



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (DHSS)**

### **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR IN THE DHSS WORKPLACE**

DHSS affirms the Beliefs and Principles statement by establishing Standards of Behavior in the DHSS workplace. In the DHSS workplace, we recognize other cultures as well as our own and value the uniqueness of each individual. We use the word culture in its broadest sense to include: age, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, race, religion and sexual orientation.

DHSS, as an employer, has a responsibility to maintain a workplace free of discrimination and harassment.

**Discrimination** is defined as: making a clear distinction; acting on the basis of prejudice. Discrimination includes but is not limited to:

1. Preferential treatment for or against person(s) based on their perceived identification as a member of one of the culture groups listed above.
2. Not considering a person for promotion based on perceived abilities because of his/her age, gender, race, etc.

**Harassment** includes but is not limited to:

1. Slurs, jokes, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts related to another individual or group.
2. Written or graphic material that denigrates (*belittles/ridicules*) or shows hostility or aversion (*dislike*) toward another individual or group.
3. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature, when (a) submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition of employment, either explicitly or implicitly; or (b) submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment; or (c) that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment or work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

DHSS is committed to valuing differences because we are firmly convinced that a workplace which embraces differences is critical to each employee's ability to succeed and to the success of DHSS. DHSS encourages employees to:

1. Learn about your own culture and other cultures. Knowing the richness and variety of cultures gives insight into how our words and actions are perceived by co-workers and clients.
2. When appropriate, include your co-workers, staff, clients, and the community in defining problems, developing solutions, and implementing the solutions. Those closest to the problem usually have the best solution.

DHSS employees have the right to a workplace free of discrimination and harassment.

**What to do if you observe discrimination or harassment.**

The best course of action takes courage. Talk to a person about his/her behavior. Tell the person that you find the behavior offensive, why you find it so, and ask him/her to stop. Talking to the person is best because sometimes the person does not know that the behavior is inappropriate. If you cannot talk to the person or the behavior continues, report the person (process listed below). Appropriate discipline will be imposed on people who have been proven to discriminate against or harass others in the workplace.

No employee will be subjected to retaliation (*reprisal*) for reporting, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing resulting from a complaint of discriminatory or harassing behavior. No person shall intimidate, threaten, coerce or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with that person's right to file a complaint.

**How to report discrimination or harassment.**

**Tell your supervisor or another appropriate person (e.g. the other supervisor, Division Director, etc.).** Supervisors must act on complaints of discrimination or harassment. An investigation will be conducted. If the behavior continues, you can do one or all of the following:

- Contact the DHSS EEO/AA Officer in Human Resources (255-9062),
- Contact the statewide EEO/AA Manager (577-8977) or the Department of Labor, Anti-Discrimination Section (761-8200), and/or
- File a grievance under the Merit Rules or your union contract.

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DHSS believes that a workplace environment which acknowledges, supports, and values each individual creates a more productive, efficient, and effective organization.

As a DHSS employee, I have read or otherwise become familiar with and will adhere to the DHSS Standards of Behavior in the workplace.

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Signature of Employee Date

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Signature of Witness Date

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