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Ulster County Policy on Harassment in the Workplace

Every person is entitled to work in an environment free from the damaging effects of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. Therefore, it is the policy of Ulster County Government that unlawful harassment will not be tolerated. The County affirms its commitment to take appropriate action against individuals engaging in unlawful harassment, and against supervisory and managerial personnel who knowingly allow it to continue.

Prohibited Conduct Under This Policy

Workplace harassment infringes on an employee's right to a safe and secure work environment. This policy prohibits harassment in the workplace as related to a person's race, religion, color, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by law, including sexual harassment. The County will take swift and appropriate action to address any violations of this policy. Harassment includes any unwelcome verbal, physical and visual conduct intended to demean, ridicule, degrade, offend, or intimidate another person. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Conduct constitutes harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
2. Submission or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Reporting Workplace Harassment

Any employee who feels that he or she has been the subject of unlawful harassment at work should immediately report the situation to the Personnel Officer or the Director of Employee Relations of Ulster County, without fear of reprisal. Ulster County will not permit retaliation of any kind against anyone who makes and/or pursues a harassment complaint. The complaint procedure is intended to ensure that concerns about harassment are promptly addressed and complaints are investigated quickly in a manner that is fair to all parties.

All information provided by complaints of harassment, and the investigations that follow, will be handled with the utmost discretion possible under the circumstances. All complaints will be treated seriously and will be investigated promptly upon being received. The nature of the investigation will consist of questions to the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any witnesses, recognizing that complete confidentiality may not be possible. Results of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant and the alleged harasser as expeditiously as possible. Appropriate action will be taken against any person violating this policy with penalties to include those provided by law, up to and including termination of employment. In any case, a subsequent review will be taken to insure that any violations have ceased.

The Personnel Officer and the Director of Employee Relations are located on the 5th Floor of the Ulster County Office Building, 244 Fair Street, P.O. Box 1800, Kingston, New York, 12402, (845) 340-3550. Use of this complaint process does not deny anyone the right to file a complaint with an outside agency such as the Ulster County Human Relations Commission, the New York State Division of Human Rights, or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

This policy statement will be distributed to all existing employees, will be included in new employee orientations and will be publicized in internal employee publications. All employees, regardless of position, will be expected to attend one of the County approved training sessions for instruction on identifying and addressing incidents of harassment in the workplace.