

Hennepin - Diversity, Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Policy

The following policy was adopted by the County Board of Commissioners under Resolution 03-347R2.

All Hennepin County employees and volunteers are responsible for understanding, complying with and supporting the Diversity, Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Policy.

Policy Statement

Hennepin County recognizes similarities and values differences among all employees, volunteers, union representatives, clients, customers and vendors. It is the responsibility of all Hennepin County employees and volunteers to create, promote and maintain work environments in which all are respected, valued and welcomed.

To comply with this Policy, all Hennepin County employees and volunteers will foster environments that value diversity and eliminate discrimination in the workplace.

Hennepin County supports and will help to enforce the prohibitions against discrimination found in the State/Federal civil rights laws, including the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

Hennepin County is committed to providing public services and a workplace free from:

- Discrimination based on an individual's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or public assistance status; and
- Harassment, including sexual and racial harassment.

Hennepin County is committed to providing equal employment opportunities in recruitment, employment, retention and promotion of person from diverse backgrounds, including groups that are underrepresented or that previously have been given limited consideration for employment.

Violations of this Policy will not be tolerated. Any employee or volunteer found to have violated this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Rights and Responsibilities

All county employees, volunteers, union representatives, clients, customers and vendors are expected to treat each other with respect.

County managers and supervisors are responsible for investigating any reported situation of discrimination, including harassment, and taking prompt and appropriate corrective action, which can include informal resolution or more formal action.

All county managers and supervisors are also responsible for monitoring their work environments by promptly addressing all reports and observations of disrespectful behavior and discrimination, including harassment.

County managers and supervisors will receive training and, as a regular part of their performance appraisals, an evaluation of their efforts in regard to this Policy.

The county's complaint processes provide for prompt, thorough and objective investigation of alleged discrimination, including harassment. If you are a witness to such conduct, you are encouraged to contact your supervisor, manager or department director. If you believe you are the target of behavior that violates this Policy, you have several options.

Employees who want to resolve issues on a less formal basis may choose any of the following options available through the informal resolution process:

- request that supervisor or manager from your department take the lead in resolving the situation, including conducting an informal inquiry; and/or
- request union involvement, if you have access to union representation; and/or
- contact your department's Human Resources Generalist; volunteers may request assistance through their volunteer coordinator; and/or
- seek advice from the Employee Assistance Program, recognizing this does not constitute a report to or knowledge on the part of the county.

Employees seeking a more formal complaint process have the following options:

- contact our supervisor, manager or department director; management has the responsibility to respond in accordance with the county's complaint processes; and/or
- make a complaint directly to the Human Resources Department and have the investigation conducted by Human Resources; and/or
- contact the business representative or the steward of your union; and/or
- in cases of discrimination, file a formal charge with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and/or file a private lawsuit.

Employees and volunteers making a complaint will not be subject to retaliation as a result of making the complaint.

This policy will be annually reviewed by the County Administrator.

Values and Intent

Respect is a basic building block of every organization. Respect for one another is fundamental to getting work done in effective, efficient and innovative ways.

Consistent with the Mission and Vision of the Board of Commissioners, Hennepin County will:

- recognize similarities and value differences among all employees, volunteers, union representatives, clients, customers and vendors;
- strive to ensure a respectful work environment free of all forms of discrimination, including harassment;
- actively recruit, develop and sustain a diverse workforce, which reflects the community; and
- promote a cooperative work environment that fosters a positive attitude toward the provision of services.

Hennepin County
Human Resources Department
HC1704 10/2003

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions are used.

Affirmative Action

Proactive measures to recruit qualified persons, including groups that are underrepresented or that previously have been given limited consideration for employment.

Discrimination

Treating an individual or a group of individuals adversely because of protected class status, or using a test, standard or employment practice that has the effect of illegally excluding or screening out a protected class.

Diversity

The fact or quality of being distinct, having various forms or qualities.

Employee

All individuals employed and paid by Hennepin County.

Equal Employment Opportunity

State/Federal laws guarantee all people the equal right to apply and be considered for job opportunities, regardless of their races, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or public assistance status.

Harassment

Unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, including written and electronic communication, directed toward an individual or a group of individuals, which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or use of public services or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or public service environment.

Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or receipt of services;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals, or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or public service environment, and in the case of employment, the employer fails to take reasonable care to stop the harassing conduct pursuant to this Policy once the conduct is made known to its management.

Protected Class

Protection under federal/state laws from discrimination because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or public assistance status.

Respect

An expression or act of giving particular attention to or showing consideration for; actions or behaviors which may include, and are not necessarily limited to, listening, empathy, patience and courtesy.

Volunteer

Any individual authorized to provide services for Hennepin County who is not paid for those services.