

Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace

About the Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Policy

The Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace policy is housed in the Hennepin County Administrative Manual. Click here to access the [Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Policy](#). This will help you to understand the rights and responsibilities expected of each employee for creating an environment that values diversity and respectful treatment in the workplace.

About the Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Team

The Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace team is assigned under Internal Audit, yet it is a separate function from traditional Internal Audit activities. The Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace team retains principles consistent with Internal Audit, such as independence and objectivity, with a team of employees from across the county who have been trained to conduct these investigations.

Complaint Process Options:

All employees and volunteers of Hennepin County have several options for seeking resolution of work related situations of concern under this policy, including any discrimination, harassment or hostile work environment. Employees have the option of filing a complaint internally using the Informal Complaint Process or the Formal Internal Complaint Process. Employees also have an option of seeking assistance from External Complaint Options - the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR). These three complaint process alternatives are explained below.

Informal Complaint Process:

Employees who want to resolve Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace issues on an informal basis may choose any of the following options:

- Request that a supervisor or manager from your department take the lead in resolving the situation, including conducting an informal inquiry
- Request union involvement, if you have access to union representation
- Contact your department's Human Resources Generalist; volunteers may request assistance through their volunteer coordinator
- Seek advice from the Employee Assistance Program, recognizing this does not constitute a report to or knowledge on the part of the county

Additionally, employees may now request the Diversity and Inclusion Division be involved in resolving the situation by calling 612-543-2463. The D&I Division will be able to consult with employees about the policy and provide coaching and guidance on issues and additional options for resolution as outlined by policy.

All county managers and supervisors are responsible for investigating any reported situation of discrimination, including harassment, and taking prompt and appropriate corrective action, which can include informal resolution or more formal action. Employees and volunteers who are not satisfied with the results of the informal resolution process or who want a formal resolution process may utilize the formal Complaint Process (outlined below), or may seek assistance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) which are outlined below.

Formal Internal Complaint Process:

Employees who desire to resolve their concerns through a formal internal process should directly contact the Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Investigations Team by completing the Formal Complaint form at the bottom titled "Policy Violation Complaint Form".

The Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Investigations Team will coordinate the review of the complainant's concern.

The objective for the Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Investigations Team is the expedient and respectful resolution of the issue. Based on the available evidence, they will determine whether there is support for the allegation(s) contained in the complaint.

Filing a complaint

The following paragraphs summarize the process. Once the completed Complaint form is received by the Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Investigations Team, an email will be sent to you acknowledging the form has been received. Within a short time frame, an Investigator will contact you to get specifics about the situation. The complaint form is at the bottom of this text and is titled "Policy Allegation Complaint Form".

- The investigator will contact you and set up an initial interview which involves gathering sufficient information about your complaint which may include:
 1. What happened and the names of all participants. Specifics of the allegation.
 2. When the incident(s) occurred. The time limit for filing a discrimination complaint is one year from the date of the incident.
 3. Lists of witnesses and/or documents that may be useful to the investigation.
 4. What the complainant is seeking as a remedy to the situation.
 5. Any other information the complainant feels is relevant to the investigation.
- If the Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Investigations Team determines that the complaint establishes a possible violation of the Non-Discrimination/Respectful Workplace policy, the Investigator will proceed with a formal complaint.
- The County Attorney's Office is notified regarding all complaints when a complainant is represented by an attorney or retains an attorney during any part of the complaint process.

The investigation:

- Persons named in the complaint are interviewed.

- All interviews are digitally recorded.
- Witnesses with direct information about the allegations of the complaint could be interviewed.
- Relevant documentation is collected.
- Collected information and interview results are analyzed to determine if the allegation(s) are supported or refuted.
- Additional or second interviews may be conducted.
- A formal statement with the outcome is prepared and sent to the complainant and others as deemed necessary.
- Most investigations will be completed within 60 days of the filing of the complaint. The time line for completion of an investigation is dependent upon such factors as the availability of witnesses, the time necessary to compile and analyze data, and the complexity of allegations in the complaint.

The resolution:

If the determination is that a violation did occur, the Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Investigator or Director will inform the department's Human Resources Business Partner and appropriate level of the Department's management.

If there is insufficient evidence that a violation occurred, the department's Human Resources Business Partner and Department's management will be notified to determine if further action is needed.

Alternative Complaint options:

A complainant who is dissatisfied with the results of an investigation may make an appeal to the Internal Audit Director.

The complainant is also free to exercise any of the other Complaint options listed. (Informal Complaint process or External Complaint options)

Complete the Policy Allegation Complaint Form below if you believe you are being or have been discriminated against because of gender, age, race, color, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, creed, or public assistance status or are experiencing a hostile work environment and been subjected to bullying. There are two ways to complete this form 1) complete on-line and send electronically 2) Print a copy of the form and complete sending it thru inter-office mail or thru the email address.

A receipt that the form has been received will be emailed to you once it is received.

To complete the Policy Violation Complaint form:

Print and complete the form - [📄Template A - Policy Violation Complaint Form.docx](#) Once the form is completed, send it by inter-office mail to the address noted on the top of the form or scan the completed form to - workplaceinvestigations@hennepin.us

If you have any additional questions after reading this material, please contact us at 612-543-2058.

External Complaint Options:

Employees and volunteers who are dissatisfied with the results of an investigation or who want a formal resolution process that is not initiated by Hennepin County may seek assistance from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR).

- **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**
651 335-4040
- **Minnesota Department of Human Rights**
651 296-5663