

# **2021 Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Training**

for New, Temporary and Lump Sum  
State of Illinois Employees  
Under the Jurisdiction of the Governor

**I. HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION ARE PROHIBITED.**

All state employee, elected official, or appointees are subject to the Ethics Act, which is intended to ensure that functions of State government are conducted with fairness, honesty, and integrity. The Ethics Act requires that: **“All persons have a right to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. All persons subject to this Act are prohibited from sexually harassing any person, regardless of any employment relationship or lack thereof.”** 5 ILCS 430/5-65(a) (emphasis added).

Thus, engaging in sexual harassment is a violation of the Ethics Act. Engaging in sexual harassment is also a violation of the Illinois Human Rights Act as well as other laws and agency policies. *See* 775 ILCS 5/2-102(D).

The Ethics Act requires that all [state employee, elected official, or appointees be aware that they are also prohibited from engaging in harassment or discrimination as defined by the Illinois Human Rights Act. Specifically, they should know that the Illinois Human Rights Act forbids discrimination and harassment on the basis of someone’s actual or perceived membership in one or more of the following protected classes:

- |                      |                              |   |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| • Age                | • Marital Status             | • Religion                                    |
| • Ancestry           | • Military Status            | • Sex   |
| • Citizenship Status | • National Origin            | • Sexual Orientation                          |
| • Color              | • Order of Protection Status | • Unfavorable Discharge from Military Service |
| • Disability         | • Pregnancy                  |   |
|                      | • Race                       |   |

The Illinois Human Rights Act also prohibits other discriminatory acts in employment, including:

- prohibiting employees from speaking their native language, when unrelated to work duties;
- certain immigration-related practices;
- imposing conditions that would require an employee to violate a sincerely-held religious practice;
- failure to offer employees reasonable accommodations related to pregnancy or childbirth; and
- discrimination based on age in training and apprenticeship programs.

*Id.* at 5/2-102.

## II. WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

“**Sexual harassment**” means any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any conduct of a sexual nature when:

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

For purposes of this definition, the phrase "working environment" is not limited to a physical location an employee is assigned to perform his or her duties and does not require an employment relationship.

5 ILCS 430/5-65(b).

An employer will be responsible for the sexually harassing or harassing behavior of a nonemployee, nonmanagerial employee, or nonsupervisory employee, if the employer becomes aware of the conduct and fails to take reasonable corrective measures. *See* 775 ILCS 5/2-102(A), (A-10), (D), and (D-5).

### Types of sexual harassment include quid pro quo and hostile work environment

- **Quid pro quo** sexual harassment occurs when a manager or supervisor communicates to a subordinate that in order for them to receive a promotion, raise, preferred assignment, or other type of job benefit – or to avoid something negative like discipline or an unpleasant assignment – the subordinate must do something sexual in return.
- **Hostile work environment** sexual harassment occurs when *unwelcome* sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any conduct of a sexual nature has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s work performances or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

### Examples of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is not limited to overt sexual advances and requests to engage in sexual acts. Many types of behavior and other acts may create a hostile work environment or suggest quid pro quo sexual harassment. Behaviors that might be sexually harassing include:

- actual or attempted rape or sexual assault;
- pressure for sexual favors;
- deliberate touching, leaning over, or cornering;
- sexual looks or gestures;

- letters, telephone calls, personal e-mails, texts, or other materials of a sexual nature;
- pressure for dates;
- sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or questions;
- referring to an adult as a “girl,” “hunk,” “doll,” “babe,” or “honey”;
- whistling at someone;
- sexual comments, innuendos, or stories;
- turning work discussions to sexual topics;
- asking about sexual fantasies, preferences, or history;
- sexual comments about a person’s clothing, anatomy, or looks;
- kissing sounds, howling, and smacking lips;
- talking about, telling lies, or spreading rumors about a person’s personal sex life;
- neck and/or shoulder massage;
- touching an employee’s clothing, hair, or body;
- hanging around a person uninvited;
- hugging or kissing;
- patting, stroking, or pinching;
- touching or rubbing oneself sexually in the presence of another person;
- standing close to or brushing up against a person;
- looking a person up and down;
- sexually suggestive posters, cartoons, websites, or magazines displayed in the workplace or shown to someone;
- playing sexually suggestive or graphic videos or music; and making sexual gestures with hands or through body movements.

Sexual harassment can involve activities online or through electronic media, even when off site or “off the clock.” Examples of behaviors that can constitute unwelcome sexual conduct through email, cell phone or text, Internet or Intranet posting, online comments, blog posts, social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat), or other electronic media include:

- requests/demands for sex;
- sexually graphic or inappropriate pictures;
- sexually graphic or inappropriate videos;
- sexually offensive language or comments;
- unwanted flirting;
- unwanted requests for dates; and
- cyber stalking.

### III. WHAT IS UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION?

“**Unlawful discrimination**” is “discrimination against a person because of his or her actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, marital status, order of protection status, disability, military status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or unfavorable discharge from military service...” (775 ILCS 5/1-103(Q))

#### Protected Categories

Each of the categories listed above has a legal meaning. Below are the legal definitions as they directly appear in the Illinois Human Rights Act for reference.

<b>Marital Status.</b> The legal status of being married, single, separated, divorced, or widowed. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(J).	<b>Sex.</b> The status of being male or female. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(O).	<b>National Origin.</b> The place in which a person or one of his or her ancestors was born. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(K).
<b>Order of Protection Status.</b> A person's status as being a person protected under an order of protection issued pursuant to certain statutes, or an order of protection issued by a court of another state. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(K-5).	<b>Age.</b> The chronological age of a person who is at least 40 years old. In the case of training and apprenticeship programs, age means a person who is 18 but not yet 40 years old. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(A).	<b>Pregnancy.</b> Pregnancy, childbirth, or medical or common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(L-5).
<b>Religion.</b> All aspects of religious observance and practice, as well as belief, unless an employer demonstrates that he or she is unable to reasonably accommodate an employee's or prospective employee's religious observance or practice without undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business. <i>Id.</i> at §2-101(F).	<b>Unfavorable Military Discharge.</b> Discharges from the Armed Forces of the U.S, their Reserve components, or any National Guard or Naval Militia which are classified as RE-3 or the equivalent, but does not include those characterized as RE-4 or "Dishonorable". <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(P).	<b>Sexual Orientation.</b> The actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or gender-related identity, whether or not traditionally associated with the person's designated sex at birth. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(O-1).
<b>Military Status.</b> A person's status on active duty in or status as a veteran of the armed forces of the U.S., status as a current member or veteran of any reserve component of the armed forces of the U.S., or status as a current member or veteran of the Illinois Army National Guard or Illinois Air National Guard. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(J-1).	<b>Disability.</b> A determinable physical or mental characteristic of a person, including one that necessitates the person's use of a guide, hearing or support dog, the history of such characteristic, or the perception of such characteristic by the person complained against, which may result from disease, injury, congenital condition of birth or functional disorder and which characteristic is unrelated to the person's ability to perform the duties of a particular job or position. <i>Id.</i> at §1-103(I).	<b>Citizenship Status.</b> The status of being: (1) a born U.S. citizen; (2) a naturalized U.S. citizen; (3) a U.S. national; or (4) a person born outside the U.S. and not a U.S. citizen who is not an unauthorized alien and who is protected from discrimination under a federal law. <i>Id.</i> at §2-101(K).

The Illinois Human Rights Act does not define race, color, or ancestry. Other legal sources provide guidance on the protected categories.

- **Race:** physical characteristics commonly associated with a person's race such as a person's color, hair, facial features, height, weight, race-linked illnesses, and cultural characteristics related to race or ethnicity. (*EEOC Compliance Manual*, Doc. No. 915.003, at 15 (2006).)
- **Color:** the pigmentation, complexion, or skin shade or skin tone. (*EEOC Compliance Manual*, Doc. No. 915.003, at 15 (2006).)
- **Ancestry:** a person's forebears, lineage, or their line of familial descent. (*Black's Law Dictionary* (11th ed. 2019).)

### Unlawful Discrimination is a Civil Rights Violation

It is a civil rights violation for "any employer to refuse to hire, to segregate, to engage in harassment [], or to act with respect to recruitment, hiring, promotion, renewal of employment, selection for training or apprenticeship, discharge, discipline, tenure or terms, privileges or conditions of employment on the basis of unlawful discrimination or citizenship status." 775 ILCS 5/2-102(A). Employment agencies and labor organizations are also prohibited from certain conduct on the basis of unlawful discrimination or citizenship status. *Id.* at §5/2-102(B) and (C).

### Other Civil Rights Violations Involving Unlawful Discrimination

The Illinois Human Rights Act also outlines other forms of discrimination that are civil rights violations, including provisions related to language, immigration-related practices, religious discrimination, reasonable accommodations for pregnancy, and training and apprenticeship programs. This section outlines information about those protections.<sup>1</sup>

**Language.** Language refers to a person's native tongue, such as Polish, Spanish, or Chinese, but does not include slang, jargon, profanity, or vulgarity. *Id.* at §2-102(A-5). It is a civil rights violation "for an employer to impose a restriction that has the effect of prohibiting a language from being spoken by an employee in communications that are unrelated to the employee's duties." *Id.*

**Immigration-related practices.** It is a civil rights violation for an employer to use more or different documents than are required under certain federal laws or to refuse to honor documents that on their face appear to be genuine. If the employer is participating in the E-Verify program,

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<sup>1</sup> The Illinois Administrative Code provides additional details regarding civil rights violations outlined in the Illinois Human Rights Act. For example, it outlines requirements for a reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities. Specifically, it states: "[e]mployers and labor organizations must make reasonable accommodation of the known physical or mental limitations of otherwise qualified disabled applicants or employees, unless the employer or labor organization can demonstrate that accommodation would be prohibitively expensive or would unduly disrupt the ordinary conduct of business. . . . [The] accommodation may include: alteration of the facility or work site; modification of work schedules or leave policy; acquisition of equipment; job restructuring; provision of readers or interpreters; and other similar actions." 56 Ill. Admin. Code § 2500.40.

it cannot take adverse employment actions without following the procedures under that program. *Id.* at §2-102(G).

**Religious discrimination.** It is a civil rights violation “for any employer to impose upon a person as a condition of obtaining or retaining employment, including opportunities for promotion, advancement, or transfer, any terms or conditions that would require such person to violate or forgo a sincerely held practice of his or her religion including, but not limited to, the wearing of any attire, clothing, or facial hair in accordance with the requirements of his or her religion,” unless the employer cannot reasonably accommodate the prospective employee or employee without undue hardship on the employer’s business. *Id.* at §2-102(E-5). An employer is also permitted to enact a dress code or grooming policy in order to maintain workplace safety or food sanitation. *Id.* Further, it is a civil rights violation for a public employer, consistent with operational needs, to refuse to permit a public employee, who takes time off work to practice religion, from performing his or her work during the employee’s non-scheduled hours in order to compensate for work time lost for such religious reasons. *Id.* at §2-102(E).

### Test your knowledge

Surjit is a Sikh and wears a beard and turban as a part of his religion. Surjit recently moved to a new department at his agency. Surjit’s new coworkers often call him a terrorist and ask him what he is hiding in his turban. These comments make Surjit uncomfortable and angry, and he now dreads going to work. He tries to avoid his coworkers as much as possible. This has caused his work to suffer because he has trouble collaborating on projects.

This is an example of harassment because it is unwelcome conduct based on Surjit’s religious beliefs and practices that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with his work performance and creating an offensive working environment. Surjit’s coworkers are making offensive comments to Surjit based on his religious observances. These offensive comments are unwelcome and negatively affect Surjit’s ability to perform his duties.

**Reasonable accommodation for pregnancy.** The Illinois Human Rights Act outlines reasonable accommodations that are afforded to individuals related to pregnancy or childbirth. It is a civil rights violation for an employer not to make a reasonable accommodation for any medical or common condition of a job applicant or employee related to pregnancy or childbirth, unless the employer can demonstrate that it would impose an undue hardship on the ordinary operation of the business. *Id.* at §2-102(J). It is also unlawful for an employer to require a job applicant or employee to accept an accommodation when that individual did not request one. *Id.* An employer may not require an employee to take leave, if another reasonable accommodation can be provided. *Id.* An employer shall reinstate the employee to her original job or equivalent position upon her signifying her intent to return or when the need for the reasonable accommodation ends, unless the employer demonstrates that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the ordinary operation of the business. *Id.* Further, an employer may not deny employment opportunities or benefits or take adverse action because an individual needs a reasonable accommodation. *Id.*

**Training and apprenticeship programs.** It is a civil rights violation “for any employer, employment agency or labor organization to discriminate against a person on the basis of age in the selection, referral for or conduct of apprenticeship or training programs.” *Id.* at §2-102(F).

*Examples of Unlawful Discrimination*

Conduct may amount to unlawful discrimination if, based on a person’s actual or perceived membership to one or more of the protected classes outlined above, an employer takes action involving:

- recruitment;
- hiring;
- promotion;
- demotion;
- renewal of employment;
- selection for training or apprenticeship;
- discharge;
- discipline;
- tenure of terms;
- privileges; and/or
- other conditions of employment.

Unlawful discrimination occurs when an employer takes a discriminatory employment action because of an applicant’s or employee’s actual or perceived membership in one of the protected classes above. However, it does not prevent an employer from taking employment action for another reason unrelated to an applicant’s or employee’s membership in a protected class.

Test your Knowledge

A state agency recently reorganized one of its offices and eliminated certain positions. Employee A, who is Black, filled one of the positions that was eliminated and thus was laid off by the agency. Employee A was an excellent employee with no job performance issues. However, only two months later the agency posted Employee A’s position. Employee A applied for their former position, but the agency selected a less qualified applicant who was white. Employee A was the best candidate for the position, particularly because Employee A had filled the position previously and knew how to perform all of the functions. Employee A called the HR manager for the agency to ask why they were not hired for their former position. The HR manager said that some of the office leadership where Employee A worked had mentioned that Employee A had never really “fit in” at the office because Employee A did not “match the demographics,” of the local community the office was located in.

This is an example of discrimination on the basis of race and color. Employee A was the best qualified applicant and had actually filled the position previously. However, the office

leadership impermissibly used Employee A's race and color when making an employment-related decision regarding Employee A. By stating that Employee A did not "match the demographics," the leadership showed that they did not rehire Employee A because Employee A was Black.

#### IV. WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

"**Harassment**" means "any unwelcome conduct on the basis of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, marital status, order of protection status, disability, military status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, unfavorable discharge from military service, or citizenship status that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. For purposes of this definition, the phrase 'working environment' is not limited to a physical location an employee is assigned to perform his or her duties." 775 ILCS 5/2-101(E-1). The definitions of these protected categories are outlined above.

##### Examples of Harassment

Examples of conduct that could amount to harassment if based on a person's actual or perceived membership in one or more protected classes include:

- offensive jokes;
- slurs;
- epithets or name calling;
- physical assault(s);
- threats;
- intimidation, ridicule or mockery;
- insults or put-downs;
- offensive objects or pictures;
- deliberate touching, leaning over, or cornering;
- offensive looks or gestures; and/or
- letters, telephone calls, personal e-mails, texts, or other materials of an offensive nature.

#### **Test your Knowledge**

Employee A is polite and professional with all coworkers and has never made a sexually explicit comment or statement to any coworker. However, Employee A's desk is in a high-traffic area of the office, and every day during the authorized lunch period Employee A often views sexually suggestive YouTube videos with scantily clad individuals. Coworkers reported the conduct to Employee A's supervisor, and explained they feel uncomfortable walking past Employee A's desk and avoid that area as much as possible, including avoiding talking to other employees who work near Employee A. Employees who work near Employee A's desk reported that they often tried to find reasons to be away from their desk during Employee A's breaks and lunch period, which impacts their work performance.

This is an example of hostile work environment sexual harassment. Hostile work environment sexual harassment occurs when such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. In this case, Employee A's coworkers avoid other employees because they do not want to be exposed to the content Employee A is viewing. Employee A's conduct is offensive to at least some coworkers and has the effect of substantially interfering with other individuals' work performance because they are not comfortable being in their work area during certain times.

**V. HOW TO REPORT AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, AND/OR RETALIATION.**

Any employee who witnesses, is subjected to, or becomes aware of sexual harassment, harassment, and/or discrimination should immediately report the incident. They can report to their supervisor, their agency ethics officer, the Office of Executive Inspector General ("OEIG"), and/or the Illinois Department of Human Rights ("IDHR").<sup>2</sup> In fact, Executive Order 16-04 requires employees of State of Illinois agencies under the Illinois Governor to report all allegations of misconduct to their ethics officer and/or the OEIG.

In addition, if an employee experiences or observes retaliation after reporting harassment or discrimination, they can report that conduct to their supervisor, ethics officer, the OEIG, and the IDHR in the same manner that they would report sexual harassment, harassment, and discrimination.

Sometimes it is difficult to know whether the conduct that makes one feel uncomfortable is sexual harassment, harassment, or discrimination in violation of a law or policy. When in doubt, employees are encouraged to report inappropriate conduct so that the employer can address the issue. While a lot of this training focuses on the legal definitions of sexual harassment, harassment, and discrimination, it is important to remember that agency policies might be more restrictive. It is important to know and understand your agency's policies and if you are unsure if something is improper to report the conduct so that it can be appropriately addressed.

***Reporting an Allegation of Sexual Harassment, Harassment, and/or Discrimination to Supervisors and Ethics Officers***

**Supervisors.** You can report sexual harassment, harassment, and unlawful discrimination to supervisors. Supervisors will know the internal practices of the agency, and will be in a position to effect change and to help an employee navigate the agency's internal complaint process. Although supervisors may seek assistance from or report the allegation to the agency ethics officer, they should share information only as required by law or in order to effect necessary management action to address the allegation.

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<sup>2</sup> This document discusses reporting to State agencies. This document does not provide legal advice and does not prevent anyone from exercising other rights, including contacting a private attorney, law enforcement, or federal or local resources regarding sexual harassment, harassment, and discrimination.

**Ethics officers.** You can report sexual harassment, harassment, and unlawful discrimination to ethics officers. Ethics officers are available to discuss any concerns about ethics violations employees may have and to accept reports of misconduct. Ethics officers can help interpret the Ethics Act as well as agency policies that prohibit sexual harassment, harassment, and discrimination. Ethics officers should be knowledgeable about the reporting process for the OEIG and IDHR to assist employees in making a report to these entities.

Additionally, if an allegation of sexual harassment, harassment, and/or discrimination involves a supervisor, or if the employee is otherwise uncomfortable with their supervisor or are concerned that the allegation may not be handled appropriately, they can report the allegation directly to their ethics officer, the OEIG, and/or the IDHR.

#### **UNIVERSITY CONTACTS**

**Liz Duvall**  
**Ethics Officer**  
**Access**  
**Office of General Counsel**  
Phone: 309-298-3070  
E-mail: [EL-Duvall@wiu.edu](mailto:EL-Duvall@wiu.edu)

**Stephanie Kinkaid**  
**Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity &**  
**Title IX Coordinator**  
Phone: 309-298-1977  
[sm-kinkaid@wiu.edu](mailto:sm-kinkaid@wiu.edu)

#### ***Reporting an Allegation of Sexual Harassment, Harassment, and/or Discrimination to the Office of Executive Inspector General***

The OEIG is an independent executive branch State agency that works to ensure accountability in State government. The OEIG's jurisdiction includes executive branch agencies, officers, and employees (other than those under the Attorney General, Secretary of State, Comptroller, or Treasurer), the four regional transit boards, the State public universities, and approximately 300 boards and commissions, plus vendors doing business with those agencies and entities. **The OEIG does not represent any party or agency in an investigation nor does it investigate on behalf of any individual or agency.**

The primary role of the OEIG is to investigate allegations of misconduct and to make reports of its findings to the affected agencies and officials. The OEIG investigates, when appropriate, alleged violations of law, rule, or regulation committed by any employee of, or those doing business with, an entity under its jurisdiction. For example, the OEIG investigates allegations of waste, fraud, abuse of authority, or corruption. The OEIG investigates violations of the Ethics Act, which includes a prohibition on sexual harassment.

A complaint may be filed with the OEIG in writing, preferably on an OEIG complaint form, or orally. A complaint may be filed with the OEIG by:

- completing a form online at <http://www.inspectorgeneral.illinois.gov>;
- calling the OEIG's toll-free hotline at (866) 814-1113;

- mailing a completed complaint form to: Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor, Attention Complaint Division, 69 West Washington Street, Suite 3400, Chicago, Illinois 60602;
- faxing a completed complaint form to (312) 814-5479;
- contacting the OEIG by telecommunications device for the disabled (TTY) at (888) 261-2734; or
- scheduling an appointment with its Springfield or Chicago locations.

The OEIG may accept anonymously filed complaints.

Anyone filing a complaint must provide sufficient detail about the allegation in order to initiate an investigation.

Finally, the OEIG maintains the confidentiality of all complainants or individuals providing information for an investigation, unless the individual consents to the disclosure or the law otherwise requires the disclosure of their name. (5 ILCS 430/20-90.)

### ***Reporting an Allegation of Sexual Harassment, Harassment, and/or Discrimination to the Illinois Department of Human Rights***

The IDHR is a State agency that administers the Illinois Human Rights Act. Individuals can report an allegation of sexual harassment, harassment, and/or discrimination to the IDHR by filing a charge within 300 days of the alleged incident.

First, they must submit information in person or in writing by mail or fax using a Complainant Information Sheet that is available on the IDHR website. It requires detailed information, including contact information, employer information, and the most recent date of the alleged conduct. A person filing a charge may also provide witness information and copies of relevant documents. Note that this process is not confidential.

The IDHR website is [www.illinois.gov/dhr](http://www.illinois.gov/dhr). It provides additional information about harassment and discrimination, filing a charge, the process for investigating and resolving an allegation, and other frequently asked questions.<sup>3</sup> The IDHR has the following offices:

#### **Chicago**

100 W. Randolph St., Ste.10-100  
Chicago, IL 60601  
312-814-6200  
866-740-3953 (TTY)

#### **Springfield**

535 W. Jefferson, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Springfield, IL 62702  
217-785-5100  
866-740-3953 (TTY)

#### **Marion**

2309 W. Main St.  
Marion, IL 62959  
618-993-7463  
866-740-3953 (TTY)

### ***The Department of Human Rights Helpline***

The IDHR operates a helpline for reporting sexual harassment and discrimination. The

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the process for filing may have changed. Please consult the IDHR website or Illinois Administrative Code for up-to-date information.

helpline number is 1-877-236-7703. There is also a website for reporting - <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sexualharassment/Pages/default.aspx>.

Through the helpline individuals may:

- receive help with finding resources, including counseling services;
- receive assistance with filing sexual harassment and discrimination complaints with the IDHR or other agencies; and
- anonymously report sexual harassment and discrimination in both State employment and private-sector employment.

Additionally, individuals subject to the Ethics Act who call the helpline can give the IDHR permission to refer the allegations to the OEIG for further investigation.

All communication submitted to the IDHR through the helpline, including by Internet, is confidential and exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

## **VI. INFORMATION ABOUT RETALIATION.**

Retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment, harassment, and/or discrimination, or who participate in investigations and other proceedings regarding those matters, is strictly prohibited by the Ethics Act, the Illinois Human Rights Act, and the Illinois Whistleblower Act.

**Ethics Act:** An officer, member, State employee, or State agency shall not take any retaliatory action against a State employee because the State employee:

- (1) Discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or to a public body an activity, policy, or practice of any officer, member, State agency, or other State employee that the State employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, rule, or regulation.
- (2) Provides information to or testifies before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing, or inquiry into any violation of a law, rule, or regulation by any officer, member, State agency, or other State employee.
- (3) Assists or participates in a proceeding to enforce the Ethics Act provisions.

5 ILCS 430/15-10.

Retaliatory action means reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, denial of promotion or transfer, or change in the terms or conditions of employment of an employee that occurs in retaliation for an employee's involvement in the protected activities outlined above. *Id.* at §15-5.

If retaliatory action occurs, the OEIG can investigate the matter and recommend discipline. An employee can also bring a lawsuit pursuant to the Ethics Act. Anyone who intentionally violates this prohibition on retaliation is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to discipline or discharge. *Id.* at 50-5(a), (f).

**Illinois Human Rights Act:** It is a civil rights violation to retaliate against a person who opposes that which they reasonably and in good faith believe to be unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment. 775 ILCS 5/6-101(A). For example, it is unlawful for someone to retaliate against a person who filed a complaint, participated in an investigation, or testified regarding a matter under the Illinois Human Rights Act. *Id.*

**Illinois Whistleblower Act:** An employer may not retaliate against an employee “for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation.” 740 ILCS 174/15(b). Further, an employer shall not retaliate against an employee for refusing to participate in an activity that would result in a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation. *Id.* at §20. If an employer retaliates against an employee in violation of the Illinois Whistleblower Act, and the employee succeeds in a civil suit, the employee may receive relief necessary to make the employee whole, including reinstatement into their position, back pay with interest, and compensation for damages. *Id.* at §30.

**VII. CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATING THE PROHIBITION ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT, HARASSMENT, AND UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION AND THE CONSEQUENCES FOR KNOWINGLY MAKING A FALSE REPORT.**

It is a violation of the Ethics Act to engage in sexual harassment as defined by the Act. As an Ethics Act violation, there are specific penalties for the violation. There are also penalties for making false reports of sexual harassment.

Any person who violates the Ethics Act’s prohibition on sexual harassment:

- may be fined up to \$5,000 per offense;
- is subject to discipline or discharge; and
- may also have fines or penalties imposed by a State or federal agency or court.

*See* 5 ILCS 430/50-5(g).

***False reports***

- The EEC may levy a fine of up to \$5,000 against any person who intentionally makes a false, frivolous, or bad faith allegation, or who intentionally obstructs or interferes in an OEIG investigation. *Id.* at §50-5(e).
- Any person who intentionally makes a false report alleging **sexual harassment** to the OEIG, EEC, or to certain law enforcement agencies or officials is guilty of a misdemeanor. *See id.* at §50-5(d).

Also note that failure to cooperate with an OEIG investigation conducted pursuant to the Ethics Act, including intentional omissions and knowing false statements, is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal. *Id.* at §20-70.

Although “harassment” and “unlawful discrimination” are not specific violations of the Ethics Act, the OEIG does investigate allegations of unlawful discrimination and harassment. There are serious consequences for engaging in unlawful discrimination and harassment, which may include being disciplined or terminated for violating the law or agency policies.

In addition, engaging in sexual harassment, harassment, unlawful discrimination, and/or retaliation can subject an individual to proceedings before the Illinois Human Rights Commission or state or federal courts. For example, individuals can file a state or federal charge against the person or entity and if they prevail, they may be entitled to one or more of the following remedies:

- Actual damages for injury or loss, including emotional damages
- Attorneys’ fees and costs
- Prejudgment interest
- Backpay
- Obtaining a cease and desist order
- Fringe benefits
- Hiring
- Reinstatement
- Promotion

775 ILCS 5/8A-104.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARTICIPATION IN:  
2021 HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION  
PREVENTION TRAINING**

I certify that I have carefully read and reviewed the content of, and completed, the 2021 Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Training pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/1 *et seq.* Furthermore, I certify that I understand my failure to comply with the laws, rules, policies, and procedures referred to within this training course may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of State employment, administrative fines, and possible criminal prosecution, depending on the nature of the violation.

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Signature

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Printed Name  
(first, middle initial, last)

\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_  
WIU ID #

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Month and Day of Birth  
(for example, July 15)

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Date

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Return **original signed document** to:

Western Illinois University  
Office of the General Counsel  
Sherman Hall 208  
Macomb, IL 61455