STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Commissioner's Policy Statement and Implementing Procedures

dmhas
A Healthcare Service Agency

SUBJECT:	A Working Plan For Affirmative Action
P & P NUMBER:	Chapter 2.1
APPROVED:	Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner Date: 4/16/18
EFFECTIVE DATE:	5/17/96
REVISED:	8/8/08, 1/10/10, 10/1/11, 1/30/2013, 3/1/2014, 3/5/2014, 4/9/15, 4/21/16, 4/12/17
REFERENCES:	Commissioner's Policy Chapter 2.19, Internal Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure
FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS:	Federal and State Anti-Discrimination Laws http://www.ct.gov/chro/lib/chro/AA_Law_List.pdf

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: As the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, I acknowledge the purpose and need for affirmative action, and commit my full support of the concepts, principles and goals of affirmative action. "Affirmative Action" means "positive action", undertaken with conviction and effort, to overcome the present effects of past practices, policies, or any barriers to equal employment opportunity. This includes the goal of full and fair participation of any groups that have been found historically to be under-utilized in the workforce or otherwise adversely affected. The purpose and goal of affirmative action is equal employment opportunity

The distinction between *affirmative action* and *equal employment opportunity* is that *affirmative action* represents the positive efforts taken throughout every stage of the employment process to ensure that individuals are treated equally. *Equal employment opportunity* denotes a system of employment practices under which no one is to be excluded from participation, advancement, or benefits due them, because of their race, color, religious creed, age, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disability, intellectual disability, learning disability, physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness), status as a veteran, genetic information, criminal record, or other factors which cannot lawfully be the basis for employment actions, unless such employment is governed by the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Section 46a-60(b), 46a-80(b), or 46a-81(b), or there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in one of the above-listed protected groups. It also denotes a system in which

neither intentional nor unintentional discrimination is present; meaning any workplace harassment or discriminatory practice on the basis of protected group identity is prohibited.

Affirmative action and equal opportunity are immediate and necessary objectives for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I am personally committed to ensuring the department's compliance with all federal and state constitutional provisions, laws, regulations, guidelines and executive orders that address affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. A list of federal and state laws prohibiting or outlawing discrimination is attached. The Department will also make a good faith effort to identify and utilize minority and women- owned businesses for contracts with DMHAS.

POLICY: Notwithstanding the legally recognized exceptions indicated above, it is DMHAS' policy that workplace harassment or discriminatory practices on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disability, intellectual disability, learning disability, physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness), status as a veteran, genetic information, or criminal record, as defined under federal and state law, are prohibited.

This policy applies to all aspects of the employment process including, but not limited to: recruitment, interviewing, selection, hiring, training, promotions, transfers, benefits, compensation, lay-offs, and terminations. The implementation of our affirmative action plan has as its primary goal to eliminate underutilization of, or discrimination against, protected class persons in all aspects of the above. Furthermore, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services pledges affirmatively to provide services and programs in a fair and impartial manner. The following is an outline of the role Affirmative Action plays at each step of the employment process:

A) **Advertising/Recruiting:** ensuring that there is an available pool of qualified protected class members for vacancies. All job postings include a statement that DMHAS is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

B) **Employment Applications, Job Qualifications, Job Specifications, Interviewing, and Personnel Practices:** Are reviewed periodically to ensure that there are no artificial barriers set to prevent qualified applicants from employment.

C) **Orientation:** All new employees are given a copy of the Department's Affirmative Action Policy during the orientation session.

D) **Training:** Ensuring that protected class members benefit fully and fairly from training opportunities.

E) **Promotional Opportunities/Job Assignments/Benefits/Compensation:** Promotions reviewed periodically to ensure that protected class members are equally considered. Able to assist employees who feel they are discriminated against.

F) **Confidential Counseling:** The Department's affirmative action staff is available to counsel

employees regarding affirmative action issues and to assist them in pursuing the agency Discrimination Complaint Procedure if applicable.

G) **Service Ratings:** Based solely on job performance, employee service ratings are reviewed and signed by the individual's immediate supervisor as well as the next level supervisor, reviewed by human resources, and signed by the employee. The levels of review should prevent bias in the evaluation process.

H) **Lay Offs:** Are consistent with the state regulations and applicable collective bargaining contracts.

I) **Terminations:** The affirmative action division is advised of all dismissals, and whenever possible monitors the outcomes of exit interviews. This ensures that the termination is a result of just cause and absent of discrimination due to protected class membership.

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services also recognizes the hiring difficulties experienced by individuals with disabilities and many older persons. Therefore, we will set program goals to overcome the present effects of past discrimination, if any, to achieve the full and fair utilization of such persons in the workforce.

As the appointing authority for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, I have the responsibility for an effective and demonstrated Affirmative Action Plan. DMHAS will work to attain these goals as set forth in our affirmative action plan submitted each year. I will also hold all managers and supervisors accountable for their role in meeting affirmative action goals, or making good faith efforts, and to ensure compliance with the requirements of statutes, regulations, and executive orders, which relate to affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.

Employees are advised that the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services has an Internal Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure, Chapter 2.19, which is available to employees to address allegations of discrimination on the basis of protected class status.

This policy will be posted and distributed annually to all employees. All employees are encouraged to review and comment on the affirmative action plan at any time.

Eric Smith, Equal Employment Opportunity Director, is designated as the individual with the responsibility and full authority for administering and monitoring the affirmative action programs of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The Affirmative Action Office for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services is located at the Connecticut Valley Hospital campus, Cottage 20 (171 Bow Lane), P.O. Box 351, Middletown, CT 06457. Telephone: 860-262-5863. Fax: 860-262-5197. E-mail address: eric.d.smith@ct.gov