

Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Discriminatory Harassment Prohibited

The Office prohibits any harassment, bias or prejudice on the basis of an individual's race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, religious affiliation, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status, or any other protected status under applicable law (for example, civil union status, height, weight, arrest record, and status with regard to Public Assistance, to the extent protected under applicable law). This includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct:

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or nonverbal behavior or physical contact of a sexual nature (regardless of how the overture is communicated) when:

- submission is made explicitly or implicitly a condition of the individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of the overture is used as the basis for employment decisions that affect the individual; or
- the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering unreasonably with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Inappropriate conduct may involve individuals of the same or opposite sex and is prohibited whether directed toward men or women. Such conduct is inappropriate whether the individual submits to it or rejects it.

Examples of Inappropriate Behavior

Examples of behaviors prohibited under this policy in addition to sexual and other discriminatory harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Comments, jokes or negative stereotyping, made verbally, via e-mail or through any other form of communication, that are insulting, degrading, exploitative, derogatory or discriminatory in nature;
- Making threats or intimidating remarks or participating in the creation of, or circulation of, any material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group of people based on a protected characteristic or classification;
- Viewing, displaying or circulating discriminatory or sexually explicit or suggestive materials, including without limitation cartoons, calendars, drawings, e-mails, etc.;
- Engaging in offensive, sexual, or overly-familiar touching or other inappropriate physical contact or interference with normal work or movement;
- Making sexual remarks, innuendoes, propositions or advances, or repeatedly requesting a personal relationship when the recipient of the request has indicated it is unwelcome; or
- Any inappropriate conduct that unreasonably interferes with another's work performance or creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment and which is inconsistent with standards of professionalism, sound judgment and respect for employees and others with whom we do business.

Consensual Relationship

Employees should also be aware that there is a risk to entering into a sexual or romantic relationship with another employee or person connected to the Office and that the Office has the right to protect its interests and take appropriate action to avoid or address potential problems related to such relationships.

While the Office does not categorically prohibit employees from entering into consensual relationships, certain relationships are deemed to be inappropriate and may be grounds for termination, particularly when there is a reporting relationship. For example, it is inappropriate for a manager to have a sexual or romantic relationship with an employee who works for the manager, or is assigned to his or her work area or is within the manager's chain of authority. In addition, such relationships between employees in more senior-level positions with employees in less senior-level positions are discouraged as they may give the appearance of favoritism because of the power and influence held by the person in the more senior-level position. Senior-level employees should also recognize that it could be difficult to prove that a relationship with a less senior-level employee was welcome or that there was mutual consent if a complaint is subsequently made.

Even relationships between colleagues or between employees and others who do business with the Office could be considered inappropriate, as they could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Reporting Violations of this Policy

There is a complaint procedure to address violations of this policy, and employees are required to utilize this procedure. If you believe you have been subject to conduct that violates this policy or have information about or have witnessed any potential violation of this policy, immediately notify your Office Manager.

Further, the Office Manager has an obligation to immediately contact the Assessor if he or she is aware of or receives a complaint or any information regarding conduct prohibited by this policy.

The Office is committed to promoting a safe and secure work environment. All employees are expected to treat coworkers, managers, customers and all other contacts in the workplace in a mature and professional way. If you are concerned about the safety and/or security of yourself or others in the workplace, you must immediately report your concerns.

Investigatory Process

The Office is committed to promptly and effectively resolving any violations of this policy. Every effort will be made to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of any complaint under this policy. Each complaining party, the alleged wrongdoer and any other persons with knowledge of the situation have an obligation to cooperate fully with any investigation, including providing all relevant information to the investigator. Employees who refuse to cooperate in an investigation may be subject to corrective action up to and including immediate termination of employment. All complaints and investigations will be handled with sensitivity. Confidentiality will be maintained

to the extent possible consistent with the Office conducting a thorough investigation and making an appropriate response to any findings or determination that result from such investigation.

Following an investigation, any employee found to have violated this policy and/or the Violence-free Workplace Policy or who failed to properly address prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate and prompt corrective action up to and including immediate termination of employment. Other responsive actions by the Office may include, but are not limited to, the following: training; monitoring of the offender; referral to counseling; warning; withholding of a promotion, pay increase, or bonus; reassignment; suspension; decrease in compensation and/or responsibility as the Office believes appropriate under the circumstances.

Protection Against Retaliation

No person who objects to conduct prohibited under this policy, makes a complaint concerning such conduct or assists in any investigation related to this policy will be subjected to retaliation or other inappropriate action because of such an objection, complaint or assistance. Retaliation complaints should be reported immediately to the Office Manager.

Such complaints will be investigated promptly and any individuals found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to corrective action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.