



Contents

Policy	1
Values and Intent.....	1
Rights and Responsibilities.....	1
Informal Complaint Process	2
Formal Complaint Process	3
External Complaint Process	3
Definitions	3

Policy

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.

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, respect and value differences among all employees, volunteers, union representatives, clients, customers and vendors; and
- Strive to ensure a respectful work environment free of all forms of discrimination, including harassment and workplace bullying; and
- Promote a cooperative work environment that fosters a positive attitude toward the provision of services.

Rights and Responsibilities

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; and
- Workplace bullying.

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

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.

All Hennepin County employees and volunteers will foster environments that demonstrate and support respect and eliminate workplace bullying and discrimination in the workplace.

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

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

County managers and supervisors are responsible for investigating any reported situation of discrimination, including harassment and workplace bullying, 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 and workplace bullying.

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 and workplace bullying. 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.

Attached is the link to the Complaint Processes which are housed on the Audit, Compliance and Investigation Services website: <https://hcconnect.hennepin.us/IA/Pages/Workplace-Investigations.aspx>

Informal Complaint Process

Employees who want to resolve issues on a less formal basis may choose any of the following options:

- Request that a supervisor or manager from your department take the lead in resolving the situation, including conducting an informal inquiry; and/or
- Request that a representative from Human Resources Diversity and Inclusion (612-543-2463) be involved in resolving the situation; and/or
- Request union involvement, if you have access to union representation; and/or
- Contact your department's Human Resources business partner; 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 of an issue on the part of the county.

Formal Complaint Process

Employees seeking a more formal complaint process may make a complaint directly to the Non Discrimination and Respectful Workplace investigations team by completing the Policy Violation Complaint form found on the Audit, Compliance and Investigation Services website. The form may be emailed to: workplaceinvestigations@hennepin.us or downloaded and sent interdepartmental mail to MC 813. This will set in motion the next steps below in the formal complaint process.

- **Preliminary Evaluation of Complaint:** After the Policy Violation Complaint form is received from complainant, a preliminary meeting is held to discuss the concerns with a representative of the Non Discrimination and Respectful Workplace investigations team. If the concerns reflect a potential violation of this Policy, a formal investigation may be conducted. If the concerns do not reflect a potential violation of this Policy, the department's management and Human Resources business partner will be notified to determine if further action is needed.
- **Decision to proceed with Formal Investigation:** If a decision is made to proceed with a formal investigation, a written statement is created by the investigation team to be reviewed and signed by the person bringing the complaint. Once this document is signed, the formal investigation begins. After the investigation is concluded, the appropriate parties are notified.

External Complaint Process

Employees seeking a more formal external complaint process in cases of discrimination can file a formal charge with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and/or file a private lawsuit.

Definitions

For 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.

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 race, 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; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; 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.

Workplace Bullying:

Workplace bullying is persistent behavior by a person or group that is threatening, humiliating and/or intimidating.

Contact: Tonya Palmer, 612-596-8746