

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy

Policy · US · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

An equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy is your organization's written commitment that employment decisions — hiring, pay, assignments, training, promotion, discipline, and termination — are made on merit and business need, never on a protected characteristic. It is the foundation document of fair employment: the anti-harassment policy, the complaint procedure, and manager training all stand on it.

The policy matters most in the moments nobody plans: the interviewer who asks about family plans, the schedule that quietly never gives one person the good shifts, the promotion decided over drinks. A written standard, trained and enforced, is what turns "we would never do that" into something you can demonstrate.

This template covers the policy statement, the protected characteristics under federal law with room for your state and local additions, where the policy applies, reasonable accommodations, how to report a concern, and the non-retaliation promise that makes reporting real.

Purpose and scope

This policy applies to every stage of employment at [Your company] — recruiting, hiring, onboarding, pay, benefits, scheduling, assignments, training, promotion, discipline, layoff, and termination — and to everyone involved in those decisions, from the owner to a shift lead making the schedule.

This policy is not a contract of employment, express or implied, and does not change the at-will nature of employment at [Your company]. It states the standard we hold ourselves to and the routes available when someone believes we have missed it.

Policy statement

[Your company] is an equal opportunity employer. We make employment decisions based on qualifications, performance, and business need, without regard to any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. We prohibit discrimination and harassment, we provide reasonable accommodations as the law requires, and we do not tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises a concern in good faith.

Sample EEO statement for job postings and handbooks

Where a short standalone statement is needed — job postings, the employee handbook cover pages, career site — use this condensed version rather than restating the full policy:

"[Your company] provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. This commitment covers every aspect of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, discipline, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave, compensation, and training."

Keep the wording consistent everywhere it appears — a job posting that names fewer characteristics than the handbook is the kind of drift that gets noticed in litigation.

Protected characteristics

Under federal law, employment decisions may not be based on:

- Race or color.
- Religion — including religious dress and grooming practices, with reasonable accommodation of religious observance.
- Sex — including pregnancy, childbirth and related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- National origin — including ethnicity, accent, and ancestry.
- Disability — physical or mental, including a history of one, with reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals.
- Age — for workers protected by the ADEA.
- Genetic information, and — for pay — sex-based wage discrimination under equal pay law.
- [Add the characteristics protected by your state and locality — many protect more than federal law, e.g. marital status or lawful off-duty conduct. Check your state and local authority.]

What this looks like in practice

- Job ads and interviews focus on the requirements of the job — interviewers do not ask about family plans, health, age, religion, or immigration status beyond what the law requires for work authorization.
- Pay, shifts, and assignments are set on consistent, recorded criteria — the good shifts and the growth opportunities are distributed on the same basis as everything else.
- Promotion and discipline decisions are documented well enough that a stranger could see the business reason.
- Layoff and termination decisions are checked by [name/role] before they take effect, against the criteria and against the pattern of who is affected.

Reasonable accommodations

[Your company] provides reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities, for pregnancy and related conditions, and for sincerely held religious beliefs and practices, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship. Ask [name/role] — no particular form or magic words are needed, and a manager who receives a request passes it to [name/role] the same day.

What follows is an interactive conversation: what the person needs, what the job requires, and what adjustments would work — schedule changes, equipment, modified duties, leave, or something we have not thought of. We document the request, the discussion, and the outcome, and we revisit arrangements that stop working.

Reporting a concern

If you believe you have experienced or witnessed discrimination — or a decision you cannot square with this policy — report it to your manager, to [named role], or through [reporting channel] if you prefer to go around your manager. Describe what happened, when, and who was involved, as best you can; you do not need proof to raise a concern in good faith.

We look into every report promptly and as confidentially as a fair process allows, and we tell the person who raised it how it was resolved. Complaint handling follows the [employee complaint policy]; harassment reports follow the anti-harassment policy.

No retaliation

Retaliation — punishing someone for reporting a concern in good faith, participating in an investigation, or requesting an accommodation — is prohibited by this policy and by federal law. That covers the obvious (termination, demotion) and the subtle (worse shifts, exclusion, sudden scrutiny). Report suspected retaliation through any channel above; it is treated as seriously as the original complaint.

Responsibilities, records and review

[Name/role] owns this policy, ensures managers are trained on it, and reviews complaints and outcomes for patterns. Managers apply the standards in every decision they make and route concerns and accommodation requests promptly. Everyone is expected to treat colleagues fairly and to raise what they see.

Complaint records, accommodation records, and training records are kept confidentially in [system/location] for [period]. This policy is reviewed [frequency, e.g. annually] and when federal, state, or local law changes. Owner: [name/role]. Next review: [date].

How to use this template

1. Add your state and local protected characteristics to the federal list before publishing — the federal list alone is incomplete in most of the country.
2. Name the accommodation contact and the complaint channels with real people, including a route around the manager.
3. Train everyone who interviews or schedules — the classic violations happen in casual questions and shift patterns, not in written decisions.
4. Check the EEOC and your state authority for the workplace posters you are required to display, and put them up.
5. Align this policy with your anti-harassment policy and complaint procedure so the three documents name the same routes.
6. Review complaint and promotion patterns [frequency] — the policy is working when the data looks like the commitment.

Official guidance

- › [EEOC — Prohibited employment policies and practices](#)
- › [EEOC — Laws and guidance](#)

› DOL — Discrimination

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/eeo-policy-template> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.