



## Workforce Investment Board Mid-Ohio-Valley

Policy #24

**Subject:** Prohibition of Harassment in the Workplace

**Purpose:** Establish the Prohibition of Harassment Policy of the Workforce Investment Board Mid-Ohio Valley for services offered through Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

**References:** Section 181(c) and 188(a) Workforce Investment Act of 1998; 20CFR Part 667.275; 29 CFR Part 37

**Background:** The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requires that recipients of WIA Title I funds shall provide equal opportunity to individuals without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, citizenship, political affiliation or belief.

**Policy:** It is the policy of the Workforce Investment Board Mid-Ohio Valley that all applicants / enrollees and employees have a right to work, train, and receive services in an environment free of discrimination, which encompasses freedom from harassment. The WIB MOV promotes a system wide policy intended to prevent harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, of its employees and to deal quickly and effectively with any incident that might occur.

### **Definition of harassment**

Harassment occurs when an employee is subjected to unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, religious beliefs, color, place of origin, gender, mental or physical disability, ancestry, marital status, family status, source of income, or sexual orientation.

Examples of harassment which will not be tolerated are: verbal or physical abuse, threats, derogatory remarks, jokes, innuendo or taunts about any employee's appearance, religious beliefs, color, place of origin, mental or physical disabilities, ancestry, marital status, family status, source of income or gender. WIB MOV also will not tolerate the display of pornographic, racist or offensive signs or images; practical jokes that result in awkwardness or embarrassment; unwelcome invitations or requests, whether indirect or explicit. These illustrative examples are not intended to be encompassing of all conduct that may constitute workplace harassment

### **Definition of sexual harassment**

Unwanted sexual advances, unwanted requests for sexual favors, and other unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term of, or condition of, an individual's employment; or

2. submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual affects that individual's employment.

Specifically, no individual shall threaten or insinuate either explicitly or implicitly that any subordinate's (employee, student, applicant) submission to or rejection of sexual advances will in any way influence any personnel decision regarding that individual's training opportunities, employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts or any other condition of training / employment or career development.

Sexual harassment can include such things as repeated offensive sexual flirtation, touching, advances, propositions, graphic / verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, offensive comments, jokes, innuendos, and other sexually suggestive or pornographic materials. These illustrative examples are not intended to be encompassing of all conduct that may constitute workplace harassment. The behavior need not be intentional in order to be considered sexual harassment.

### **Procedure**

If you are being harassed:

1. Tell the harasser his/her behavior is unwelcome and ask him/her to stop.
2. Keep a record of incidents (date, times, locations, possible witnesses, what happened, your response.) You do not have to have a record of events in order to file a complaint, but a record can strengthen your case and help you remember details over time.
3. If, after asking the harasser to stop his/her behavior, the harassment continues, file a complaint following the WIB MOV Grievance Procedure outlined in Policy #01. The first level of reporting should be to an individual's immediate supervisor unless that individual is the violator. In that situation, the complaint should be reported to the next level in the chain of command or to the WIB MOV equal opportunity representative.

### **Dealing with a complaint**

1. An investigation will be undertaken immediately upon receiving a harassment complaint. Harassment complaints shall be held in confidence to the extent possible. While absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, information shall only be disclosed to appropriate individuals on a need-to-know basis to investigate and resolve the matter.
2. Both the complainant and the alleged harasser will be interviewed, as will any individuals who may be able to provide relevant information. All information will be kept in confidence.
3. If the investigation reveals evidence to support the complaint of harassment, the harasser will be disciplined appropriately. Discipline may include suspension or dismissal, and the incident will be documented in the harasser's file.
4. If the investigation fails to find evidence to support the complaint, there will be no documentation concerning the complaint placed in the file of the alleged harasser.

5. No retaliation will be tolerated against applicants / enrollees and employees who report harassment or assist in the investigation of a complaint, regardless of the outcome of a harassment complaint.

**Responsibility of management**

It is the responsibility of all supervisors employed by the WIB MOV or organizations funded by the WIB MOV to take immediate and appropriate action to report or deal with incidents of harassment of any type whether brought to their attention or personally observed. Under no circumstances should a legitimate complaint be dismissed or downplayed nor should the complainant be told to deal with it personally.

**Action:** All recipients and sub-recipients of Workforce Investment Act funds through WIB MOV shall ensure all employees/ applicants/ and participants are aware of the prohibition of harassment and verify compliance with this policy.

**Expiration Date:** Effective until rescinded or modified by the Workforce Investment Board Mid-Ohio Valley.

Approved: