Know Your Rights: Workplace Discrimination is Illegal

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces Federal laws that protect you from discrimination in employment. If you believe you’ve been discriminated against at work or in applying for a job, the EEOC may be able to help.

Who is Protected?
• Employees (current and former), including managers and temporary employees
• Job applicants
• Union members and applicants for membership in a union

What Organizations are Covered?
• Most private employers
• State and local governments (as employers)
• Educational institutions (as employers)
• Unions
• Staffing agencies

What Types of Employment Discrimination are Illegal?
Under the EEOC’s laws, an employer may not discriminate against you, regardless of your immigration status, on the bases of:
• Race
• Color
• Religion
• National origin
• Sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sexual orientation, or gender identity)
• Age (40 and older)
• Disability
• Genetic information (including employer requests for, or purchase, use, or disclosure of genetic tests, genetic services, or family medical history)

• Retaliation for filing a charge, reasonably opposing discrimination, or participating in a discrimination lawsuit, investigation, or proceeding
• Interference, coercion, or threats related to exercising rights regarding disability discrimination or pregnancy accommodation

What Employment Practices can be Challenged as Discriminatory?
All aspects of employment, including:
• Discharge, firing, or lay-off
• Harassment (including unwelcome verbal or physical conduct)
• Hiring or promotion
• Assignment
• Pay (unequal wages or compensation)
• Failure to provide reasonable accommodation for a disability; pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition; or a sincerely-held religious belief, observance or practice
• Benefits
• Job training
• Classification
• Referral
• Obtaining or disclosing genetic information of employees
• Requesting or disclosing medical information of employees
• Conduct that might reasonably discourage someone from opposing discrimination, filing a charge, or participating in an investigation or proceeding

What Can You Do if You Believe Discrimination has Occurred?
Contact the EEOC promptly if you suspect discrimination. Do not delay, because there are strict time limits for filing a charge of discrimination (180 or 300 days, depending on where you live/work). You can reach the EEOC in any of the following ways:
Submit an inquiry through the EEOC’s public portal: https://publicportal.eeoc.gov/Portal/Login.aspx
Call 1–800–669–4000 (toll free)
1–800–669–6820 (TTY)
1–844–234–5122 (ASL video phone)
Visit an EEOC field office (information at www.eeoc.gov/field-office)
E-Mail info@eeoc.gov

Additional information about the EEOC, including information about filing a charge of discrimination, is available at www.eeoc.gov.

The Department of Labor’s Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) enforces the nondiscrimination and affirmative action commitments of companies doing business with the Federal Government. If you are applying for a job with, or are an employee of, a company with a Federal contract or subcontract, you are protected under Federal law from discrimination on the following bases: Race, Color, Religion, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, National Origin Executive Order 11246, as amended, prohibits employment discrimination by Federal contractors based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin, and requires affirmative action to ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment.

Who is Covered?
• Union members and applicants for membership
• Staffing agencies
• State and local governments (as employers)
• Most private employers
• EEOC field office (information at www.eeoc.gov/field-office)
• Job applicants
• Union members and applicants for membership in a union

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• Disability

Protected Veteran Status The Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. 4212, prohibits employment discrimination against, and requires affirmative action to recruit, employ, and advance in employment, disabled veterans, recently separated veterans (i.e., within three years of discharge or release from active duty), active duty wartime or campaign badge veterans, or Armed Forces service medal veterans.

Retaliation Retaliation is prohibited against a person who files a complaint of discrimination, participates in an OFCCP proceeding, or otherwise opposes discrimination by Federal contractors under these Federal laws. Any person who believes a contractor has violated its nondiscrimination or affirmative action obligations under OFCCP’s authorities should contact immediately:
The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210
1–800–397–6251 (toll-free)

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7–1–1 to access telecommunications relay services. OFCCP may also be contacted by submitting a question online to OFCCP’s Help Desk at https://ofcpphelpdesk.dol.gov/ or by calling an OFCCP regional or district office, listed in most telephone directories under U.S. Government, Department of Labor and on OFCCP’s “Contact Us” webpage at https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ofccp/contact.

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