



Anti-Harassment Policy Statement

The Committee for Purchase from People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled operating as the U.S. AbilityOne Commission (Commission) is committed to creating a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment where all employees can thrive, develop their potential, and contribute to the success of their workplace. Harassment in any form is inappropriate and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Commission will take immediate and appropriate corrective action if harassment occurs, regardless of whether the conduct violated the law.

Unlawful harassment is unwelcome conduct, based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, age (beginning at age 40), disability, genetic information (including family medical history), pregnancy accommodation, or protected Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) activity, and that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance/environment by resulting in a tangible employment action, or is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the victim's employment and create a hostile or abusive working environment.

To be unlawful, the conduct must create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people. Harassment becomes unlawful when:

- Enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or
- The conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.
- Harassment is also prohibited against individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge; for testifying or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws; or for opposing employment practices that they reasonably believe discriminate against individuals, in violation of these laws.

At the Commission, harassment includes any conduct that demonstrates hostility or aversion towards a person that could be reasonably perceived as disruptive, disrespectful, offensive, or inappropriate in the workplace, or tend to unfairly exclude an individual or group. This definition may encompass a broader range of conduct than what constitutes harassment under EEO laws. The primary distinction between conduct covered under this policy and conduct that may violate applicable EEO laws is that offensive conduct may violate this policy without regard to how often it has occurred or whether it occurred because of a person's membership in a protected class.

Harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Actions or behavior intentionally directed towards someone that adversely impacts the Commission's operations, productivity, and/or work environment;
- Inappropriate communication such as slurs, epithets, ridicule, rude comments, or insults;
- Yelling or emotional outbursts, using expletives, throwing objects, or banging/slamming doors;
- Inappropriate touching or any form of physical intimidation or aggression (e.g., holding, restraining, impeding or blocking movement, following, inappropriate contact or advances, or any other form of inappropriate touching);
- Inappropriate gestures, expressions, pictures, or graffiti;
- Threats made against others or other threatening behavior; or
- Bullying or intimidation, such as making statements that are false, malicious, disparaging, or derogatory with the intent to hurt another's reputation.
- Inappropriate comments about a person's disability and/or outing a person's disability to staff.

Harassment can occur in a variety of employment relationships and may impact victims in varying ways. For example:

- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee (i.e., contractor, intern, etc.).
- Victims may include anyone affected by the offensive conduct, not just the intended target of the conduct.
- Unlawful harassment may occur even if there is no economic injury to, or discharge of, the victim.

Reporting Suspected Harassment:

Any federal employee, non-federal worker, or contractor who suspects they have been a victim of harassment or believe they have witnessed harassment should report the behavior to their supervisor, a member of their management team, or to the Commission's Anti-Harassment Program as soon as possible. All harassment concerns and allegations will be reported to the Commission's Anti-Harassment Coordinator at (703) 798-5873 or email to EEOffice@abilityone.gov. The Commission will protect the confidentiality of employees who report harassment or participate in a harassment investigation to the greatest possible extent. Employees will not be punished for reporting harassment or participating in a harassment investigation or lawsuit. Retaliation for harassment complaints or participation in the Anti-Harassment program, such as in an investigation, is prohibited by EEO laws and regulations. Any person who believes they have been subject to retaliation should use the same reporting procedures as complaints of harassment. The Commission will undertake whatever measures are necessary to ensure that retaliation does not occur.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for taking prompt and appropriate action to stop or prevent harassment and reporting harassment complaints they receive to the Anti-Harassment Policy Coordinator (AHPC). Allegations of discrimination and harassment will be taken seriously and promptly investigated (within 10 days of receiving the harassment complaint) to ensure immediate and appropriate action is taken (within 60 days of the allegation being raised, barring extenuating circumstances) to eliminate harassing conduct, regardless of whether the conduct violated the law. Appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination, will be taken if allegations of harassment are substantiated.

In addition to reporting to the Commission's Anti-Harassment Program, Commission employees and job applicants who believe they have been subjected to unlawful harassment in Commission employment matters because of their race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or in retaliation for prior EEO activity may also file an individual complaint of discrimination with the General Service Administration. The first step is to contact an EEO Counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory conduct or personnel action. The EEO Counselor may be contacted via email at Deborah.hum@gsa.gov or send an email to eeo@gsa.gov.

Filing a complaint with the Commission's Anti-Harassment Program will not meet the requirement that an employee contact an EEO Counselor within 45 days. Even if an employee has filed a complaint with the Commission's Anti-Harassment Program, the employee must also contact an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged discriminatory action to pursue a complaint through the EEO process. Contacting the EEO Counselor outside the 45-calendar day limitation imposed by EEO regulations at 29 CFR Part 1614 will subject the complaint to dismissal in the EEO complaint process. Upon receiving a timely formal EEO complaint, the General Service Administration will determine whether the complaint meets all requirements to accept the complaint for investigation in the EEO complaint process.

Any investigation conducted in the EEO complaint process will be conducted separate and apart from any investigation conducted in the Anti-Harassment Program process. The EEO complaint investigation process must last no longer than 180 calendar days of the formal complaint filing date. In cases where the EEO complaint involves a matter that may be appealed to the U.S. Merits System Protection Board, the investigation will last 120 calendar days. The Commission will address all claims of harassment through the Commission's Anti-Harassment Program irrespective of whether an employee or applicant files an EEO complaint through the General Service Administration.

For more information about the Commission's Anti-Harassment Program, or for training on harassment prevention, please contact the U.S. AbilityOne Commission's Anti-Harassment Policy Coordinator at (703) 798-5873 or EEOffice@abilityone.gov or Astria Wilson at 202- 306-0729 or by email at awilson@abilityone.gov.