

Office of Diversity and Equity

Discrimination Complaints

9-1

Policy

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall provide a process to resolve allegations of discrimination raised by employees, applicants seeking employment and members of the public receiving services from DCF.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §46a-68; R.C.S.A. §46a-68-46.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 7-4, "Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace."

Annual Notice

A copy of this policy shall be distributed annually to all employees by the Office of Diversity and Equity and shall be posted on the agency's internet and intranet websites.

Office of Diversity and Equity's Responsibilities

The Office of Diversity and Equity shall be responsible for mitigating any discriminatory conduct within the agency and to investigate all complaints against the agency that are not filed with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) or the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Employees to be Informed of Legal Options

When the Office of Diversity of Equity meets with an employee regarding an allegation of discrimination, the employee shall be advised by the Office of Diversity and Equity of his or her legal rights under federal and state law. The employee shall be advised of his or her right to file a complaint with the CHRO, EEOC, the United States Department of Labor - Wage and Hour Division and any other federal, state or local agencies that enforce laws concerning discrimination in employment.

Information and Counseling

The staff of the Office of Diversity and Equity shall provide information and counsel employees with questions or concerns about DCF's anti-discrimination policies. These meetings shall take place in a private area. Issues discussed during the counseling sessions shall be confidential, except when disclosure is required by law

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Complaint Procedure

A complaint may be submitted verbally or in writing to the Office of Diversity and Equity. When possible, a complaint should be submitted using the DCF-104, "Discrimination Complaint Intake Form." However, every complaint, regardless of method of reporting, shall contain the following information:

- name of complainant;
- work location (if complainant is a DCF employee);
- location of incident(s);
- a brief description of why the complainant believes he or she was discriminated against; and
- when the incident(s) occurred.

Who May File a Complaint

Any person applying for employment or currently employed by DCF who believes that he or she has been subject to discrimination based on age, ancestry, color, gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, physical disability (including blindness), prior conviction of a crime, pregnancy, present or past history of mental disability, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation may file a complaint with the Office of Diversity and Equity.

Any person receiving services from DCF who believes that he or she has been subject to discrimination based on age, ancestry, color, gender identity or expression, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, mental disability, physical disability (including blindness), national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation may file a complaint with the Office of Diversity and Equity

Time Line for Grievance Resolution

The Office of Diversity and Equity shall complete its investigation and file its written report and proposed recommendations with the Commissioner within 45 days of the filing of the complaint.

The Commissioner shall review all investigations conducted by the Office of Diversity and Equity and shall have final authority to accept or modify the recommendations of the investigation.

Notice of the results of the final investigation shall be provided to the complainant and the respondent.

Right to Appeal

If the complainant disagrees with a finding that a complaint is not substantiated, the complainant may submit an appeal in writing to the Commissioner or designee within ten days of receipt of the written notification of the results. The Commissioner or designee shall:

- conduct a review
 - notify the complainant in writing of the results of the review.
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Non-Retaliation

DCF strictly forbids retaliation against any person who reports discrimination or participates in an internal or external investigation concerning allegations of discrimination. Employees shall not retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, harass or interfere with any person who raises allegations of discrimination or with an employee who aids or encourages a person to raise allegations of discrimination. DCF shall investigate and take all necessary actions to address any allegations of retaliation.

Training

Staff members of the Office of Diversity and Equity shall receive periodic training in counseling and investigation procedures.
