

Policy 1-2: Anti-Discrimination and Harassment

The District is committed to providing a professional work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. As such, the District prohibits any discriminatory practices, including harassment and sexual harassment.

Each and every employee, officer, official, forest preserve commissioner, agent, volunteer, and vendor of the District, as well as any other person on District property, shall refrain from discriminating against or harassing any other person based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, marital or civil union status, sexual orientation, disability, citizenship status, military status, veteran status, genetic information, or any other protected characteristic as established by law. Any such harassment is illegal and will not be tolerated by the District. Sexual harassment is also prohibited.

Conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, professional conferences, business meetings, and business-related social events. Any employee engaging in practices or conduct constituting discrimination or harassment of any kind shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

1-2.1: Definitions of Harassment

1. Harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or any of that individual's relatives, friends, or associates because of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital or civil union status, sexual orientation, disability, citizenship status, military status, veteran status, genetic information, or any other protected characteristic as protected by law, and that:
 - a. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment;
 - b. has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
 - c. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.
2. Sexual harassment may occur whenever there are unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - a. submission to the conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly as a condition of the individual's employment;
 - b. submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee; or
 - c. the harassment has the purposes or effect of interfering with the employee's work performance or creating an environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the employee.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display of or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group (including through e-mail).

1-2.2: Reporting Procedure

The District strongly encourages the reporting of any incident of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace. Discrimination or harassment of any kind should

be reported regardless of the offender's identity or position. Reports may be made by any person who has experienced or witnessed the incident, regardless of whether the individual is the intended victim. While no fixed reporting period has been established, the District strongly urges the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that action can be taken. To the extent possible while still meeting the responsibility of addressing the complaint, all reports will be kept confidential.

Employees who have experienced or witnessed conduct that is prohibited by this policy have an obligation to utilize this reporting procedure. An employee's failure to fulfill this obligation may affect his/her rights in pursuing further action.

The availability of this reporting procedure does not preclude individuals who have experienced or witnessed discriminatory or harassing conduct from directly advising the offender, if comfortable doing so, that the behavior is unwelcome and requesting that it be discontinued. However, this is not required before following the reporting procedures noted below.

Report to Supervisory and/or Administrative Personnel

An employee who experiences or witnesses harassment or discrimination of any kind should report the offending behavior to their immediate supervisor, department head, and/or Human Resources. The concern may be reported to any or all of these individuals in any order. In the event the employee does not feel comfortable doing so, or if the supervisor, department head, and/or Human Resources is the source of the offending behavior or condones/ignores the problem, the employee may report the incident directly to the Executive Director.

Any supervisor who becomes aware, whether by report or observation, of any form of discrimination or harassment should immediately notify Human Resources and/or the Executive Director. Human Resources and/or the Executive Director shall be responsible for investigating the reported misconduct and resolving the matter as soon as possible.

Report to the Board of Commissioners

If the Executive Director is the source of the offending behavior or condones/ignores the problem, the employee may report the incident directly to the President of the Board of Commissioners. The President or other designee of the Board of Commissioners shall be responsible for investigating the report and resolving the matter.

Harassment Allegations Against Non-Employees/Third Parties

Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, or retaliation by an agent, vendor, supplier, contractor, volunteer, or patrons should be made to the Executive Director. The Executive Director (or a designee) will promptly investigate the complaints and determine the appropriate action. The District will take reasonable efforts to protect employees from further contact with such persons. However, please recognize that the District has limited control over the actions of non-employees.

1-2.3: Investigation

Any reported allegations of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, will be investigated promptly by Human Resources and/or the Executive Director. The investigation may include individual interviews with all parties involved, and when necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or who may have other relevant knowledge. The District reserves the right and hereby provides notice that third parties may be used to investigate claims of discrimination or harassment. Any individual involved in the complaint shall not be allowed to conduct the investigation.

All employees are required to cooperate in any investigation of a report of discrimination or harassment. Failure to cooperate in an investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The District will make every reasonable effort to conduct the investigation in a responsible and confidential manner. However, it is impossible to guarantee absolute confidentiality.

Responsive Action

Based on the information gathered in the investigation, Human Resources and/or the Executive Director shall determine the validity of the allegation and shall take appropriate action. Misconduct constituting discrimination or harassment will be dealt with appropriately based on the circumstances of each situation. Responsive action may include training, referral to counseling and/or disciplinary action such as a warning, reprimand, withholding of promotion or pay increase, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay, or termination, as the District believes appropriate.

False and Frivolous Complaints

A false or frivolous complaint refers to a situation where the accuser is using a complaint of harassment to accomplish some end other than stopping illegal harassment. It does not refer to complaints made in good faith that cannot be proven. Given the seriousness of the consequences for the accused, a false and frivolous complaint is a severe offense that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

1-2.4: Retaliation

The District prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, in good faith; who participates in good faith in an investigation of such reports; or who files a discharge of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation of any kind is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

In addition, various state and federal laws prohibit retaliation for reports of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Such laws include the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Whistleblower Act, and the State Officials and Employee Ethics Act.

The District encourages the prompt reporting of any incident of retaliation. Such reports should be made to Human Resources and/or the Executive Director. Reports of retaliation shall be investigated in the same method as reports of discrimination or harassment.

1-2.5: Additional Resources

Any person who believes that a complaint of discrimination or harassment was not properly investigated or handled; who believes that he/she is being retaliated against for filing a complaint, testifying, assisting, or participating in an investigation; or who wishes to pursue other means of investigation, may contact:

Illinois Department of Human Rights
222 S College St #101
Springfield, IL 62704
217-785-5100

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

CCFPD Personnel Policy Manual
Section 1: Employment Policies and Procedures

Chicago District Office
500 W Madison St, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60661
800-669-4000

Revised: December 20, 2017 (effective immediately)
Approved by: CCFPD Board of Commissioners