCT will not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, against any employee because they are a member of, apply to be a member of, perform, has performed, applied to perform or have an obligation to perform service in a uniformed service.

It is also the policy of OBLPCT to provide an environment for each applicant and employee that is free from sexual harassment, as well as harassment and intimidation on account of individual's race, color, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, age, familial status or disability.

**2. Dissemination of the Affirmative Action Policy and Affirmation Action Plan**

The impact of the Affirmative Action Plan can be fully realized only to the extent that its provisions are known by those who must apply it and those who benefit from it. With this in mind, the following describes methods used to disseminate the information internally and externally.

The responsibility for dissemination of the agency's Affirmative Action Policy Statement and Affirmative Action Plan has been delegated to the Affirmative Action Representative. Such communication is internal and external and includes:

**a) Internal Dissemination**

A statement from the Director to all employees communicating the existence of the plan in order to:

- i. Be aware of the plan and avail themselves of its benefit; and
- ii. Be aware of individual responsibility for effective implementation of the plan.
- iii. Include the Affirmative Action Policy Statement, Affirmative Action Plan and Grievance Procedure as part of each new employee's orientation;

- iv. Post the agency's Affirmative Action Policy Statement and Grievance Procedure on the employee bulletin board; and
- v. Post the agency's Affirmative Action Policy Statement, Affirmative Action Plan, and Grievance Procedure on agency's website.
- vi. Distribute the agency's Affirmative Action Policy Statement, Affirmative Action Plan and Grievance Procedure to any employee upon request.

**b) External Dissemination**

- i. All recruitment announcements and applications for employment will include the phrase, "An Equal Opportunity Employer".
- ii. OBLPCT's Affirmative Action Plan is posted on the agency's website and available to the public upon request.
- iii. Provide copies of the agency's Affirmative Action Policy Statement, Affirmative Action Plan and Grievance Procedure to any person, including job applicants, upon request;
- iv. Notify all bidders, contractors, subcontractors and suppliers of the agency's affirmative action policy. Notices will include a statement that the agency will not knowingly do business with any bidder, contractor, subcontractor, or supplier of materials that discriminates against members of any protected class.

**4. Monitoring and Reporting System**

The Affirmative Action Representative will monitor the Affirmative Action Plan on a continual basis. Monitoring will include, but not be limited to:

- I. Reporting and auditing including:
  - i. Maintain accurate and current records on all applicants, hires, promotions, transfers, and terminations by sex, race, and EEO-4 categories;
  - ii. The review of all promotions, transfers, and terminations to be certain that all employees are treated fairly and equitably; and
  - iii. The review of all selection, promotional, and training procedures to ensure non-discriminations in practice

- II. Report annually to the Board on the effectiveness of the affirmative action program, progress and efforts made toward accomplishing affirmative action goals, and planned action and recommendations for improvement, if necessary.
- III. Prepare updates and evaluations of the Affirmative Action Plan and submit to the Governor's Affirmative Action Office.

## **5. Complaint Process regarding Discrimination or Harassment**

The complaint procedure provides a method of resolving complaints involving violation of the OBLPCT nondiscrimination policy within the agency. Employees and job applicants are encouraged to use the complaint process. Retaliation, coercion, reprisal, or intimidation against a person who has filed a complaint or serves as a witness is prohibited.

### **a) Informal Complaint Process**

An employee may notify the Affirmative Action Representative at (503) 378-5499 of an issue or concern regarding discrimination in order to raise awareness or put the agency on alert without filing a formal complaint. In these situations:

- i. The employee may ask the Affirmative Action Representative to keep the matter and identity of the employee confidential. (The agency will comply with the request, if possible.)
- ii. The employee will sign documentation stating that he/she wishes his/her identity to remain confidential.
- iii. The agency will document the discussion.
- iv. The Affirmative Action Representative will review the information and notify the Board chair, keeping the employee's identity confidential when it is determined that action is necessary to correct the problem or to prevent reoccurrence.
- v. The Affirmative Action Representative will offer suggestions to the Board such as training and changes in environment.

### **b) Internal Complaint Process**

- i. Any individual who believes he/she has been subjected to unlawful discriminatory actions may file a complaint within 30 calendar days of the alleged incident.

- ii. An employee may submit a written complaint to Affirmative Action Representative that explains the basis for the complaint, identifies the alleged discriminating party or parties, the date the discriminatory action(s) occurred, and the relief requested.
- iii. Affirmative Action Representative will review/investigate the complaint and provide the complainant written notification of the findings within 30 days or upon completion. The agency will notify the employee in writing if additional time is needed for investigating the allegations or to issue a report of the findings.
- iv. The agency will initiate corrective action if the investigation substantiates the complaint.

**c) External Complaint Process**

If an employee is not satisfied with the complaint process within the agency and wishes to appeal agency decisions, he or she may contact one of the organizations listed below. Nothing in this policy prevents any person from filing a complaint with the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

**Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries - Civil Rights Division**

State Office Building  
800 NE Oregon Street, MS# 32, Suite 1070  
Portland, OR 97232  
Phone Number: 503.731.4874  
Fax Number: 503.731.4069

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries - Civil Rights Division is the Oregon state equivalent of the federal EEOC. As a designated Fair Employment Practices Agency (FEPA), the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries - Civil Rights Division may coordinate operations with the EEOC. The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries - Civil Rights Division investigates state claims not covered by federal law or exceed the basic protections of federal law. Individuals filing a charge of discrimination with the EEOC should also send a copy of the charge to the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries - Civil Rights Division.

**Salem**  
**Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries**  
3865 Wolverine Street NE; E-1  
Salem, OR 97305  
Phone Number: 503.378.3292

**Governor's Affirmative Action Office**

155 Cottage Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301  
Director: 503.378.3544  
Program Manager: 503.378.6518  
Website: <http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/GovAA/index.shtml>

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

Seattle Field office EEOC Office/ Federal Office Building  
909 First Avenue, Suite 400  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone: 1-800-669-4000 Phone: 1-800-669-6820 (TTY)  
The EEOC does not maintain an office in Oregon.  
The Seattle Field Office is open Monday – Friday, 8 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.  
File a Charge of Discrimination: <http://www.eeoccomplaint.com/>

**Department of Labor, Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC)**

1315 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1030  
Portland, OR 97201  
Phone: 503.326.4112

**The U.S. Department of Labor**

Pacific Regional Office  
71 Stevenson Street, Suite 1700  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Phone: 503.848.6969

**The Civil Rights Office of Health & Human Services**

Office of Civil Rights, Region D  
2201 Six Avenue, Mail Stop RX-11  
Seattle, WA 98121  
Phone: 206.615.2290 Phone: 206.615.2296 (TDD)

The OBLPCT remains committed to its policy on Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. My personal commitment to these ideals are represented in the Affirmative Action Plan. Likewise, the Plan represents OBLPCT's commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action in employment and public service consistent with all applicable federal and state laws, including Executive Order 11246; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974; the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act; and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This Affirmative Action Plan has my complete authorization and commitment.

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Director Signature

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Date

If you have any questions regarding the agency's Affirmative Action Plan please contact the Director.

## **B. Agency Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

The Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists provides a leadership culture that fosters and embeds Diversity and Inclusion throughout its operations, both internally with staff and externally with public members, stakeholders and/or partners by increasing diverse and multi-cultural perspectives, improving business and service delivery outcomes, increasing certified firm contracting inclusion, improving individual and organizational cultural competencies, improving organizational accountability, maximizing taxpayer dollars, and improving public confidence and community relations.

## **C. Training, Education, Developmental Plan (TEDP)**

### **1. Employees**

OBLPCT recognizes that employees are its greatest resources. Investing in employee development and enhancing employee knowledge, skills and abilities is one of the agency's highest priorities.

Continued professional development and training opportunities ensure that employees are provided with the skills needed to excel in their work, and be retained in the agency. OBLPCT uses a variety of approaches to establish a climate that supports continuous learning and development through the following:

- a. Provide opportunities for acquiring the skills, knowledge, and experience that employees need for their continuing learning and career development.
- b. Provide developmental opportunities for employees, such as detail assignments to give everyone interested in a chance to participate in assignments that prepare them for high-level positions.
- c. Use a variety of ways to provide training and developmental experience for employees such as:
  - i. Webinars and other interactive and on-line training technologies,
  - ii. Internal and external training courses,
  - iii. Establishing individual needs and training requests during employee performance evaluations..

Provide training opportunities for all employees. Through investments in training, OBLPCT reflects the value of employees and supports employee interest in keeping their skills updated in order to remain competitive.

- d. "Discrimination and Harassment-Free Workplace" and "Maintaining a Professional Workplace". Each employee will learn and adhere to the policies regarding discrimination and harassment free workplace. It emphasizes the prohibited conduct, the complaint or reporting procedure, and where staff can readily access this information for future reference.

- e. New Employee Orientation – Effectively orienting new employees to the agency and to their positions is critical to establishing successful, productive working relationships. OBLPCT strives to ensure the employee’s first interaction with agency personnel is a positive experience. OBLPCT provides the following information to the new employee:
  - i. Affirmative Action Policy and Affirmative Action Plan
  - ii. Agency’s expectation of employee
  - iii. Agency’s mission and objectives
  - iv. Discrimination and Harassment-Free Workplace Policy;
  - v. Performance Evaluation Process
  - vi. Roles and Responsibilities/Position Description
- f. Leadership Oregon – If financial resources allow OBLPCT will provide employees the opportunity to participate in Leadership Oregon program.

#### No Cost Trainings

Due to limited financial resources available, OBLPCT will utilize training courses available through Department of Administrative Services’ iLearnOregon system. These training courses are available to state agencies and their employees free of charge. iLearnOregon website:

<https://ilearn.oregon.gov/Kview/CustomCodeBehind/Base/Login/Login.aspx>

- g. SAIF – Crisis Intervention: “Managing Conflict in the Workplace” training is no longer available.
- h. Sustainability in the Workplace – The principle of sustainability is the heart of what makes and keeps Oregon such a special place to live. It is also an integral part of the Governor’s efforts to revitalize Oregon’s economy and improve state government. This training will take our knowledge of sustainability beyond an introduction. It provides an overview of the principles and concepts of sustainability and a framework for additional learning and decision-making.
- i. Information Security (DAS)
  - Acceptable Use of Information Assets Policy: The purpose of the Acceptable Use Policy is to inform users of DAS technology assets of the appropriate and acceptable use of information, computer systems

and devices, telecommunications devices, and other office technology.

### Other Learning Opportunities

Diversity in the workplace education is more than just “inclusion”, a commitment to workplace diversity awareness helps OBLPCT create a satisfactory, safe and meaningful work environment in which employees thrive. Through diversity awareness inclusive of human characteristics such as race, spirituality, gender, sexual orientation or status as a person with disability, OBLPCT demonstrates that its employees are seen, recognized and valued. By incorporating these strategies OBLPCT can attract and retain skilled and talented workforce.

### Continuing Learning Opportunities

To continue learning about diversity and cultures within our workforce the following are some of the recommended books from several speakers that have participated in state government sponsored trainings.

- Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Bantam Books, 1983.
- Dickerson, Debra. *An American Story*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2000
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skins, White Masks*. Grove Press, 1991.
- Kochman, Thomas. *Black and White Styles in Conflict*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- McBride, James. *The Color of Water*. Riverhead Books, 1997.
- McCall, Nathan. *Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America*. Vintage Books, 1995.
- Meeks, Kenneth. *Driving While Black*. Broadway Books, 2000.
- Reed, Cecil and Donovan Priscilla. *Fly in the Buttermilk*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1993.
- Robinson, Randall N. *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*. Plume, 2001.
- Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I Was Puerto Rican*. Vintage Books, 1994.
- Tatum, Beverly D. *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* Basic Books, 1999.
- West, Cornell. *Race Matters*. Vintage Books, 1994.
- Wilson, M. and Russel, K. *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black Women and White Women*. New York, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1996.
- Amsterdam, Boston, *The Diversity Scorecard: Evaluating the Impact of Diversity on Organizational Performance*, Elsevier Science/Butterworth-Heinemann; 2003.

- Rikleen, Lauren, *Ending the Gauntlet: Removing Barriers to Women's Success in the Law - by Managing Differently* – James O. Rodgers,
- Aguilar, Leslie *Multicultural Customer Service: Providing Outstanding Service Across Cultures*, Linda Stokes McGraw-Hill, Inc, Times Mirror Press -
- Phil Rubio, *A History of Affirmative Action, 1619-2000*
- Poverty & Race Research Action Council: <http://www.prrac.org/>
- Civil Rights Coalition for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: <http://www.civilrights.org/>

## 2. **Volunteers**

OBLPCT provides a copy of the agency's Affirmative Action Policy and Affirmative Action Plan to all Volunteers. Agency also reviews the statewide policies on "Discrimination and Harassment-Free Workplace" and "Maintaining a Professional Workplace" policies with Volunteers.

## 3. **Contractors/Vendors**

OBLPCT requires Contractors/Vendors to abide by statewide policies on "Discrimination and Harassment-Free Workplace" and "Maintaining a Professional Workplace".

## **D. Programs**

The following activities play a major role in moving the agency towards its affirmative action goals and objectives and building a foundation for future efforts to diversify the workforce.

### 1. **Internship Programs**

a) The Board will investigate and evaluate opportunities to provide internships for students or other pre-professionals who may wish to obtain employment skills.

### 2. **Mentorship Programs**

a) The Board will investigate and evaluate opportunities to provide mentorships for students or other pre-professionals who may wish to obtain employment skills.

### 3. **Community Outreach Programs**

a. OBLPCT greatest strength is the quality of and diversity of our employees who differ in age, gender, race, nationality, sexual

orientation, and religious beliefs and operates across multiple cultures and languages. OBLPCT encourages employees to participate in organizations with the community it serves.

- b. Sharing job opportunities with local ethnic organizations, local ethnic chambers, tribes, faith-based organizations, local ethnic newspapers, etc. in a timely manner.
- c. Ensure protected classes personnel are aware of promotional opportunities as they arise.

#### **4. Diversity Awareness Program**

To achieve workforce diversity, OBLPCT is positioning itself with a strong commitment to its agency's affirmative action program. This includes strong leadership support and commitment to provide necessary resources, people and funding of new initiatives.

- a. Continued support from leadership that creates an environment of inclusion, which values differences.
- b. Continued management involvement in planning and conducting affirmative action/equal employment opportunity activities.
- c. Ensure that employees are an integral part in the design of OBLPCT efforts to plan and conduct affirmative action/equal employment opportunity and diversity activities.
- d. Widely disseminate OBLPCT Affirmative Action Plan goals throughout the agency and encourage recruitment in support of these goals.
- e. Diversity Bulletin Board – To bring awareness to the agency's workforce, the board provides information for employees to share with one another. OBLPCT also posts the Governor's monthly diversity proclamations, diversity activities and projects, diversity calendar of events and other community activities, etc.

#### **5. Leadership Development/Training Programs**

- a. The Board established and schedules an annual training session for all board members and staff to review board roles and public meeting and public record requirements. In addition, the training provides an overview on public official ethics requirements and guidance.

**E. Update: Executive Order 08.18**

**a) Cultural Competency Assessment and Implementation Services**

Cultural Competency Assessment and Implementation Services is a strategy designed to identify best practices and reduce any discriminatory behaviors that may exist within the agency. Through an assessment, OBLPCT will enable the creation of increased awareness; appropriate identification and response to cultural and language barriers for employees and the public; a common understanding of how all members of the organization should be valued and respected; a promotion of managerial skills among diverse employees; an understanding of the roles of OBLPCT management and employees in creating a welcoming environment and the improvement of employee morale.

In lieu of funding resources OBLPCT is implementing creative initiatives to ensure that is positioned itself with a strong commitment to its agency's affirmative action program. This includes strong leadership support and commitment to provide creative initiatives.

**b) Statewide Exit Interview Survey**

The survey will allow departing employees share their opinions about their work experience with the agency. OBLPCT is interested in how employees view their tenure and information and suggestions they can provide related to their experience. The survey covers issues such as: benefits; working conditions; opportunities for career advancement; the quality and quantity of the workload; and relationships with co-workers and supervisors.

OBLPCT will analyze the data analysis to provide an understanding of reasons for turnover. If the analysis identifies a negative opinion regarding the agency's workplace environment, OBLPCT will use this information as an opportunity to improve the work environment for the current employees, and improve job satisfaction.

Data obtained from employees leaving the agency provides information critical to:

1. Assess workplace deficiencies;
  2. Enhance the workplace;
  3. Improve employee retention;
  4. Achieve a diverse workforce through workforce planning;
- and

5. Improvements based on any negative feedback from the survey.

The result of the data analysis will be reviewed by the agency Director for any corrective action and approve strategies that will help retention of skilled and valued employees.

### **c) Performance Evaluations of All Management Personnel**

OBLPCT has incorporated affirmative action objectives as a key consideration for the manager's performance evaluation. Specific examples of the managers affirmative action objectives and diversity successes and achievement are described below. Management personnel will receive an annual performance evaluation to assess whether they are meeting its affirmative action objectives. Any goals or work plans for future performance will be outline in the evaluation.

Sample affirmative action duty descriptions:

- a. Understand Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Affirmative Action (AA), Diversity and Cultural Competency principles, and the agency's AA Plan goals and objectives.
- b. Review hiring, transfers, promotional, developmental/rotational or training practices and procedures to identify and remove barriers in the attainment of the agency's affirmative action goals and objectives.
- c. Make hiring, transfer and promotional decisions in support of agency's affirmative action goals and objectives. Engage in appropriate recruitment efforts designed to reach agency's affirmative action goals and objectives.
- d. Promote and foster a positive work environment within the agency programs concerning EEO, AA, Diversity and Cultural Competencies by ensuring employees are aware and follow agency policies and procedures, and address work-related issues and/or concerns immediately and take appropriate action if necessary.
- e. Attend EEO, AA, and other diversity-related training to provide leadership to staff by being aware of diversity and cultural issues. This also includes supporting employees to attend such programs for further professional development.

- f. Ensure information regarding EEO, AA and Americans with Disabilities (ADA) information is properly displayed on the appropriate boards at the worksites(s).

**Ref: 659A.012 State agencies to carry out policy against discrimination in employment; evaluation of supervisors; affirmative action reports.** (1) To achieve the public policy of the State of Oregon for persons in the state to attain employment and advancement without discrimination because of race, religion, color, sex, marital status, national origin, disability or age, every state agency shall be required to include in the evaluation of all management personnel the manager's effectiveness in achieving affirmative action objectives as a key consideration of the manager's performance.

(2) To achieve the public policy of the State of Oregon for persons in the state to attain employment and advancement without discrimination because of race, religion, color, sex, marital status, national origin, age or disability, every state agency shall be required to present the affirmative action objectives and performance of that agency of the current biennium and those for the following biennium to the Governor of the State of Oregon and to the Legislative Assembly. These plans shall be reviewed as part of the budget review process.

### **F. Status of Contracts to Minority-owned Business (ORS 659.A015)**

The Board has a contract with a vendor to provide computer database development and support. The Board has two additional contracts for investigative services; one contract is with a small business owned by a woman and one is with a minority-owned business.

## **III. ROLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN**

### ***A. Responsibilities and Accountabilities***

OBLPCT provides overall direction and resources to support the Affirmative Action Plan. The Board will foster-- and promote to employees-- the importance of a diverse workplace free from discrimination and harassment. The Board is committed to the use of Affirmative Action precepts in hiring employees and in recommending appointments to its membership. The Board will continue implementation of the Affirmative

Action Plan by exercising impartial and unbiased evaluations of future employment applications and interviews.

1. Director/Administrator

The Director plays a leadership role in dedicating the agency to a policy of equal employment opportunity and conveying a sense of that commitment both within and outside of the organization. The Director has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring the Affirmative Action Plan and for ensuring compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

- a. Foster and promote the importance of a diverse and respectful workplace.
- b. Periodically review the Affirmative Action Plan and progress toward meeting the agency's affirmative action objectives; and
- c. Review equal employment opportunity and affirmative action objectives. Ensure the agency's effectiveness in meeting its affirmative action program, and approve strategies for meeting objectives;
- d. Recognize policy needs and initiate necessary changes.

2. Affirmative Action Representative

- a. The Affirmative Action Representative is responsible for implementing and maintaining the agency's affirmative action plan and is accountable to the Board.
  - i. Develop and disseminate the Affirmative Action Plan, including the agency's Affirmative Action Policy Statement, and monitor progress and prepare annual updates and modifications, as needed;
  - ii. Develop and monitor internal and external communication of the agency's Affirmative Action Policy and Affirmative Action Plan to keep staff informed.
  - iii. Develop and advise employees and job applicants of discrimination grievance procedures. Accept and investigate all sexual harassment and/or discrimination grievances or complaints filed either internally or externally and make recommendations for appropriate actions;

- iv. Serve as the agency's liaison with governmental agencies responsible for the enforcement of civil rights and fair employment laws and regulations;
- v. Assist in implementation and review of the internal monitoring and review system, using standardized reports and statistical data to measure the effectiveness of the agency's affirmative action program, and indicate the need for remedial action;
- vi. Contact community organizations and persons representing minorities, women and persons with disabilities and share information on available agency recruitments;
- vii. Share information with staff on developments of affirmative action issues, including legal decisions and their possible impact;
- viii. Periodically review personnel policies and procedures to ensure they reflect the agency's affirmative action commitment;
- ix. Periodically audit minimum job requirements, training programs, and promotion and transfer actions to assure non-discriminatory practices;
- x. Conduct periodic reviews to assure EEO posters, the Affirmative Action Policy Statement, and Alternate Format poster are properly displayed; and
- xi. Conduct exit interviews with employees leaving the agency to learn about perceptions or concerns about work climate and affirmative action issues.

## **IV. JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2014**

### ***A. Accomplishments***

The following have been provided to staff:

- *Ten Tips for Cultural Sensitivity*, Adapted from *Minority Health Today Magazine*
- *Cultural Differences – Some Examples*, Adapted from *Minority Health Today Magazine*
- *Cultural Competence – Background*, [www.eisenbruch.com](http://www.eisenbruch.com)
- *The Strength and Power of Diversity*, Georgetown University Child Development Center

- We have had no staff turnover so have not used a candidate recruitment process nor the exit interview survey
- Appointment of 1 Board member of color.
- The Board has 3 staff: 1 women, 2 men; 2 veterans and 1 person with a disability

## **V. JULY 1, 2015 – JUNE 30, 2017**

### ***A. Goals for Affirmative Action Program***

Build cultural competence/diversity into every Board meeting agenda

Use the exist survey when and if we have staff turnover

Reach out to minority and people of color to recruit candidates when positions are vacant.

Our goal is to ensure that the Board, the agency staff, and licensed mental health practitioners take active steps to increase their knowledge about cultures and the growing diversity of Oregon's population and to ensure that they provide culturally appropriate services.

Continue the activities and policies set during the 2009-11 and 2011-13 biennia.

Continue inclusion of diversity, affirmative action, and cultural competency language in administrative rules, policy, academic graduate level training, and review of Oregon graduate counseling and marriage and family therapy programs. Encourage employees to attend the Governor's Affirmative Action Office informational trainings.

Continue to work with the Governor's office to identify diverse applicants for board appointment.

## **VI. APPENDIX A**

ADA and Reasonable Accommodation in Employment

Discrimination and Harassment Free Workplace

Training & Development Policy

Maintaining a Professional Workplace

Veterans Preference in Employment

## **VII. APPENDIX B**

Age Discrimination in Employment (ADEA)  
Disability Discrimination  
Equal Pay and Compensation Discrimination  
Genetic Information Discrimination  
National Origin Discrimination  
Pregnancy Discrimination  
Race/Color Discrimination  
Religious Discrimination  
Retaliation  
Sex-Based Discrimination  
Sexual Harassment

**SUBJECT:** ADA and Reasonable Accommodation in Employment      **NUMBER:** 50.020.10  
**DIVISION:** Human Resource Services Division      **EFFECTIVE DATE:** 6/7/10

**APPROVED:** Signature on file with Human Resource Services Division

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Oregon state government follows the clear mandate in state law and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, to remove barriers that prevent qualified people with disabilities from enjoying the same employment opportunities that are available to people without disabilities.

Oregon state government provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment. Its agencies do not discriminate based on disability. Oregon state government uses only job-related standards, criteria, and methods of administration that are consistent with business necessity. These standards, criteria and methods do not discriminate or perpetuate discrimination based on disability.

According to OAR 105-040-0001 Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Oregon state government takes positive steps to recruit, hire, train, and provide reasonable accommodation to applicants and employees with disabilities.

**AUTHORITY:**

ORS 240.145; 240.240; 240.250; ORS 659A.103 -145; 243.305; 243.315; The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008; Civil Rights Act of 1991; and 42 U.S.C. §12101 *et seq.*

**APPLICABILITY:**

This policy applies to all state employees, including state temporary employees, according to provisions of federal and state law.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

ADA Accommodation Tool Kit

**DEFINITIONS:**

See State HR Policy 10.000.01 Definitions and OAR 105-010-0000

The following definitions apply to terms referenced in this policy and its attachments:

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** –The ADA is a federal civil rights statute that removes barriers that prevent qualified people with disabilities from enjoying the same employment opportunities available to people without disabilities. References to ADA also refer to amendments to that Act.

**Essential Functions** – These include, but are not limited to, duties that are necessary because:

- The primary reason the position exists is to perform these duties.
- A limited number of employees are available who can perform these duties.
- The incumbent is hired or retained to perform highly specialized duties.

**Individual with a Disability** – This term means a person to whom one or more of the following apply:

- A person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such a person without regard to medications or other assistive measures a person might use to eliminate or reduce the effect of impairment.
- A person with a record of such an impairment
- A person regarded as having such impairment.

**Major Life Activities** – This term means the basic activities the average person in the general population can perform with little or no difficulty. These including breathing; walking; hearing; thinking; concentrating; seeing; communicating; speaking; reading; learning; eating; self-care; performing manual tasks such as reaching, bending, standing and lifting; sleeping; or working (working in general, not the ability to perform a specific job). The term also includes but not limited to “major bodily functions,” such as functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

**Physical or Mental Impairment** – This term refers to any of the following:

- Physiological disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss that affects one or more bodily systems, including neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, cardiovascular or reproductive
- Mental or psychological disorder including but not limited to mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness or specific learning disability
- Disease or condition including orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairment, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, HIV disease or alcoholism
- Any other physical or mental impairment listed under the ADA.

**Qualified Person** – This term means a person who has the personal and professional attributes, including skill, experience, education, physical and mental ability, medical, safety and other requirements to hold the position.

“Qualified person” does not include people who currently engage in illegal use of drugs. A person may qualify, however, if he or she is currently enrolled in or has completed a rehabilitation program, and continues to abstain from illegal use of drugs.

**Reasonable Accommodation** – This term means change or adjustment to a job or work environment that enables a qualified employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees who have no disabilities. “Reasonable accommodation” does not include modifications or adjustments that cause an undue hardship to the agency.

“Reasonable accommodation” does not mean providing personal auxiliary aids or services, such as service dogs or hearing aids that person uses both on and off the job.

A reasonable accommodation does not include lowering production standards, promoting or assigning an employee to a higher-paying job, creating a position or reassigning essential functions to another worker.

Undue Hardship – This term means significant difficulty or expense. Whether a particular accommodation imposes undue hardship is determined on a case-by-case basis, with consideration of such factors as the following:

- The nature and cost of the accommodation needed
- The agency's size, employee's official worksite, and financial resources
- The agency's operation, structure, functions, and geographic separateness
- The agency's administrative or fiscal relationship to its facility responding to the accommodation request and to the other state agencies
- The impact of the accommodation on the operation of the agency or its facility.

## POLICY

- (1) Each state agency director or authorized designee (agency) administers State HR Policy 50.020.10 as the agency's policy. Compliance with the ADA is mandatory.
  - (a) Each agency identifies an ADA Coordinator for the agency to coordinate ADA accommodation requests and function as an agency resource on ADA matters.
  - (b) Each agency develops and follows its own procedures for receiving, processing and documenting accommodation requests under this policy. The attached tool kit will assist in this process.
- (2) An employee may request an accommodation under this policy by following agency procedures.
- (3) The agency must review and respond in a timely manner to each request for accommodation. The agency must engage in an interactive dialogue with the employee to determine whether the accommodation is necessary and will be effective.
- (4) Each accommodation is unique to the person, the disability and the nature of the job. No specific form of accommodation can guarantee success for all people in any particular job. The agency must give primary consideration to the specific accommodation requested by the employee. Through the interactive process the agency may identify and provide an alternative accommodation.
- (5) The duty to provide reasonable accommodation is ongoing. The agency and the employee must engage in the interactive process again if an accommodation proves ineffective.
- (6) The agency may deny an accommodation if it is not effective, if it will cause undue hardship to the agency, or if the agency identifies imminent physical harm or risk. The undue hardship exception is available only after careful consideration. The agency must consider alternative accommodations, should a requested accommodation pose undue hardship.
- (7) Federal and state law prohibit retaliation against an employee with respect to hiring or any other term or condition of employment because the employee asked about, requested, or was previously accommodated under the ADA.

**SUBJECT:** Discrimination and Harassment Free Workplace      **NUMBER:** 50.010.01

**DIVISION:** Human Resource Services Division      **EFFECTIVE DATE:** 01/25/08

**APPROVED:** Signature on file with Human Resource Services Division

**POLICY STATEMENT:**      The State of Oregon is committed to a discrimination and harassment free work environment. This policy outlines types of prohibited conduct and procedures for reporting and investigating prohibited conduct.

**AUTHORITY:**      ORS 174.100, 240.086(1); 240.145(3); 240.250; 240.316(4); 240.321; 240.555; 240.560; 659A.029; 659A.030; Title VII; Civil Rights Act of 1964; Executive Order EO-93-05; Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Employment Act of 1967; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and 29 CFR §37.

**APPLICABILITY:**      All employees, state temporary employees and volunteers.

**ATTACHMENTS:**      None

**DEFINITIONS:**      See also HRSD State Policy 10.000.01, Definitions; and OAR 105-010-0000

**Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA):** A written agreement between the State of Oregon, (Department of Administrative Services) and a labor union. References to CBAs contained in this policy are applicable only to employees covered by a CBA.

**Complainant:** A person or persons allegedly subjected to discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment.

**Contractor:** For the purpose of this policy, a contractor is an individual or business with whom the State of Oregon has entered into an agreement or contract to provide goods or services. Qualified rehabilitation facilities who by contract provide temporary workers to state agencies are considered contractors. Contractors are not subject to ORS 240 but must comply with all federal and state laws.

**Discrimination:** Making employment decisions related to hiring, firing, transferring, promoting, demoting, benefits, compensation, and other terms and conditions of employment, based on or because of an employee's protected class status.

**Employee:** Any person employed by the state in one of the following capacities: management service, unclassified executive service, unclassified or classified unrepresented service, unclassified or classified represented service, or represented or unrepresented temporary service. For the purpose of this policy, this definition includes board and commission members, and individuals who volunteer their services on behalf of state government.

**Higher Standard:** Applies to managers and supervisors. Proactively taking an affirmative

posture to create and maintain a discrimination and harassment free workplace.

**Manager/Supervisor:** Those who supervise or have authority or influence to effect employment decisions.

**Protected Class Under Federal Law:** Race; color; national origin; sex (includes pregnancy-related conditions); religion; age (40 and older); disability; a person who uses leave covered by the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act; a person who uses Military Leave; a person who associates with a protected class; a person who opposes unlawful employment practices, files a complaint or testifies about violations or possible violations; and any other protected class as defined by federal law.

**Protected Class Under Oregon State Law:** All Federally protected classes, plus: age (18 and older); physical or mental disability; injured worker; a person who uses leave covered by the Oregon Family Leave Act; marital status; family relationship; sexual orientation; whistleblower; expunged juvenile record; and any other protected class as defined by state law.

**Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is unwelcome, unwanted, or offensive sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment, or is used as a basis for any employment decision (granting leave requests, promotion, favorable performance appraisal, etc.); or

2) Such conduct is unwelcome, unwanted or offensive and has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to: unwelcome, unwanted, or offensive touching or physical contact of a sexual nature, such as, closeness, impeding or blocking movement, assaulting or pinching; gestures; innuendoes; teasing, jokes, and other sexual talk; intimate inquiries; persistent unwanted courting; sexist put-downs or insults; epithets; slurs; or derogatory comments.

**Sexual Orientation under Oregon State Law:** An individual's actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality or gender identity, regardless of whether the individual's gender identity, appearance, expression or behavior differs from that traditionally associated with the individual's sex at birth.

**Workplace Harassment:** Unwelcome, unwanted or offensive conduct based on or because of an employee's protected class status.

Harassment may occur between a manager/supervisor and a subordinate, between employees, and among non-employees who have business contact with employees. A complainant does not have to be the person harassed, but could be a person affected by the offensive conduct.

Examples of harassing behavior include, but are not limited to, derogatory remarks, slurs and jokes about a person's protected class status.

**POLICY**

(1) The State of Oregon is committed to a discrimination and harassment free work environment. This policy outlines types of prohibited conduct and procedures for reporting and investigating prohibited conduct.

(a) **Discrimination, Workplace Harassment and Sexual Harassment.** The State of Oregon provides a work environment free from unlawful discrimination or workplace harassment based on or because of an employee's protected class status. Additionally, the state of Oregon provides a work environment free from sexual harassment. Employees at every level of the organization, including state temporary employees and volunteers, must conduct themselves in a business-like and professional manner at all times and not engage in any form of discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment.

(b) **Higher Standard.** Managers/supervisors are held to a higher standard and are expected to take a proactive stance to ensure the integrity of the work environment. Managers/supervisors must exercise reasonable care to prevent and promptly correct any discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment they know about or should know about.

(c) **Reporting.** Anyone who is subject to or aware of what he or she believes to be discrimination, workplace harassment, or sexual harassment should report that behavior to the employee's immediate supervisor, another manager, or the agency, board, or commission Human Resource section, Executive Director, or chair, as applicable. A report of discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment is considered a complaint. A supervisor or manager receiving a complaint should promptly notify the Human Resource section, Executive Director, or chair, as applicable.

(A) A complaint may be made orally or in writing.

(B) A complaint must be filed within one year of the occurrence.

(C) An oral or written complaint should contain the following:

(i) the name of the person filing the report;

(ii) the name of the complainant;

(iii) the names of all parties involved, including witnesses;

(iv) a specific and detailed description of the conduct or action that the employee believes is discriminatory or harassing;

(v) the date or time period in which the alleged conduct occurred; and

(vi) a description of the remedy the employee desires.

(d) **Other Reporting Options.** Nothing in this policy prevents any person from filing a formal grievance in accordance with a CBA, or a formal complaint with the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or if applicable, the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Civil Rights Center. However, some CBAs require an employee to choose between the complaint procedure outlined in the CBA and filing a BOLI or EEOC complaint.

(e) **Filing a Report with the USDOL Civil Rights Center.** An employee whose position is funded by the Oregon Workforce Investment Act (WIA), such as employees of the Oregon Workforce One-stop System, may file a complaint under the WIA, Methods of Administration (MOA) with the State of Oregon WIA, MOA Equal Opportunity Officer or directly through the USDOL, Civil Rights Center. The

complaint must be written, signed and filed within 180 days of when the alleged discrimination or harassment occurred.

- (f) **Investigation.** The agency, board, or commission Human Resource section, Executive Director, or chair, as applicable, will coordinate and conduct or delegate responsibility for coordinating and conducting an investigation.
- (A) All complaints will be taken seriously and an investigation will be initiated as quickly as possible.
  - (B) The agency, board or commission may need to take steps to ensure employees are protected from further potential discrimination or harassment.
  - (C) Complaints will be dealt with in a discreet and confidential manner, to the extent possible.
  - (D) All parties are expected to cooperate with the investigation and keep information regarding the investigation confidential.
  - (E) The agency, board or commission will notify the accused and all witnesses that retaliating against a person for making a report of discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
  - (F) The agency, board or commission will notify the complainant and the accused when the investigation is concluded.
  - (G) Immediate and appropriate action will be taken if a complaint is substantiated.
  - (H) The agency, board or commission will inform the complainant if any part of a complaint is substantiated and that action has been taken. The complainant will not be given the specifics of the action.
  - (I) The complainant and the accused will be notified by the agency, board or commission if a complaint is not substantiated.
- (g) **Penalties.** Conduct in violation of this policy will not be tolerated.
- (A) Employees engaging in conduct in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
  - (B) State temporary employees and volunteers who engage in conduct in violation of this policy may be subject to termination of their working or volunteer relationship with the agency, board or commission.
  - (C) An agency, board or commission may be liable for discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment if it knows of or should know of conduct in violation of this policy and fails to take prompt, appropriate action.
  - (D) Managers and supervisors who know or should know of conduct in violation of this policy and who fail to report such behavior or fail to take prompt, appropriate action may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
  - (E) An employee who engages in harassment of other employees while away from the workplace and outside of working hours may be subject to the provisions of this policy if that conduct has a negative impact on the work environment and/or working relationships.
  - (F) If a complaint involves the conduct of a contracted employee or a contractor, the agency, board, or commission Human Resource section, Executive Director, chair, or designee must inform the contractor

of the problem behavior and require prompt, appropriate action.

(G) If a complaint involves the conduct of a client, customer, or visitor, the agency, board or commission should follow its own internal procedures and take prompt, appropriate action.

(h) **Retaliation.** This policy prohibits retaliation against employees who file a complaint, participate in an investigation, or report observing discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment.

(A) Employees who believe they have been retaliated against because they filed a complaint, participated in an investigation, or reported observing discrimination, workplace harassment or sexual harassment, should report this behavior to the employee's supervisor, another manager, the Human Resource section, the Executive Director, or the chair, as applicable. Complaints of retaliation will be investigated promptly.

(B) Employees who violate this policy by retaliating against others may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

(C) State temporary employees and volunteers who retaliate against others may be subject to termination of their working or volunteer relationship with the agency, board or commission.

(i) **Policy Notification.** All employees including state temporary employees and volunteers shall:

(A) be given a copy or the location of Statewide Policy 50.010.01, Discrimination and Harassment Free Workplace;

(B) be given directions to read the policy;

(C) be provided an opportunity to ask questions and have their questions answered; and

(D) sign an acknowledgement indicating the employee read the policy and had the opportunity to ask questions.

(i) Signed acknowledgements are kept on file at the agency, board or commission.

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**(1) Performance Measure:** Percent of employees informed of Policy 50.010.01, prohibited behavior and reporting procedures.

**Performance Standard:** 100%

**(2) Performance Measure:** Percent of complaints where prompt, appropriate action is taken following investigation of a substantiated complaint.

**Performance Standard:** 100%

<b>SUBJECT:</b> Maintaining a Professional Workplace	<b>NUMBER:</b>	50.010.03
<b>DIVISION:</b> Human Resource Services Division	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	08/27/07
<b>APPROVED:</b> Signature on file with the Human Resource Services Division		

**POLICY STATEMENT:** It is the policy of the State of Oregon to create and maintain a work environment that is respectful, professional and free from inappropriate workplace behavior.

**AUTHORITY:** ORS 240.145 and ORS 240.250

**APPLICABILITY:** All employees, including state temporary employees

**ATTACHMENTS:** N/A

**DEFINITIONS:**

See also HRSD State Policy 10.000.01, Definitions; and OAR 105-010-0000

**Agency:** Refers to state agencies, boards and commissions

**Professional Workplace Behavior:** Supporting the values and mission of the State of Oregon and the agency, building positive relationships with others, communicating in a respectful manner, holding oneself accountable and pursuing change within the system.

**Inappropriate Workplace Behavior:** Unwelcome or unwanted conduct or behavior that causes a negative impact or disruption to the workplace or the business of the state, or results in the erosion of employee morale and is not associated with an employee's protected class status.

Examples of inappropriate workplace behavior include but are not limited to, comments or behaviors of an individual or group that disparage, demean or show disrespect for another employee, a manager, a subordinate, a customer, a contractor or a visitor in the workplace.

Inappropriate workplace behavior does not include actions of performance management such as supervisor instructions, expectations or feedback, administering of disciplinary actions, or investigatory meetings.

Inappropriate workplace behavior does not include assigned, requested or unsolicited constructive peer feedback on projects or work.

**Protected Class Under Federal Law:** Race; color; national origin; sex (includes pregnancy-related conditions); religion; age (40 and older); disability; a person who uses leave covered by the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act; a person who uses

## Maintaining a Professional Workplace

Military Leave; a person who associates with a protected class; a person who opposes unlawful employment practices, files a complaint or testifies about violations or possible violations; and any other protected class as defined by federal law.

**Protected Class Under Oregon State Law:** All Federally protected classes, plus: age (18 and older); physical or mental disability; injured worker; a person who uses leave covered by the Oregon Family Leave Act; marital status; family relationship; sexual orientation; whistleblower; expunged juvenile record; and any other protected class as defined by state law.

**POLICY**

- (1) It is the policy of the State of Oregon to create and maintain a work environment that is respectful, professional and free from inappropriate workplace behavior.
- (a) **Conduct** Employees at every level of the agency should foster an environment that encourages professionalism and discourages disrespectful behavior. All employees are expected to behave respectfully and professionally and refrain from engaging in inappropriate workplace behavior.
- (b) **Addressing Inappropriate Workplace Behavior**
- (A) Supervisors must address inappropriate behavior that they observe or experience and should do so as close to the time of the occurrence as possible and appropriate.
- (B) If an employee observes or experiences inappropriate workplace behavior and the employee feels comfortable in doing so, they should:
- (i) redirect inappropriate conversations or behavior to workplace business; and/or
  - (ii) tell an offending employee his/her behavior is offensive and ask him/her to stop.
- (c) **Reporting Inappropriate Workplace Behavior**
- (A) An employee should report inappropriate workplace behavior he/she experiences or observes to his/her immediate supervisor as soon as practicable. If the employee's immediate supervisor is the one engaging in the inappropriate behavior, the employee should report the behavior to upper management, the agency head or Human Resource section, as soon as practicable. The report may be made orally or in writing.
- (B) If past practice exists in the agency, an employee who is represented by a labor union may have a union representative present during regular work hours, when reporting inappropriate workplace behavior and through the process set forth in this policy. The union representative must not be a witness or party to the investigation.
- (C) Reporting behavior or conduct directed toward an employee because of his/her protected class status is addressed in DAS Statewide Policy 50.010.01, Discrimination and Harassment Free Workplace.
- (d) **Responding to a Report of Inappropriate Workplace Behavior** Inappropriate workplace behavior must be addressed and corrected before it becomes pervasive, causes further workplace disruption or lowers employee morale. Unless the agency decides otherwise, the supervisor of the employee allegedly engaging in the inappropriate workplace behavior must investigate the report as soon as possible.

**(e) Consequences**

(A) Any employee found to have engaged in inappropriate workplace behavior, will be counseled, or, depending on the severity of the behavior, may be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

(B) A supervisor who fails to address inappropriate behavior, will be counseled, or, depending on the severity of the behavior, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**(f) Retaliation** Retaliating against someone for reporting or addressing inappropriate workplace behavior is prohibited. The agency will investigate reports of retaliation. Any employee found to have engaged in retaliation may be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

## 105-040-0015

### **Veteran's Preference in Employment**

Applicability: Recruitment and selection processes for all State of Oregon positions in agencies subject to ORS 240, State Personnel Relations Law, including but not limited to promotional opportunities.

(1) Definitions: (See also HRSD Rule 105-010-0000 Definitions Applicable Generally to Personnel Rules and Policies.)

(a) Initial Application Screening: An agency's process of determining whether an applicant meets the minimum and special qualifications for a position. An Initial Application Screening may also include an evaluation of skills or grading of supplemental test questions if required on the recruiting announcement.

(b) Application Examination: The selection process utilized by an agency after Initial Application Screening. This selection process includes, but is not limited to, formal testing or other assessments resulting in a score as well as un-scored examinations such as interviews and reference checks.

(c) Veteran and Disabled Veteran: As defined by ORS 408.225 and 408.235.

(2) Application of preference points upon Initial Application Screening: Qualifying Veterans and Disabled Veterans receive preference points as follows;

(a) Five Veteran's Preference points are added upon Initial Application Screening when an applicant submits as verification of eligibility a copy of the Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214 or 215), or a letter from the US Department of Veteran's Affairs indicating the applicant receives a non-service connected pension with the State of Oregon Application; or

(b) Ten Disabled Veteran's points are added upon Initial Application Screening when an applicant submits as verification of eligibility a copy of the Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214 or 215) with the State of Oregon Application. Disabled Veterans must also submit a copy of their Veteran's disability preference letter from the US Department of Veteran Affairs, unless the information is included in the DD Form 214 or 215.

(c) Veteran's and Disabled Veteran's preference points are not added when a Veteran or Disabled Veteran fails to meet the minimum or the special qualifications for a position.

(3) Following an Initial Application Screening the agency generates a list of qualified applicants to consider for Appointment. An Appointing Authority or designee may then:

(a) Determine whether or not to interview all applicants who meet the minimum and special qualifications of the position (including all Veterans and Disabled Veterans); or

(b) Select a group of Veteran and Disabled Veteran applicants who most closely match the agency's purposes in filling the position. This group of applicants may be considered along with non-veteran applicants who closely match the purposes of the agency in filling the position as determined by:

(A) Scored Application Examinations (including scored interviews): If an agency utilizes, after an Initial Application Screening, a scored Application Examination to determine whom to consider further for Appointment, the agency will add (based on a 100-point scale) five points to a Veteran's score or 10 points to a Disabled Veteran's score or;

(B) Un-scored Application Examinations: Un-scored Application Examinations done by sorting into levels (such as "unsatisfactory," "satisfactory," "excellent") based on desired attributes or other criteria for further consideration will be accomplished by:

(i) Advancing the application of a Veteran one level;

(ii) Advancing an application of a Disabled Veteran two levels.

(4) Preference in un-scored interviews: A Veteran or Disabled Veteran who, in the judgment of the Appointing Authority or designee, meets all or substantially all of the agency's purposes in filling the position will continue to be considered for Appointment.

(5) If a Veteran or Disabled Veteran has been determined to be equal to the top applicant or applicants for a position by the Appointing Authority or designee then the Veteran or Disabled Veteran is ranked more highly than non-veteran applicants and, a Disabled Veteran is ranked more highly than non-veteran and Veteran applicants.

(6) Preference described in Sections 2 through 5 of this rule is not a requirement to appoint a Veteran or Disabled Veteran to a position. An agency may base a decision not to appoint the Veteran or Disabled Veteran solely on the Veteran's or Disabled Veteran's merits or qualifications.

(7) A Veteran or a Disabled Veteran applicant not appointed to a position may request an explanation from the agency. The request must be in writing and be sent within 30 calendar days of the date the Veteran or Disabled Veteran was notified that they were not selected. The agency will respond in writing with the reasons for not appointing the Veteran or Disabled Veteran.

[ED. NOTE: Forms referenced are available from the agency.]

Stat. Auth: ORS 240.145(3) & 240.250

Stats. Implemented: ORS 408.225, 408.230 & 408.235

Hist.: HRSD 3-2007(Temp), f. & cert ef. 9-5-07 thru 3-3-08; HRSD 1-2008, f. 2-27-08, cert. ef. 3-1-08; HRSD 3-2009, f. 12-30-09, cert. ef. 1-1-10



## Prohibited Employment Policies/Practices

Under the laws enforced by EEOC, it is illegal to discriminate against someone (applicant or employee) because of that person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. It is also illegal to retaliate against a person because he or she complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

The law forbids discrimination in every aspect of employment.

The laws enforced by EEOC prohibit an employer or other covered entity from using neutral employment policies and practices that have a disproportionately negative effect on applicants or employees of a particular race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or national origin, or on an individual with a disability or class of individuals with disabilities, if the policies or practices at issue are not job-related and necessary to the operation of the business. The laws enforced by EEOC also prohibit an employer from using neutral employment policies and practices that have a disproportionately negative impact on applicants or employees age 40 or older, if the policies or practices at issue are not based on a reasonable factor other than age.

## Job Advertisements

It is illegal for an employer to publish a job advertisement that shows a preference for or discourages someone from applying for a job because of his or her race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

For example, a help-wanted ad that seeks "females" or "recent college graduates" may discourage men and people over 40 from applying and may violate the law.

## Recruitment

It is also illegal for an employer to recruit new employees in a way that discriminates against them because of their race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

For example, an employer's reliance on word-of-mouth recruitment by its mostly Hispanic work force may violate the law if the result is that almost all new hires are Hispanic.

## Application & Hiring

It is illegal for an employer to discriminate against a job applicant because of his or her race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. For example, an employer may not refuse to give employment applications to people of a certain race.

An employer may not base hiring decisions on stereotypes and assumptions about a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

If an employer requires job applicants to take a test, the test must be necessary and related to the job and the employer may not exclude people of a particular race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, or individuals with disabilities. In addition, the employer may not use a test that excludes applicants age 40 or older if the test is not based on a reasonable factor other than age.

If a job applicant with a disability needs an accommodation (such as a sign language interpreter) to apply for a job, the employer is required to provide the accommodation, so long as the accommodation does not cause the employer significant difficulty or expense.

## Job Referrals

It is illegal for an employer, employment agency or union to take into account a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information when making decisions about job referrals.

## Job Assignments & Promotions

It is illegal for an employer to make decisions about job assignments and promotions based on an employee's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. For example, an employer may not give preference to employees of a certain race when making shift assignments and may not segregate employees of a particular national origin from other employees or from customers.



An employer may not base assignment and promotion decisions on stereotypes and assumptions about a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

If an employer requires employees to take a test before making decisions about assignments or promotions, the test may not exclude people of a particular race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or national origin, or individuals with disabilities, unless the employer can show that the test is necessary and related to the job. In addition, the employer may not use a test that excludes employees age 40 or older if the test is not based on a reasonable factor other than age.

## Pay And Benefits

It is illegal for an employer to discriminate against an employee in the payment of wages or employee benefits on the bases of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Employee benefits include sick and vacation leave, insurance, access to overtime as well as overtime pay, and retirement programs. For example, an employer may not pay Hispanic workers less than African-American workers because of their national origin, and men and women in the same workplace must be given equal pay for equal work.

In some situations, an employer may be allowed to reduce some employee benefits for older workers, but only if the cost of providing the reduced benefits is the same as the cost of providing benefits to younger workers.

## Discipline & Discharge

An employer may not take into account a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information when making decisions about discipline or discharge. For example, if two employees commit a similar offense, an employer may not discipline them differently because of their race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

When deciding which employees will be laid off, an employer may not choose the oldest workers because of their age.

Employers also may not discriminate when deciding which workers to recall after a layoff.

## Employment References

It is illegal for an employer to give a negative or false employment reference (or refuse to give a reference) because of a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

## Reasonable Accommodation & Disability

The law requires that an employer provide reasonable accommodation to an employee or job applicant with a disability, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense for the employer.

A reasonable accommodation is any change in the workplace (or in the ways things are usually done) to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.

Reasonable accommodation might include, for example, providing a ramp for a wheelchair user or providing a reader or interpreter for a blind or deaf employee or applicant.

## Reasonable Accommodation & Religion

The law requires an employer to reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause difficulty or expense for the employer. This means an employer may have to make reasonable adjustments at work that will allow the employee to practice his or her religion, such as allowing an employee to voluntarily swap shifts with a co-worker so that he or she can attend religious services.

## Training & Apprenticeship Programs

It is illegal for a training or apprenticeship program to discriminate on the bases of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. For example, an employer may not deny training opportunities to African-American employees because of their race.

In some situations, an employer may be allowed to set age limits for participation in an apprenticeship program.

## Harassment

It is illegal to harass an employee because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.

It is also illegal to harass someone because they have complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Harassment can take the form of slurs, graffiti, offensive or derogatory comments, or other verbal or physical conduct. Sexual harassment (including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other conduct of a sexual nature) is also unlawful. Although the law does not prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal if it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or if it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

Harassment outside of the workplace may also be illegal if there is a link with the workplace. For example, if a supervisor harasses an employee while driving the employee to a meeting.

*Read more about [harassment](#).*

## Terms & Conditions Of Employment

The law makes it illegal for an employer to make any employment decision because of a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. That means an employer may not discriminate when it comes to such things as hiring, firing, promotions, and pay. It also means an employer may not discriminate, for example, when granting breaks, approving leave, assigning work stations, or setting any other term or condition of employment - however small.

## Pre-Employment Inquiries (General)

As a general rule, the information obtained and requested through the pre-employment process should be limited to those essential for determining if a person is qualified for the job; whereas, information regarding race, sex, national origin, age, and religion are irrelevant in such determinations.

Employers are explicitly prohibited from making pre-employment inquiries about disability.

Although state and federal equal opportunity laws do not clearly forbid employers from making pre-employment inquiries that relate to, or disproportionately screen out members based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, or age, such inquiries may be used as evidence of an employer's intent to discriminate unless the questions asked can be justified by some business purpose.

Therefore, inquiries about organizations, clubs, societies, and lodges of which an applicant may be a member or any other questions, which may indicate the applicant's race, sex, national origin, disability status, age, religion, color or ancestry if answered, should generally be avoided.

Similarly, employers should not ask for a photograph of an applicant. If needed for identification purposes, a photograph may be obtained after an offer of employment is made and accepted.

## Pre-Employment Inquiries and:

Race

Height & Weight

Credit Rating Or Economic Status

Religious Affiliation Or Beliefs

Citizenship

Marital Status, Number Of Children

Gender

Arrest & Conviction

Security/Background Checks For Certain Religious Or Ethnic Groups

Disability

Medical Questions & Examinations

## Dress Code

In general, an employer may establish a dress code which applies to all employees or employees within certain job categories. There are a few possible exceptions.

A dress code must not treat some employees less favorably because of their national origin. For example, a dress code that prohibits certain kinds of ethnic dress, such as traditional African or East Indian attire, but otherwise permits casual dress would treat some employees less favorably because of their national origin.

An employer may require all workers to follow a uniform dress code even if the dress code conflicts with some workers' ethnic beliefs or practices.

If the dress code conflicts with an employee's religious practices and the employee requests an accommodation, the employer must modify the dress code or permit an exception to the dress code unless doing so would result in undue hardship. Similarly, if an employee requests an accommodation to the dress code because of his disability, the employer must modify the dress code or permit an exception to the dress code, unless doing so would result in undue hardship.

If an employee needs to modify a dress requirement because of a disability, the employer may need to grant that employee a reasonable accommodation.

## Constructive Discharge/Forced To Resign

Discriminatory practices under the laws EEOC enforces also include constructive discharge or forcing an employee to resign by making the work environment so intolerable a reasonable person would not be able to stay.



## The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older from employment discrimination based on age. The ADEA's protections apply to both employees and job applicants. Under the ADEA, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of his/her age with respect to any term, condition, or privilege of employment, including hiring, firing, promotion, layoff, compensation, benefits, job assignments, and training. The ADEA permits employers to favor older workers based on age even when doing so adversely affects a younger worker who is 40 or older.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on age or for filing an age discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under the ADEA.

The ADEA applies to employers with 20 or more employees, including state and local governments. It also applies to employment agencies and labor organizations, as well as to the federal government. ADEA protections include:

- **Apprenticeship Programs**

It is generally unlawful for apprenticeship programs, including joint labor-management apprenticeship programs, to discriminate on the basis of an individual's age. Age limitations in apprenticeship programs are valid only if they fall within certain specific exceptions under the ADEA or if the EEOC grants a specific exemption.

- **Job Notices and Advertisements**

The ADEA generally makes it unlawful to include age preferences, limitations, or specifications in job notices or advertisements. A job notice or advertisement may specify an age limit only in the rare circumstances where age is shown to be a "bona fide occupational qualification" (BFOQ) reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the business.

- **Pre-Employment Inquiries**

The ADEA does not specifically prohibit an employer from asking an applicant's age or date of birth. However, because such inquiries may deter older workers from applying for employment or may otherwise indicate possible intent to discriminate based on age, requests for age information will be closely scrutinized to make sure that the inquiry was made for a lawful purpose, rather than for a purpose prohibited by the ADEA. If the information is needed for a lawful purpose, it can be obtained after the employee is hired.

- **Benefits**

The Older Workers Benefit Protection Act of 1990 (OWBPA) amended the ADEA to specifically prohibit employers from denying benefits to older employees. Congress recognized that the cost of providing certain benefits to older workers is greater than the cost of providing those same benefits to younger workers, and that those greater costs might create a disincentive to hire older workers. Therefore, in limited circumstances, an employer may be permitted to reduce benefits based on age, as long as the cost of providing the reduced benefits to older workers is no less than the cost of providing benefits to younger workers.

Employers are permitted to coordinate retiree health benefit plans with eligibility for Medicare or a comparable state-sponsored health benefit.

- **Waivers of ADEA Rights**

An employer may ask an employee to waive his/her rights or claims under the ADEA. Such waivers are common in settling ADEA discrimination claims or in connection with exit incentive or other employment termination programs. However, the ADEA, as amended by OWBPA, sets out specific minimum standards that must be met in order for a waiver to be considered knowing and voluntary and, therefore, valid. Among other requirements, a valid ADEA waiver must:

- be in writing and be understandable;
- specifically refer to ADEA rights or claims;
- not waive rights or claims that may arise in the future;
- be in exchange for valuable consideration in addition to anything of value to which the individual already is entitled;
- advise the individual in writing to consult an attorney before signing the waiver; and
- provide the individual at least 21 days to consider the agreement and at least seven days to revoke the agreement after signing it.

If an employer requests an ADEA waiver in connection with an exit incentive or other employment termination program, the minimum requirements for a valid waiver are more extensive. See "Understanding Waivers of Discrimination Claims in Employee Severance Agreements" at [http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/qanda\\_severance-agreements.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/qanda_severance-agreements.html)

## Disability Discrimination

Disability discrimination occurs when an employer or other entity covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, or the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, treats a qualified individual with a disability who is an employee or applicant unfavorably because she has a disability.

Disability discrimination also occurs when a covered employer or other entity treats an applicant or employee less favorably because she has a history of a disability (such as cancer that is controlled or in remission) or because she is believed to have a physical or mental impairment that is not transitory (lasting or expected to last six months or less) and minor (even if she does not have such an impairment).

The law requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to an employee or job applicant with a disability, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense for the employer ("undue hardship").

The law also protects people from discrimination based on their relationship with a person with a disability (even if they do not themselves have a disability). For example, it is illegal to discriminate against an employee because her husband has a disability.

*Note: Federal employees and applicants are covered by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, instead of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The protections are mostly the same.*

## Disability Discrimination & Work Situations

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.

## Disability Discrimination & Harassment

It is illegal to harass an applicant or employee because he has a disability, had a disability in the past, or is believed to have a physical or mental impairment that is not transitory (lasting or expected to last six months or less) and minor (even if he does not have such an impairment).

Harassment can include, for example, offensive remarks about a person's disability. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that aren't very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

## Disability Discrimination & Reasonable Accommodation

The law requires an employer to provide reasonable accommodation to an employee or job applicant with a disability, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense for the employer.

A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment (or in the way things are usually done) to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment.

Reasonable accommodation might include, for example, making the workplace accessible for wheelchair users or providing a reader or interpreter for someone who is blind or hearing impaired.

While the federal anti-discrimination laws don't require an employer to accommodate an employee who must care for a disabled family member, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) may require an employer to take such steps. The Department of Labor enforces the FMLA. For more information, call: 1-866-487-9243.

## Disability Discrimination & Reasonable Accommodation & Undue Hardship

An employer doesn't have to provide an accommodation if doing so would cause undue hardship to the employer.

Undue hardship means that the accommodation would be too difficult or too expensive to provide, in light of the employer's size, financial resources, and the needs of the business. An employer may not refuse to provide an accommodation just because it involves some cost. An employer does not have to provide the exact accommodation the employee or job applicant wants. If more than one accommodation works, the employer may choose which one to provide.



## Definition Of Disability

Not everyone with a medical condition is protected by the law. In order to be protected, a person must be qualified for the job and have a disability as defined by the law.

A person can show that he or she has a disability in one of three ways:

A person may be disabled if he or she has a physical or mental condition that substantially limits a major life activity (such as walking, talking, seeing, hearing, or learning).

A person may be disabled if he or she has a history of a disability (such as cancer that is in remission).

A person may be disabled if he is believed to have a physical or mental impairment that is not transitory (lasting or expected to last six months or less) and minor (even if he does not have such an impairment).

## Disability & Medical Exams During Employment Application & Interview Stage

The law places strict limits on employers when it comes to asking job applicants to answer medical questions, take a medical exam, or identify a disability.

For example, an employer may not ask a job applicant to answer medical questions or take a medical exam before extending a job offer. An employer also may not ask job applicants if they have a disability (or about the nature of an obvious disability). An employer may ask job applicants whether they can perform the job and how they would perform the job, with or without a reasonable accommodation.

## Disability & Medical Exams After A Job Offer For Employment

After a job is offered to an applicant, the law allows an employer to condition the job offer on the applicant answering certain medical questions or successfully passing a medical exam, but only if all new employees in the same type of job have to answer the questions or take the exam.

## Disability & Medical Exams For Persons Who Have Started Working As Employees

Once a person is hired and has started work, an employer generally can only ask medical questions or require a medical exam if the employer needs medical documentation to support an employee's request for an accommodation or if the employer believes that an employee is not able to perform a job successfully or safely because of a medical condition.

The law also requires that employers keep all medical records and information confidential and in separate medical files.

## Available Resources

In addition to a variety of [formal guidance documents](#), EEOC has developed a wide range of fact sheets, question & answer documents, and other publications to help employees and employers understand the complex issues surrounding disability discrimination.

[Your Employment Rights as an Individual With a Disability](#)

[Job Applicants and the ADA](#)

[Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities in the Workplace and the ADA](#)

[Questions and Answers: Promoting Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce](#)

[The Family and Medical Leave Act, the ADA, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)

[The ADA: A Primer for Small Business](#)

[Your Responsibilities as an Employer](#)

[Small Employers and Reasonable Accommodation](#)

[Work At Home/Telework as a Reasonable Accommodation](#)

[Applying Performance And Conduct Standards To Employees With Disabilities](#)

[Obtaining and Using Employee Medical Information as Part of Emergency Evacuation Procedures](#)

[Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities in the Workplace and the ADA-A Guide for Employers](#)

[Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Employer Best Practices for Workers with Caregiving Responsibilities](#)

[Reasonable Accommodations for Attorneys with Disabilities](#)

[How to Comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for Restaurants and Other Food Service Employers](#)

[Final Report on Best Practices For the Employment of People with Disabilities In State Government](#)

[ABCs of Schedule A Documents](#)

## The Questions and Answers Series

[Health Care Workers and the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Deafness and Hearing Impairments in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Blindness and Vision Impairments in the Workplace and the ADA](#)

[The Americans with Disabilities Act's Association Provision](#)

[Diabetes in the Workplace and the ADA](#)

[Epilepsy in the Workplace and the ADA](#)

[Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace and the ADA](#)

[Cancer in the Workplace and the ADA](#)

## Mediation and the ADA

[Questions and Answers for Mediation Providers: Mediation and the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

[Questions and Answers for Parties to Mediation: Mediation and the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

## Facts About the Americans with Disabilities Act

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. The ADA covers employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. It also applies to employment agencies and to labor organizations. The ADA's nondiscrimination standards also apply to federal sector employees under section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and its implementing rules.

An individual with a disability is a person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.

A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question. Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.
- Job restructuring, modifying work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position;
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

An employer is required to make a reasonable accommodation to the known disability of a qualified applicant or employee if it would not impose an "undue hardship" on the operation of the employer's business. Reasonable accommodations are adjustments or modifications provided by an employer to enable people with disabilities to enjoy equal employment opportunities. Accommodations vary depending upon the needs of the individual applicant or employee. Not all people with disabilities (or even all people with the same disability) will require the same accommodation. For example:

- A deaf applicant may need a sign language interpreter during the job interview.
- An employee with diabetes may need regularly scheduled breaks during the workday to eat properly and monitor blood sugar and insulin levels.
- A blind employee may need someone to read information posted on a bulletin board.
- An employee with cancer may need leave to have radiation or chemotherapy treatments.

An employer does not have to provide a reasonable accommodation if it imposes an "undue hardship." Undue hardship is defined as an action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as an employer's size, financial resources, and the nature and structure of its operation.

An employer is not required to lower quality or production standards to make an accommodation; nor is an employer obligated to provide personal use items such as glasses or hearing aids.

An employer generally does not have to provide a reasonable accommodation unless an individual with a disability has asked for one. If an employer believes that a medical condition is causing a performance or conduct problem, it may ask the employee how to solve the problem and if the employee needs a reasonable accommodation. Once a reasonable accommodation is requested, the employer and the individual should discuss the individual's needs and identify the appropriate reasonable accommodation. Where more than one accommodation would work, the employer may choose the one that is less costly or that is easier to provide.

Title I of the ADA also covers:

#### Medical Examinations and Inquiries

Employers may not ask job applicants about the existence, nature, or severity of a disability. Applicants may be asked about their ability to perform specific job functions. A job offer may be conditioned on the results of a medical examination, but only if the examination is required for all entering employees in similar jobs. Medical examinations of employees must be job related and consistent with the employer's business needs.

Medical records are confidential. The basic rule is that with limited exceptions, employers must keep confidential any medical information they learn about an applicant or employee. Information can be confidential even if it contains no medical diagnosis or treatment course and even if it is not generated by a health care professional. For example, an employee's request for a reasonable accommodation would be considered medical information subject to the ADA's confidentiality requirements.

#### Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Employees and applicants currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs are not covered by the ADA when an employer acts on the basis of such use. Tests for illegal drugs are not subject to the ADA's restrictions on medical examinations. Employers may hold illegal drug users and alcoholics to the same performance standards as other employees.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on disability or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under the ADA.

#### Federal Tax Incentives to Encourage the Employment of People with Disabilities and to Promote the Accessibility of Public Accommodations

The Internal Revenue Code includes several provisions aimed at making businesses more accessible to people with disabilities. The following provides general – non-legal – information about three of the most significant tax incentives. (Employers should check with their accountants or tax advisors to determine eligibility for these incentives or visit the Internal Revenue Service's website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), for more information. Similar state and local tax incentives may be available.)

##### Small Business Tax Credit (Internal Revenue Code Section 44: Disabled Access Credit)

Small businesses with either \$1,000,000 or less in revenue or 30 or fewer full-time employees may take a tax credit of up to \$5,000 annually for the cost of providing reasonable accommodations such as sign language interpreters, readers, materials in alternative format (such as Braille or large print), the purchase of adaptive equipment, the modification of existing equipment, or the removal of architectural barriers.

##### Work Opportunity Tax Credit (Internal Revenue Code Section 51)

Employers who hire certain targeted low-income groups, including individuals referred from vocational rehabilitation agencies and individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be eligible for an annual tax credit of up to \$2,400 for each qualifying employee who works at least 400 hours during the tax year. Additionally, a maximum credit of \$1,200 may be available for each qualifying summer youth employee.

##### Architectural/Transportation Tax Deduction (Internal Revenue Code Section 190 Barrier Removal):

This annual deduction of up to \$15,000 is available to businesses of any size for the costs of removing barriers for people with disabilities, including the following: providing accessible parking spaces, ramps, and curb cuts; providing wheelchair-accessible telephones, water fountains, and restrooms; making walkways at least 48 inches wide; and making entrances accessible.

## **Equal Pay and Compensation Discrimination Equal Pay Act of 1963, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

The right of employees to be free from discrimination in their compensation is protected under several federal laws, including the following enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: the **Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The law against compensation discrimination includes all payments made to or on behalf employees as remuneration for employment. All forms of compensation are covered, including salary, overtime pay, bonuses, stock options, profit sharing and bonus plans, life insurance, vacation and holiday pay, cleaning or gasoline allowances, hotel accommodations, reimbursement for travel expenses, and benefits.

### **Equal Pay Act**

The Equal Pay Act requires that men and women be given equal pay for equal work in the same establishment. The jobs need not be identical, but they must be substantially equal. It is job content, not job titles, that determines whether jobs are substantially equal. Specifically, the EPA provides that employers may not pay unequal wages to men and women who perform jobs that require substantially equal skill, effort and responsibility, and that are performed under similar working conditions within the same establishment. Each of these factors is summarized below:

#### **Skill**

- Measured by factors such as the experience, ability, education, and training required to perform the job. The issue is what skills are required for the job, not what skills the individual employees may have. For example, two bookkeeping jobs could be considered equal under the EPA even if one of the job holders has a master's degree in physics, since that degree would not be required for the job.

#### **Effort**

- The amount of physical or mental exertion needed to perform the job. For example, suppose that men and women work side by side on a line assembling machine parts. The person at the end of the line must also lift the assembled product as he or she completes the work and place it on a board. That job requires more effort than the other assembly line jobs if the extra effort of lifting the assembled product off the line is substantial and is a regular part of the job. As a result, it would not be a violation to pay that person more, regardless of whether the job is held by a man or a woman.

#### **Responsibility**

- The degree of accountability required in performing the job. For example, a salesperson who is delegated the duty of determining whether to accept customers' personal checks has more responsibility than other salespeople. On the other hand, a minor difference in responsibility, such as turning out the lights at the end of the day, would not justify a pay differential.

#### **Working Conditions**

- This encompasses two factors: (1) physical surroundings like temperature, fumes, and ventilation; and (2) hazards.

## Establishment

- The prohibition against compensation discrimination under the EPA applies only to jobs within an establishment. An establishment is a distinct physical place of business rather than an entire business or enterprise consisting of several places of business. In some circumstances, physically separate places of business may be treated as one establishment. For example, if a central administrative unit hires employees, sets their compensation, and assigns them to separate work locations, the separate work sites can be considered part of one establishment.

Pay differentials are permitted when they are based on seniority, merit, quantity or quality of production, or a factor other than sex. These are known as “affirmative defenses” and it is the employer’s burden to prove that they apply.

In correcting a pay differential, no employee’s pay may be reduced. Instead, the pay of the lower paid employee(s) must be increased.

## Title VII, ADEA, and ADA

Title VII, the ADEA, and the ADA prohibit compensation discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability. Unlike the EPA, there is no requirement that the claimant’s job be substantially equal to that of a higher paid person outside the claimant’s protected class, nor do these statutes require the claimant to work in the same establishment as a comparator. Compensation discrimination under Title VII, the ADEA, or the ADA can occur in a variety of forms. For example:

- An employer pays an employee with a disability less than similarly situated employees without disabilities and the employer’s explanation (if any) does not satisfactorily account for the differential.
- An employer sets the compensation for jobs predominately held by, for example, women or African-Americans below that suggested by the employer’s job evaluation study, while the pay for jobs predominately held by men or whites is consistent with the level suggested by the job evaluation study.
- An employer maintains a neutral compensation policy or practice that has an adverse impact on employees in a protected class and cannot be justified as job-related and consistent with business necessity. For example, if an employer provides extra compensation to employees who are the “head of household,” i.e., married with dependents and the primary financial contributor to the household, the practice may have an unlawful disparate impact on women.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on compensation or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under Title VII, ADEA, ADA or the Equal Pay Act.

## **Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)**

*Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA), which prohibits genetic information discrimination in employment, took effect on November 21, 2009.*

Under Title II of GINA, it is illegal to discriminate against employees or applicants because of genetic information. Title II of GINA prohibits the use of genetic information in making employment decisions, restricts employers and other entities covered by Title II (employment agencies, labor organizations and joint labor-management training and apprenticeship programs - referred to as "covered entities") from requesting, requiring or purchasing genetic information, and strictly limits the disclosure of genetic information.

The EEOC enforces Title II of GINA (dealing with genetic discrimination in employment). The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and the Treasury have responsibility for issuing regulations for Title I of GINA, which addresses the use of genetic information in health insurance.

### Definition of "Genetic Information"

Genetic information includes information about an individual's genetic tests and the genetic tests of an individual's family members, as well as information about the manifestation of a disease or disorder in an individual's family members (i.e. family medical history). Family medical history is included in the definition of genetic information because it is often used to determine whether someone has an increased risk of getting a disease, disorder, or condition in the future. Genetic information also includes an individual's request for, or receipt of, genetic services, or the participation in clinical research that includes genetic services by the individual or a family member of the individual, and the genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or by a pregnant woman who is a family member of the individual and the genetic information of any embryo legally held by the individual or family member using an assisted reproductive technology.

### Discrimination Because of Genetic Information

The law forbids discrimination on the basis of genetic information when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, fringe benefits, or any other term or condition of employment. *An employer may never use genetic information to make an employment decision because genetic information is not relevant to an individual's current ability to work.*

### Harassment Because of Genetic Information

Under GINA, it is also illegal to harass a person because of his or her genetic information. Harassment can include, for example, making offensive or derogatory remarks about an applicant or employee's genetic information, or about the genetic information of a relative of the applicant or employee. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so severe or pervasive that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted). The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area of the workplace, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee, such as a client or customer.

## Retaliation

Under GINA, it is illegal to fire, demote, harass, or otherwise “retaliate” against an applicant or employee for filing a charge of discrimination, participating in a discrimination proceeding (such as a discrimination investigation or lawsuit), or otherwise opposing discrimination.

## Rules Against Acquiring Genetic Information

- It will usually be unlawful for a covered entity to get genetic information. There are six narrow exceptions to this prohibition:
- Inadvertent acquisitions of genetic information do not violate GINA, such as in situations where a manager or supervisor overhears someone talking about a family member’s illness.
- Genetic information (such as family medical history) may be obtained as part of health or genetic services, including wellness programs, offered by the employer on a voluntary basis, if certain specific requirements are met.
- Family medical history may be acquired as part of the certification process for FMLA leave (or leave under similar state or local laws or pursuant to an employer policy), where an employee is asking for leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
- Genetic information may be acquired through commercially and publicly available documents like newspapers, as long as the employer is not searching those sources with the intent of finding genetic information or accessing sources from which they are likely to acquire genetic information (such as websites and on-line discussion groups that focus on issues such as genetic testing of individuals and genetic discrimination).
- Genetic information may be acquired through a genetic monitoring program that monitors the biological effects of toxic substances in the workplace where the monitoring is required by law or, under carefully defined conditions, where the program is voluntary.
- Acquisition of genetic information of employees by employers who engage in DNA testing for law enforcement purposes as a forensic lab or for purposes of human remains identification is permitted, but the genetic information may only be used for analysis of DNA markers for quality control to detect sample contamination.

## Confidentiality of Genetic Information

It is also unlawful for a covered entity to disclose genetic information about applicants, employees or members. Covered entities must keep genetic information confidential and in a separate medical file. (Genetic information may be kept in the same file as other medical information in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.) There are limited exceptions to this non-disclosure rule, such as exceptions that provide for the disclosure of relevant genetic information to government officials investigating compliance with Title II of GINA and for disclosures made pursuant to a court order.

## National Origin Discrimination

National origin discrimination involves treating people (applicants or employees) unfavorably because they are from a particular country or part of the world, because of ethnicity or accent, or because they appear to be of a certain ethnic background (even if they are not).

National origin discrimination also can involve treating people unfavorably because they are married to (or associated with) a person of a certain national origin or because of their connection with an ethnic organization or group.

Discrimination can occur when the victim and the person who inflicted the discrimination are the same national origin.

### National Origin Discrimination & Work Situations

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.

### National Origin & Harassment

It is unlawful to harass a person because of his or her national origin. Harassment can include, for example, offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's national origin, accent or ethnicity. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

### National Origin & Employment Policies/Practices

The law makes it illegal for an employer or other covered entity to use an employment policy or practice that applies to everyone, regardless of national origin, if it has a negative impact on people of a certain national origin and is not job-related or necessary to the operation of the business.

An employer can only require an employee to speak fluent English if fluency in English is necessary to perform the job effectively. An "English-only rule", which requires employees to speak only English on the job, is only allowed if it is needed to ensure the safe or efficient operation of the employer's business and is put in place for nondiscriminatory reasons.

An employer may not base an employment decision on an employee's foreign accent, unless the accent seriously interferes with the employee's job performance.

### Citizenship Discrimination & Workplace Laws

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate with respect to hiring, firing, or recruitment or referral for a fee, based upon an individual's citizenship or immigration status. The law prohibits employers from hiring only U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents unless required to do so by law, regulation or government contract. Employers may not refuse to accept lawful documentation that establishes the employment eligibility of an employee, or demand additional documentation beyond what is legally required, when verifying employment eligibility (i.e., completing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Form

I-9), based on the employee's national origin or citizenship status. It is the employee's choice which of the acceptable Form I-9 documents to show to verify employment eligibility.

IRCA also prohibits retaliation against individuals for asserting their rights under the Act, or for filing a charge or assisting in an investigation or proceeding under IRCA.

IRCA's nondiscrimination requirements are enforced by the Department of Justice's Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices (OSC), Civil Rights Division. OSC may be reached at:

1-800-255-7688 (voice for employees/applicants),  
1-800-237-2515 (TTY for employees/applicants),  
1-800-255-8155 (voice for employers), or  
1-800-362-2735 (TTY for employers), or  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/osc>.

## Pregnancy Discrimination

### Pregnancy Discrimination

Pregnancy discrimination involves treating a woman (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth.

### Pregnancy Discrimination & Work Situations

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) forbids discrimination based on pregnancy when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, such as leave and health insurance, and any other term or condition of employment.

### Pregnancy Discrimination & Temporary Disability

If a woman is temporarily unable to perform her job due to a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, the employer or other covered entity must treat her in the same way as it treats any other temporarily disabled employee. For example, the employer may have to provide light duty, alternative assignments, disability leave, or unpaid leave to pregnant employees if it does so for other temporarily disabled employees.

Additionally, impairments resulting from pregnancy (for example, gestational diabetes or preeclampsia, a condition characterized by pregnancy-induced hypertension and protein in the urine) may be disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). An employer may have to provide a reasonable accommodation (such as leave or modifications that enable an employee to perform her job) for a disability related to pregnancy, absent undue hardship (significant difficulty or expense). The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 makes it much easier to show that a medical condition is a covered disability.

For more information about the ADA, see <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability.cfm>.

For information about the ADA Amendments Act, see [http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability\\_regulations.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability_regulations.cfm).

### Pregnancy Discrimination & Harassment

It is unlawful to harass a woman because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth. Harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted). The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

### Pregnancy, Maternity & Parental Leave

Under the PDA, an employer that allows temporarily disabled employees to take disability leave or leave without pay, must allow an employee who is temporarily disabled due to pregnancy to do the same.

An employer may not single out pregnancy-related conditions for special procedures to determine an employee's ability to work. However, if an employer requires its employees to submit a doctor's statement concerning their ability to work before granting leave or paying sick benefits, the employer may require employees affected by pregnancy-related conditions to submit such statements.

Further, under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, a new parent (including foster and adoptive parents) may be eligible for 12 weeks of leave (unpaid or paid if the employee has earned or

accrued it) that may be used for care of the new child. To be eligible, the employee must have worked for the employer for 12 months prior to taking the leave and the employer must have a specified number of employees. See <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.htm>.

#### Pregnancy & Workplace Laws

Pregnant employees may have additional rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which is enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor. Nursing mothers may also have the right to express milk in the workplace under a provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act enforced by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division.

See <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.htm>.

For more information about the Family Medical Leave Act or break time for nursing mothers, go to <http://www.dol.gov/whd>, or call 202-693-0051 or 1-866-487-9243 (voice), 202-693-7755 (TTY).

## **Race/Color Discrimination**

Race discrimination involves treating someone (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because he/she is of a certain race or because of personal characteristics associated with race (such as hair texture, skin color, or certain facial features). Color discrimination involves treating someone unfavorably because of skin color complexion.

Race/color discrimination also can involve treating someone unfavorably because the person is married to (or associated with) a person of a certain race or color or because of a person's connection with a race-based organization or group, or an organization or group that is generally associated with people of a certain color.

Discrimination can occur when the victim and the person who inflicted the discrimination are the same race or color.

### **Race/Color Discrimination & Work Situations**

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.

### **Race/Color Discrimination & Harassment**

It is unlawful to harass a person because of that person's race or color.

Harassment can include, for example, racial slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's race or color, or the display of racially-offensive symbols. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

### **Race/Color Discrimination & Employment Policies/Practices**

An employment policy or practice that applies to everyone, regardless of race or color, can be illegal if it has a negative impact on the employment of people of a particular race or color and is not job-related and necessary to the operation of the business. For example, a "no-beard" employment policy that applies to all workers without regard to race may still be unlawful if it is not job-related and has a negative impact on the employment of African-American men (who have a predisposition to a skin condition that causes severe shaving bumps).

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## **Facts About Race/Color Discrimination**

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects individuals against employment discrimination on the basis of race and color as well as national origin, sex, or religion.

It is unlawful to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race or color in regard to hiring, termination, promotion, compensation, job training, or any other term, condition, or privilege of employment. Title VII also prohibits employment decisions based on

stereotypes and assumptions about abilities, traits, or the performance of individuals of certain racial groups.

Title VII prohibits both intentional discrimination and neutral job policies that disproportionately exclude minorities and that are not job related.

Equal employment opportunity cannot be denied because of marriage to or association with an individual of a different race; membership in or association with ethnic based organizations or groups; attendance or participation in schools or places of worship generally associated with certain minority groups; or other cultural practices or characteristics often linked to race or ethnicity, such as cultural dress or manner of speech, as long as the cultural practice or characteristic does not materially interfere with the ability to perform job duties.

#### Race-Related Characteristics and Conditions

Discrimination on the basis of an immutable characteristic associated with race, such as skin color, hair texture, or certain facial features violates Title VII, even though not all members of the race share the same characteristic.

Title VII also prohibits discrimination on the basis of a condition which predominantly affects one race unless the practice is job related and consistent with business necessity. For example, since sickle cell anemia predominantly occurs in African-Americans, a policy which excludes individuals with sickle cell anemia is discriminatory unless the policy is job related and consistent with business necessity. Similarly, a "no-beard" employment policy may discriminate against African-American men who have a predisposition to pseudofolliculitis barbae (severe shaving bumps) unless the policy is job-related and consistent with business necessity.

#### Color Discrimination

Even though race and color clearly overlap, they are not synonymous. Thus, color discrimination can occur between persons of different races or ethnicities, or between persons of the same race or ethnicity. Although Title VII does not define "color," the courts and the Commission read "color" to have its commonly understood meaning – pigmentation, complexion, or skin shade or tone. Thus, color discrimination occurs when a person is discriminated against based on the lightness, darkness, or other color characteristic of the person. Title VII prohibits race/color discrimination against all persons, including Caucasians.

Although a plaintiff may prove a claim of discrimination through direct or circumstantial evidence, some courts take the position that if a white person relies on circumstantial evidence to establish a reverse discrimination claim, he or she must meet a heightened standard of proof. The Commission, in contrast, applies the same standard of proof to all race discrimination claims, regardless of the victim's race or the type of evidence used. In either case, the ultimate burden of persuasion remains always on the plaintiff.

Employers should adopt "best practices" to reduce the likelihood of discrimination and to address impediments to equal employment opportunity.

Title VII's protections include:

- **Recruiting, Hiring, and Advancement**

Job requirements must be uniformly and consistently applied to persons of all races and colors. Even if a job requirement is applied consistently, if it is not important for job performance or business needs, the requirement may be found unlawful if it excludes persons of a certain racial group or color significantly more than others. Examples of potentially unlawful practices include: (1) soliciting applications only from sources in which all or most potential workers are of the same race or color; (2) requiring applicants to have a certain educational background that is not important for job performance or business needs; (3) testing applicants for knowledge, skills or abilities that are not important for job performance or business needs.

Employers may legitimately need information about their employees or applicants race for affirmative action purposes and/or to track applicant flow. One way to obtain racial information and simultaneously guard against discriminatory selection is for employers to use separate forms or otherwise keep the information about an applicant's race separate from the application. In that way, the employer can capture the information it needs but ensure that it is not used in the selection decision.

Unless the information is for such a legitimate purpose, pre-employment questions about race can suggest that race will be used as a basis for making selection decisions. If the information is used in the selection decision and members of particular racial groups are excluded from employment, the inquiries can constitute evidence of discrimination.

- **Compensation and Other Employment Terms, Conditions, and Privileges**

Title VII prohibits discrimination in compensation and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. Thus, race or color discrimination may not be the basis for differences in pay or benefits, work assignments, performance evaluations, training, discipline or discharge, or any other area of employment.

- **Harassment**

Harassment on the basis of race and/or color violates Title VII. Ethnic slurs, racial "jokes," offensive or derogatory comments, or other verbal or physical conduct based on an individual's race/color constitutes unlawful harassment if the conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment, or interferes with the individual's work performance.

- **Retaliation**

Employees have a right to be free from retaliation for their opposition to discrimination or their participation in an EEOC proceeding by filing a charge, testifying, assisting, or otherwise participating in an agency proceeding.

- **Segregation and Classification of Employees**

Title VII is violated where minority employees are segregated by physically isolating them from other employees or from customer contact. Title VII also prohibits assigning primarily minorities to predominantly minority establishments or geographic areas. It is also illegal to exclude minorities from certain positions or to group or categorize employees or jobs so that certain jobs are generally held by minorities. Title VII also does not permit racially motivated decisions driven by business concerns – for example, concerns about the effect on employee relations, or the negative

reaction of clients or customers. Nor may race or color ever be a bona fide occupational qualification under Title VII.

Coding applications/resumes to designate an applicant's race, by either an employer or employment agency, constitutes evidence of discrimination where minorities are excluded from employment or from certain positions. Such discriminatory coding includes the use of facially benign code terms that implicate race, for example, by area codes where many racial minorities may or are presumed to live.

- **Pre-Employment Inquiries and Requirements**

Requesting pre-employment information which discloses or tends to disclose an applicant's race suggests that race will be unlawfully used as a basis for hiring. Solicitation of such pre-employment information is presumed to be used as a basis for making selection decisions. Therefore, if members of minority groups are excluded from employment, the request for such pre-employment information would likely constitute evidence of discrimination.

However, employers may legitimately need information about their employees' or applicants' race for affirmative action purposes and/or to track applicant flow. One way to obtain racial information and simultaneously guard against discriminatory selection is for employers to use "tear-off sheets" for the identification of an applicant's race. After the applicant completes the application and the tear-off portion, the employer separates the tear-off sheet from the application and does not use it in the selection process.

Other pre-employment information requests which disclose or tend to disclose an applicant's race are personal background checks, such as criminal history checks. Title VII does not categorically prohibit employers' use of criminal records as a basis for making employment decisions. Using criminal records as an employment screen may be lawful, legitimate, and even mandated in certain circumstances. However, employers that use criminal records to screen for employment must comply with Title VII's nondiscrimination requirements.

## Religious Discrimination

Religious discrimination involves treating a person (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of his or her religious beliefs. The law protects not only people who belong to traditional, organized religions, such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, but also others who have sincerely held religious, ethical or moral beliefs.

Religious discrimination can also involve treating someone differently because that person is married to (or associated with) an individual of a particular religion or because of his or her connection with a religious organization or group.

### Religious Discrimination & Work Situations

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.

### Religious Discrimination & Harassment

It is illegal to harass a person because of his or her religion.

Harassment can include, for example, offensive remarks about a person's religious beliefs or practices. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that aren't very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

### Religious Discrimination and Segregation

Title VII also prohibits workplace or job segregation based on religion (including religious garb and grooming practices), such as assigning an employee to a non-customer contact position because of actual or feared customer preference.

### Religious Discrimination & Reasonable Accommodation

The law requires an employer or other covered entity to reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause more than a minimal burden on the operations of the employer's business. This means an employer may be required to make reasonable adjustments to the work environment that will allow an employee to practice his or her religion.

Examples of some common religious accommodations include flexible scheduling, voluntary shift substitutions or swaps, job reassignments, and modifications to workplace policies or practices.

### Religious Accommodation/Dress & Grooming Policies

Unless it would be an undue hardship on the employer's operation of its business, an employer must reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices. This applies not only to schedule changes or leave for religious observances, but also to such things as dress or grooming practices that an employee has for religious reasons. These might include, for example,

wearing particular head coverings or other religious dress (such as a Jewish yarmulke or a Muslim headscarf), or wearing certain hairstyles or facial hair (such as Rastafarian dreadlocks or Sikh uncut hair and beard). It also includes an employee's observance of a religious prohibition against wearing certain garments (such as pants or miniskirts).

When an employee or applicant needs a dress or grooming accommodation for religious reasons, he should notify the employer that he needs such an accommodation for religious reasons. If the employer reasonably needs more information, the employer and the employee should engage in an interactive process to discuss the request. If it would not pose an undue hardship, the employer must grant the accommodation.

#### Religious Discrimination & Reasonable Accommodation & Undue Hardship

An employer does not have to accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices if doing so would cause undue hardship to the employer. An accommodation may cause undue hardship if it is costly, compromises workplace safety, decreases workplace efficiency, infringes on the rights of other employees, or requires other employees to do more than their share of potentially hazardous or burdensome work.

#### Religious Discrimination And Employment Policies/Practices

An employee cannot be forced to participate (or not participate) in a religious activity as a condition of employment.

## Retaliation

All of the laws we enforce make it illegal to fire, demote, harass, or otherwise "retaliate" against people (applicants or employees) because they filed a charge of discrimination, because they complained to their employer or other covered entity about discrimination on the job, or because they participated in an employment discrimination proceeding (such as an investigation or lawsuit).

For example, it is illegal for an employer to refuse to promote an employee because she filed a charge of discrimination with the EEOC, even if EEOC later determined no discrimination occurred.

### Retaliation & Work Situations

The law forbids retaliation when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.

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## Facts About Retaliation

An employer may not fire, demote, harass or otherwise "retaliate" against an individual for filing a charge of discrimination, participating in a discrimination proceeding, or otherwise opposing discrimination. The same laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, and disability, as well as wage differences between men and women performing substantially equal work, also prohibit retaliation against individuals who oppose unlawful discrimination or participate in an employment discrimination proceeding.

In addition to the protections against retaliation that are included in all of the laws enforced by EEOC, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also protects individuals from coercion, intimidation, threat, harassment, or interference in their exercise of their own rights or their encouragement of someone else's exercise of rights granted by the ADA.

There are three main terms that are used to describe retaliation. Retaliation occurs when an employer, employment agency, or labor organization takes an **adverse action** against a **covered individual** because he or she engaged in a **protected activity**. These three terms are described below.

### *Adverse Action*

An adverse action is an action taken to try to keep someone from opposing a discriminatory practice, or from participating in an employment discrimination proceeding. Examples of adverse actions include:

- employment actions such as termination, refusal to hire, and denial of promotion,
- other actions affecting employment such as threats, unjustified negative evaluations, unjustified negative references, or increased surveillance, and
- any other action such as an assault or unfounded civil or criminal charges that are likely to deter reasonable people from pursuing their rights.

Adverse actions do not include petty slights and annoyances, such as stray negative comments in an otherwise positive or neutral evaluation, "snubbing" a colleague, or negative comments that are justified by an employee's poor work performance or history.

Even if the prior protected activity alleged wrongdoing by a different employer, retaliatory adverse actions are unlawful. For example, it is unlawful for a worker's current employer to retaliate against him for pursuing an EEO charge against a former employer.

Of course, employees are not excused from continuing to perform their jobs or follow their company's legitimate workplace rules just because they have filed a complaint with the EEOC or opposed discrimination. For more information about adverse actions, see EEOC's Compliance Manual Section 8, Chapter II, Part D.

#### *Covered Individuals*

Covered individuals are people who have opposed unlawful practices, participated in proceedings, or requested accommodations related to employment discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability. Individuals who have a close association with someone who has engaged in such protected activity also are covered individuals. For example, it is illegal to terminate an employee because his spouse participated in employment discrimination litigation.

Individuals who have brought attention to violations of law other than employment discrimination are NOT covered individuals for purposes of anti-discrimination retaliation laws. For example, "whistleblowers" who raise ethical, financial, or other concerns unrelated to employment discrimination are not protected by the EEOC enforced laws.

#### *Protected Activity*

Protected activity includes:

Opposition to a practice believed to be unlawful discrimination

Opposition is informing an employer that you believe that he/she is engaging in prohibited discrimination. Opposition is protected from retaliation as long as it is based on a reasonable, good-faith belief that the complained of practice violates anti-discrimination law; and the manner of the opposition is reasonable.

Examples of protected opposition include:

- Complaining to anyone about alleged discrimination against oneself or others;
- Threatening to file a charge of discrimination;
- Picketing in opposition to discrimination; or
- Refusing to obey an order reasonably believed to be discriminatory.

Examples of activities that are NOT protected opposition include:

- Actions that interfere with job performance so as to render the employee ineffective; or
- Unlawful activities such as acts or threats of violence.

Participation in an employment discrimination proceeding.

Participation means taking part in an employment discrimination proceeding. Participation is protected activity even if the proceeding involved claims that ultimately were found to be invalid.

Examples of participation include:

- Filing a charge of employment discrimination;
- Cooperating with an internal investigation of alleged discriminatory practices; or

- Serving as a witness in an EEO investigation or litigation.

A protected activity can also include requesting a reasonable accommodation based on religion or disability.

For more information about Protected Activities, see EEOC's Compliance Manual, Section 8, Chapter II, Part B - Opposition and Part C - Participation.



## Sex-Based Discrimination

Sex discrimination involves treating someone (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of that person's sex.

Sex discrimination also can involve treating someone less favorably because of his or her connection with an organization or group that is generally associated with people of a certain sex.

### Sex Discrimination & Work Situations

The law forbids discrimination when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.

### Sex Discrimination Harassment

It is unlawful to harass a person because of that person's sex. Harassment can include "sexual harassment" or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.

Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex.

Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

### Sex Discrimination & Employment Policies/Practices

An employment policy or practice that applies to everyone, regardless of sex, can be illegal if it has a negative impact on the employment of people of a certain sex and is not job-related or necessary to the operation of the business.



## **Sexual Harassment**

It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person's sex. Harassment can include "sexual harassment" or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person's sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general.

Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex.

Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted).

The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer.

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## **Facts About Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII applies to employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. It also applies to employment agencies and to labor organizations, as well as to the federal government. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

- The victim as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The victim does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
- Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the victim.
- The harasser's conduct must be unwelcome.

It is helpful for the victim to inform the harasser directly that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop. The victim should use any employer complaint mechanism or grievance system available.

When investigating allegations of sexual harassment, EEOC looks at the whole record: the circumstances, such as the nature of the sexual advances, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. A determination on the allegations is made from the facts on a case-by-case basis.

Prevention is the best tool to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace. Employers are encouraged to take steps necessary to prevent sexual harassment from occurring. They should clearly communicate to employees that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. They can do so by providing sexual harassment training to their employees and by establishing an effective complaint or grievance process and taking immediate and appropriate action when an employee complains.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on sex or for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under Title VII.