AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENT

Purpose

The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA) is an affirmative action employer and is committed to the policies and procedures that promote equal employment opportunity. Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity have been established as immediate and imperative agency objectives. The ultimate purposes of OPA's Affirmative Action Program are to:

- ensure equality at OPA,
- avoid discrimination – either intentional or inadvertent,
- develop a workforce that is truly representative of all segments of the population, and
- improve the operation of OPA's services.

Definitions

- "Affirmative Action" is a program of positive action, undertaken with conviction and effort, to overcome the present effects of past practices, policies or barriers to equal employment opportunity and to achieve the full and fair participation of women, Blacks and Hispanics and any other protected group found to be underutilized in the workforce or affected by policies and practices having an adverse impact.

- "Equal Employment Opportunity" is employment of individuals without consideration of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, intellectual disability, genetic information, learning disability, physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness) mental disability (past/present history thereof) or criminal record, unless the provisions of §46a-80(b) or 46a-81(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in one of the above protected groups. Equal Employment Opportunity is the purpose and goal of Affirmative Action under §46a-68-31 through 46a-68-74 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

OPA's Affirmative Action Program

OPA has created an Affirmative Action Program to overcome the present effects of any past policies, practices and barriers to equal opportunity. In our Affirmative Action Plan, we identify the achievements that have been made through the application of our good faith efforts and, through the full and fair participation of all of our employees in all of the Agency's undertakings. We also recognize the hiring difficulties experienced by the physically disabled and by many older persons, and will set program goals to achieve the full and fair utilization of these persons in the workforce.

A list of all federal and state constitutional provisions, laws, regulations, guidelines, and executive orders that prohibit or outlaw discrimination is included in this Plan. In accordance with these requirements, no person or facility of this Agency shall be used in the furtherance of any discriminatory practice, nor shall we become a party to any agreement, arrangement, contract or plan that has the effect of sanctioning discriminatory practices. All education and training programs and all employment practices conducted by, sponsored by, or with the approval of, OPA shall be open to all qualified persons.

Our policy is posted on OPA's policy bulletin boards throughout the agency, on the OPA Intranet, and on OPA's internet website. Each employee has the right to review and comment upon the agency's Affirmative Action Plan. All responses should be addressed to Jamila H. Goolgar, Equal Employment Opportunity Designee, who has been assigned all affirmative action duties. She can be reached at the Department of Administrative Services, Equal Employment Opportunity Unit, 165 Capitol Avenue, 5th Floor, Hartford, CT 06106, or at jamila.goolgar@ct.gov. Her phone number at the agency is (860) 713-5258.

Commitment

OPA will use viable affirmative action measures in all stages of the employment process as outlined in Section 46a-68-43 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies and in the OPA Affirmative Action Plan, and will provide services and programs in a fair and impartial manner.

As Executive Director of OPA, I readily assume the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the success of our Affirmative Action programs and goals throughout this Agency within the timetables stated in our Plan and stress that the effectiveness of our programs will depend on the complete cooperation of all administrative and supervisory staff. I ask that each share in this responsibility and act accordingly.

We recognize that programs without effort are meaningless and that effort undirected by specific procedures prevents achievement. I personally pledge my support and commitment to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity. I ask each employee to review this policy and be familiar with it. More importantly, however, each employee is expected to commit him/herself to its ideals and objectives as I have done.

Craig B. Henrici, Executive Director

5-8-15
Date

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