STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
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ANTI-HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Purpose

The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA) is committed to providing a work environment in which all people are treated with respect and dignity. All employees are expected to participate in this effort.

Prohibited Conduct

Federal and state law, including Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-2(a)(1), and the Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act, C.G.S. §46a-60 *et seq.*, prohibit various forms of discrimination and illegal harassment in employment.

OPA strictly prohibits discrimination, including sexual harassment and harassment based on all legally protected classes, including race, color, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, learning disability or, physical disability, including but not limited to, blindness, present or past history or mental disability, intellectual disability, genetic information, criminal record, and military or veteran status. "Harassment" means any verbal, physical, graphic or written conduct when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting that individual; or
- Such conduct interferes with another's work performance or creates an intimidating, offensive or hostile work environment.

OPA shall not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of a protected class by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, client or customer, whether in the workplace, at assignments outside of the workplace, at OPA-sponsored social events or elsewhere.

Reporting Discrimination and Harassment

1. **Claimants** – If you believe that you are being harassed or otherwise discriminated against because of your protected class, you should immediately report the harassment/discrimination to any one of the following people:

    - Your supervisor or manager;
    - OPA's Equal Employment Opportunity Designee, Jamila H. Goolgar (860-713-5258); or
    - OPA's Human Resources Specialist, Lorraine Vittner (860-622-2411).

2. **Witnesses** – Any employee who witnesses harassment or other forms of discrimination prohibited under this policy or becomes aware that another employee has been subjected to such harassment or discrimination is also urged to immediately report the conduct via one of the three avenues listed above.

3. **Supervisors and Managers** – Any supervisor or manager who receives a complaint about prohibited harassment or other forms of discrimination, who believes that someone is engaging in such conduct are mandated to report it to Jamila H. Goolgar or Lorraine Vittner. Ignoring such conduct is not acceptable and may subject the supervisor or manager to disciplinary action.

No Retaliation

OPA strictly forbids retaliation against employees who report discrimination, including harassment, or who participate in internal or external investigations involving such conduct. Agents of OPA shall not retaliate against, coerce, intimidate, threaten, harass, or interfere with any individual exercising or enjoying his or her rights under Federal or State law or because an individual aided or encouraged any other individual in the exercise of rights granted or protected by State or Federal law. All employees are strongly urged to report all instances of retaliation via one of the avenues listed above.

Investigating Complaints

OPA takes all complaints and reports of harassment and discrimination seriously. All complaints and reports will be investigated promptly. All employees are expected to cooperate fully with all administrative complaint investigations and any actions taken by OPA as a result of such investigations.

Corrective Action

If an investigation confirms that discrimination or harassment prohibited under this policy has occurred, OPA will take corrective action promptly. Discipline up to and including discharge from state service may be imposed.

Craig Henrici, Executive Director
Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

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Date

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