

Unlawful Workplace Harassment

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Policy

All employees have the right to work in an environment free from discrimination and harassing conduct. No State employee shall engage in conduct that falls under the definition of unlawful workplace harassment, including sexual harassment discrimination, or retaliation, and no employment decisions shall be made on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, age, color, disability, genetic information, or political affiliation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish that the State of North Carolina prohibits in any form unlawful workplace harassment or retaliation based on opposition to unlawful workplace harassment of State employees or applicants and to require that every agency shall develop strategies to ensure that work sites are free from unlawful workplace harassment, including sexual harassment discrimination and retaliation.

Definitions

“Unlawful Workplace Harassment” is unsolicited and unwelcomed speech or conduct based upon race, sex, religion, national origin, age, color, disability, genetic information, or political affiliation where:

1. enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or
2. the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

“Sexual Harassment” - Harassment on the basis of sex is a particular type of violation of this unlawful workplace harassment policy and in addition to the previous definition of unlawful workplace harassment, this unlawful workplace harassment policy prohibits the following: “Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's

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employment, (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or (3) such conduct

has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or

creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.”

“**Retaliation**” is any adverse action taken against an individual for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit related to discriminatory employment practices based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation or because of opposition to employment practices in violation of the unlawful workplace harassment policy.

Coverage

This policy covers, full-time or part-time employees with either a permanent, probationary, trainee, time-limited or temporary appointment; former employees; and applicants.

Complaint Process

An employee, former employee or applicant alleging unlawful workplace harassment or retaliation may file a complaint following the process outlined in the Employee Grievance Policy located in Section 7 of the State Human Resources Manual.

Prevention Strategies

Each agency head shall develop strategies to prevent unlawful workplace harassment.

The strategies shall at the minimum include:

- a commitment by the agency to the prohibition of unlawful workplace harassment, sexual harassment and retaliation,
- training and other methods to prevent harassing actions,
- a process for disseminating information prohibiting unlawful workplace harassment and retaliation to all agency employees

Workplace harassment prevention strategies shall be included as part of the agency's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan.