

MULTNOMAH COUNTY HAS CLEAR POLICIES AND RULES FOR RESOLVING DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS

Summary

All employees have a right to work in an environment free of harassment or discrimination. Multnomah County's complaint protocol is designed to prevent disrespectful or inappropriate behavior and provide a speedy resolution for any employee who has this kind of experience.

Discussion

Multnomah County places a premium on a respectful and safe work environment and prohibits harassing and discriminating behaviors. This includes negative behaviors based on an employee's membership in any protected classes (race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, familial status, or physical or mental disability). It also prohibits disrespectful and inappropriate behavior between and among colleagues.

This document will advise employees what they should do if they encounter these difficult situations.

Reporting. Employees are expected to *promptly* report suspected harassment and/or discrimination. They can submit a complaint orally or in writing. They can report to *any* of the following individuals that the employee feels comfortable contacting: any supervisor or manager; a department human resources representative; the Central Human Resources Director; the Affirmative Action/EEO Officer; and/or any Department Director.

These individuals either handle the complaint themselves, or forward it to the appropriate person for review. The person handling the complaint contacts the employee after filing of a complaint to discuss next steps.

Informal resolution. Sometimes complaints can be resolved immediately without an investigation. The manager takes immediate corrective action, discussed and negotiated with the complainant, to resolve the complaint. Informal resolution can be particularly effective when the negative behavior does not rise to the level of a policy violation.

It's important to remember that the county will take *whatever action is necessary to stop harassing or discriminatory behavior* at the earliest possible stage, even if the behavior has not reached the stage of a rule violation.

Investigation. When a complaint isn't informally resolved, the employee is interviewed and asked to discuss the details of the complaint and to explore options for resolution. The county (typically Central Human Resources or the Department HR Unit) will decide if an investigation is needed. The county directs the investigation, the purpose of which is

to gather facts regarding the initial complaint. The county makes every effort to finish the investigation quickly. But some investigations, by their nature, require a lengthy process in order to gather all of the facts.

Results of Investigation. The investigator prepares a written report of the investigation, including whether or not the findings are substantiated. If the allegations are substantiated, the report may contain recommendations for corrective action that ensures the activity will cease. Employees who violate either of these rules may be disciplined, up to and including dismissal.

Questions? If you have any questions about the complaint process, please contact a member of your department's HR Team or Ann Boss in Labor Relations at (503) 988-5015, ext. 28434.

References

MCPR 3-40 Discrimination and Harassment-Free Workplace.

MCPR 3-10 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES