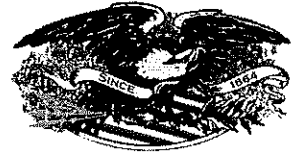


STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
287 WEST STREET
ROCKY HILL, CT 06067



Subject: Affirmative Action Discrimination Complaint Procedure

Revised: January 31, 2019

Section 1. PURPOSE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM

- a. The ultimate purpose of the Affirmative Action Program is to ensure equality at the Department of Veterans Affairs, avoid discrimination, intentional or inadvertent, and develop a work force that is truly representative of all segments of our population. Affirmative Action is a program of positive action, undertaken with conviction and effort, designed to overcome the present effects of past policies, practices and barriers to equal employment opportunity. It identifies, in an affirmative action plan, the causes of imbalance and achieves, through the application of aggressive, good faith effort, the full and fair participation of all persons in the work place and in all agency undertakings.
- b. All employees shall be free from any and all restraint, interference, coercion, or reprisal on the part of their associates, supervisor, and all others in making any complaint or appeal, in serving as representatives or a complainant, in appearing as witnesses or in seeking information. The above principals apply with equal force even after a complaint has been adjudicated. Should these principles be violated, it should be brought to the attention of the Agency Human Resources Administrator by the aggrieved party, his/her representatives or any person affected.

Section 2. WHO MAY FILE A COMPLAINT

- a. A complaint related to employment may be filed by any employee or applicant of the Department of Veterans Affairs who believes that an employment practice in the Department of Veterans Affairs has or will result in discrimination in employment against him/her due to their race, color, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, past or present mental disability, sexual orientation, mental retardation, learning disability, prior conviction of a crime, genetic information, gender identity or expression and veteran status, including pregnancy and sexual harassment, workplace hazards to reproductive systems, criminal record (in state employment and licensing).

Section 3. PROCEDURE

- a. All complaints are to be filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs Human Resources Administrator, or in the absence of the Human Resources Administrator, with the Department Manager for investigation.
- b. All complaints shall be submitted in writing using the 'Affirmative Action Complaint Form', attached, and should be filed within thirty (30) calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act giving rise to the complaint.
- c. The Human Resources Administrator is charged to notify the accused party of the particulars of such complaint within five (5) working days from the time of its submission.

Section 4. RESOLUTION

- a. Attempts will be made to resolve complaints of discriminatory actions and practices through a formal process. The Human Resources Administrator is designated to act in an effort to mediate or conciliate complaints.
- b. The Human Resources Administrator shall ensure prompt consideration of each complaint filed with his/her office. If, after the investigation of the complaint, the Human Resources Administrator concludes that no discriminatory act has occurred, (s) he may dismiss the charge. Any complainant dissatisfied by the dismissal or disposition of the complaint retains all other administrative and legal remedies as provided by Personnel Regulations, union contracts, or other laws and regulations.
- c. If, after investigation of the complaint, Human Resources Administrator believes that an act of discrimination may have occurred within ten (10) workdays after said determination is made, the Human Resources Administrator shall personally attempt to conciliate the matter.
- d. Confidential counseling is incorporated into the Department of Veterans Affairs Affirmation Action Discrimination Procedure.
- e. Hearings by the Commissioner's Office may be held in cases in which conciliation or mediation has failed where either so requests party. Such requests shall be submitted in writing, signed stating the basis for the request. A decision shall be rendered by the Commissioner's Office after a careful review of all the facts.
- f. If either party fails to comply with any obligation or requirement which forms part of any such decision, said decision may be enforced by a directive from the Commissioner's Office.

- g. Time frames shall not exceed ninety (90) days for filing, processing and resolution of all discrimination grievances.
- h. In accordance with Section 46a-68-46(b) of the Regulations for Affirmation Action by State Government, all records of grievances, herein addressed as complaints, and dispositions thereof shall be maintained and reviewed on a regular basis by the Human Resources Administrator to detect any patterns in the nature of the complaints. Records so retained shall be confidential except where disclosure is required by law.

i. Employees are advised of legal options to file complaints with the following:

Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, (860-566-7710) within 180 days from the alleged discrimination; United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, (1-800-669-4000) within 300 days from the alleged discrimination; United States Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division; and any other agencies, state, federal or local, which enforce laws concerning discrimination in employment. Contact information for these agencies and organizations is also provided at the time of the initial interview.

Issued:



Noreen Sinclair
DVA Human Resources Administrator

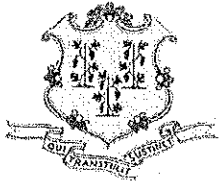
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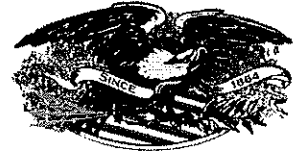
Thomas J. Saadi
Commissioner

January 31, 2019
Date



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
287 WEST STREET
ROCKY HILL, CT 06067



Subject: Affirmative Action Plan Policy Statement

Revised: January 31, 2019

Section 1. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- a. The ultimate purpose of the affirmative action program is to ensure equality at the Department of Veterans Affairs, avoid discrimination, intentional or inadvertent, and develop a work force that is truly representative of all segments of our population.
- b. The Department of Veterans Affairs subscribes without reservation to these goals, recognizes the need, and pledges continued strong support for affirmative action. To these ends, the agency will continue its long-standing policy of applying affirmative action criteria to all its personnel actions.

Section 2. DISTINCTION BETWEEN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

- a. Affirmative Action is a program of positive action, undertaken with conviction and effort, designed to overcome the present effects of the past policies, practices and barriers to equal employment opportunity. It identifies, in an affirmative action plan, the causes of imbalance and achieves, through the application of aggressive, good faith effort, the full and fair participation of all persons in the work place and in all agency undertakings.
- b. Equal Employment Opportunity means the chance to obtain employment without consideration of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, past or present mental disability, sexual orientation, mental retardation, learning disability, prior conviction of a crime, genetic information, gender identity or expression and veteran status.
- c. Toward these ends, the Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes that Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity are immediate and necessary agency objectives.
- d. The Department of Veterans Affairs reaffirms its commitment to the right of every person to apply and be evaluated for opportunities in all phases of the employment process solely on the basis of individual merit and qualifications. The Department of Veterans Affairs accepts its responsibility to recruit, appoint, assign,

the processes followed may not exclude, and must actively seek out, persons from groups adversely impacted in the past.

- e. **Personnel policies:** ways of managing the entire range of actions taken with regard to employees, including all rights and privileges attendant to the workplace. Under affirmative action guidelines, the protection of appointing authority is extended throughout the Agency to ensure that these rights, opportunities, and privileges are equally offered and enjoyed by all workers.
- f. **Job structuring:** a way of meeting the needs of the Agency while accomplishing the forward progress of existing staff and the encouragement and enlightenment of new staff. By offering a flexible program of restructuring and review, the Department can bring along all its members in a growth-oriented environment. Including training and planning for the success of all individuals will enhance the performance of all groups.
- g. **Orientation:** the method by which the transition into a specific workforce is accomplished. For affirmative action purposes, the effectiveness of orientation is determined by how well the needs and obstacles encountered by protected group members are anticipated and how effectively all rights, privileges and available avenues of redress are conveyed to them.
- h. **Training:** an opportunity to diversify, restructure and grow into the best possible staff in order to accomplish Agency goals and missions.
- i. **Counseling:** it is important that all protected group members have access to career and other counseling. Liaison personnel are available to discuss problems involving labor relations, health and medical problems, business matters, harassment, unfair labor practices and discrimination.
- j. **Grievance procedures:** it is essential for equal treatment under the law and that Agency members know of their alternatives when confronted with a violation of their civil rights. The Affirmative Action Program provides written procedures and policies to ensure that employees know of their options and are free to exercise them in a non-intimidating atmosphere.
- k. **Evaluations:** the Affirmative Action Program constantly seeks methods to evaluate personnel based solely on merit requirements.
- l. **Layoffs:** affirmative action and labor have competed to protect their clients in matters concerning layoffs. Ultimately, seniority will be given first consideration, but without regard to any other factors that cannot be considered.

Section 7. PLAN TO BE POSTED AND DISTRIBUTED ANNUALLY TO EMPLOYEES

- a. The Policy Statement and a summary of the objectives of the plan are posted and distributed at least annually to all employees, who are encouraged to read both the policy statement and the entire plan. Employees have the right to review and comment on the plan. All written recommendations are brought to the agency administration for review and possible incorporation into succeeding plans.

Section 8. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

- a. The Department of Veterans Affairs has an internal complaint procedure. All employees or applicants may file a complaint with the Human Resources Administrator or Department Manager related to employment practices. The Affirmative Action Complaint Procedure is outlined in a separate document and is located in the Human Resources Office.

Approved:



Thomas J. Saadi
Commissioner

January 31, 2019
Date

SUMMARY OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN

The Department of Veterans' Affairs is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. In accordance with state and federal laws and regulations, the Agency maintains an Affirmative Action Plan that is updated annually and reported to the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

The main objectives of the plan are to

- foster and maintain a workplace that is free from discrimination of any kind;
- provide a process by which complaints of discrimination and/or harassment may be filed and investigated;
- make available to all persons, regardless of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, marital status, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, past or present mental disability, sexual orientation, mental retardation, learning disability, prior conviction of a crime, genetic information, gender identity or expression and veteran status;
- gender, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, disability, religious affiliation or creed, and age, announcements for job vacancies;
- build and maintain a workforce that is representative of the local and statewide labor market;
- set hiring goals that will keep the workforce in parity with the labor market;
- recruit a diverse pool of qualified candidates to add to our workforce;
- provide upward mobility opportunities for the existing workforce.

At any time, any employee of the Agency is welcome to meet with the Human Resources Administrator, Noreen R. Sinclair, to discuss the plan and learn more about it. She can be reached at extension 3630.

January 31, 2019