



## **NEW JERSEY STATE MODEL PROCEDURES FOR INTERNAL COMPLAINTS ALLEGING DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE**

Each State department, commission, State college or university, agency and authority (hereafter referred to in this section as “State agency”) is responsible for implementing this model procedure, completing it to reflect the structure of the organization, and filing a copy of the completed procedure with the Civil Service Commission, Division of EEO/AA.

1. All employees and applicants for employment have the right and are encouraged to immediately report suspected violations of the State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace, N.J.A.C. 4A:7-3.1.
2. Complaints of prohibited discrimination/harassment can be reported to either Helen Higginbotham, the EEO/AA Officer, or to any supervisory employee of the State agency. Complaints may also be reported to the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer or Director of Human Resources.
3. Every effort should be made to report complaints promptly. Delays in reporting may not only hinder a proper investigation, but may also unnecessarily subject the victim to continued prohibited conduct.
4. Supervisory employees shall immediately report all alleged violations of the State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace to Helen Higginbotham, EEO/AA Officer. Such a report shall include both alleged violations reported to a supervisor, and those alleged violations directly observed by the supervisor.
5. If reporting a complaint to any of the persons set forth in paragraphs 2 through 4 above presents a conflict of interest, the complaint may be filed directly with the Division of EEO/AA, P.O. Box 315, Trenton, NJ 08625. An example of such a conflict would be where the individual against whom the complaint is made is involved in the intake, investigative or decision making process.

6. In order to facilitate a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation, all complainants are encouraged to submit a Division of EEO/AA Discrimination Complaint Processing Form. An investigation may be conducted whether or not the form is completed.
7. Each State agency shall maintain a written record of the discrimination/harassment complaints received. Written records shall be maintained as confidential records to the extent practicable and appropriate. A copy of all complaints (regardless of the format in which submitted) must be submitted to the Civil Service Commission, Division of EEO/AA, by the State agency's EEO/AA Officer, along with a copy of the acknowledgement letter(s) sent to the person(s) who filed the complaint and, if applicable, the complaint notification letter sent to the person(s) against whom the complaint has been filed. If a written complaint has not been filed, the EEO/AA Officer must submit to the Division of EEO/AA a brief summary of the allegations that have been made. Copies of complaints filed with the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or in court also must be submitted to the Division of EEO/AA.
8. During the initial intake of a complaint, the EEO/AA Officer or authorized designee will obtain information regarding the complaint, and determine if interim corrective measures are necessary to prevent continued violations of the State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace.
9. At the EEO/AA Officer's discretion, a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation into the alleged harassment or discrimination will take place.
10. An investigatory report will be prepared by the EEO/AA Officer or his or her designee when the investigation is completed. The report will include, at a minimum:
  - a. A summary of the complaint;
  - b. A summary of the parties' positions;
  - c. A summary of the facts developed through the investigation; and
  - d. An analysis of the allegations and the facts.The investigatory report will be submitted to Dr. Peter P. Mercer or designee who will issue a final letter of determination to the parties.
11. Dr. Peter P. Mercer or designee will review the investigatory report issued by the EEO/AA Officer or authorized designee, and make a determination as to whether the allegation of a violation of the State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the

Workplace has been substantiated. If a violation has occurred, Dr. Peter P. Mercer or designee will determine the appropriate corrective measures necessary to immediately remedy the violation.

12. Dr. Peter P. Mercer or designee will issue a final letter of determination to both the complainant(s) and the person against whom the complaint was filed, setting forth the results of the investigation and the right of appeal to the Civil Service Commission, as set forth in Paragraphs 13 and 14, below. To the extent possible, the privacy of all parties involved in the process shall be maintained in the final letter of determination. The Civil Service Commission, Division of EEO/AA shall be furnished with a copy of the final letter of determination.
  - a. The letter shall include, at a minimum:
    1. A brief summary of the parties' positions;
    2. A brief summary of the facts developed during the investigation; and
    3. An explanation of the determination, which shall include whether:
      - i. The allegations were either substantiated or not substantiated; and
      - ii. A violation of the State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace did or did not occur.
  - b. The investigation of a complaint shall be completed and a final letter of determination shall be issued no later than 120 days after the initial intake of the complaint referred to in Paragraph 8, above, is completed.
  - c. The time for completion of the investigation and issuance of the final letter of determination may be extended by the State agency head for up to 60 additional days in cases involving exceptional circumstances. The State agency head shall provide the Division of EEO/AA and all parties with written notice of any extension and shall include in the notice an explanation of the exceptional circumstances supporting the extension.
13. A complainant who is in the career, unclassified or senior executive service, or who is an applicant for employment, who disagrees with the determination of Dr. Peter P. Mercer or designee, may submit a written appeal to the, New Jersey Civil Service Commission ("NJCSC"), Division of Appeals and Regulatory Affairs, Written Record Appeals Unit, P.O. Box 312, Trenton, NJ 08625-0312, postmarked or delivered within 20 days of the receipt of the determination from Dr. Peter P. Mercer or designee. The appeal shall be in writing and include all materials presented by the complainant at the State agency level, the final letter

of determination, the reason for the appeal and the specific relief requested. Please be advised that there is a \$20 fee for appeals. Please include a check or money order along with the appeal, payable to NJCSC. Persons receiving public assistance and those qualifying for NJCSC Veterans Preference are exempt from this fee, to the Civil Service Commission PO Box 312, Trenton, N.J. 08625.

- a. Employees filing appeals which raise issues for which there is another specific appeal procedure must utilize those procedures. The Civil Service Commission Chair may require any appeal, which raises issues of alleged discrimination and other issues, such as examination appeals, to be processed using the procedures set forth in this section or a combination of procedures as the Chair deems appropriate. See N.J.A.C. 4A:2-1.7.
  - b. The Civil Service Commission shall decide the appeal on a review of the written record or such other proceeding as it deems appropriate. See N.J.A.C. 4A:2-1.1(d).
  - c. The appellant shall have the burden of proof in all discrimination appeals brought before the Civil Service Commission.
14. In a case where a violation has been substantiated, and no disciplinary action recommended, the party (ies) against whom the complaint was filed may appeal the determination to the Civil Service Commission at the address indicated in Paragraph 13 above, within 20 days of receipt of the final letter of determination by the State agency head or designee.
- a. The burden of proof shall be on the appellant.
  - b. The appeal shall be in writing and include the final letter of determination, the reason for the appeal, and the specific relief requested.
  - c. If disciplinary action has been recommended in the final letter of determination, the party(ies) charged may appeal using the procedures set forth in N.J.A.C. 4A:2-2 and 3.
15. The Division of EEO/AA shall be placed on notice of, and given the opportunity to submit comments on, appeals filed with the Civil Service Commission of decisions on discrimination complaints, regardless of whether or not the complaint was initially filed directly with the Division of EEO/AA.
16. Any employee or applicant for employment can file a complaint directly with external agencies that investigate discrimination/harassment charges in addition

to utilizing this internal procedure. The time frames for filing complaints with external agencies indicated below are provided for informational purposes only. An individual should contact the specific agency to obtain exact time frames for filing a complaint. The deadlines run from the date of the last incident of alleged discrimination/harassment, not from the date that the final letter of determination is issued by the State agency head or designee.

Complaints may be filed with the following external agencies:

**Division on Civil Rights  
N. J. Department of Law & Public Safety  
(Within 180 days for violation of the discriminatory act)**

Trenton Regional Office  
140 East Front Street  
6th Floor, P.O. Box 090  
Trenton NJ 08625-0090  
(609) 292-4605

Newark Regional Office  
31 Clinton Street, 3rd floor  
P.O. Box 46001  
Newark, NJ 07102  
(973) 648-2700

Atlantic City Office  
1325 Boardwalk  
1st Floor at Tennessee Avenue  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
(609) 441-3100

Southern Region (formerly named Camden Regional Office)  
5 Executive Campus Building 5, Suite 107  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002  
(856) 486-4080

**United States Equal Employment Opportunity  
Commission (EEOC)  
(Within 300 days of the discriminatory act)  
National Call Center – 1 800-669-4000**

\*Newark Area Office  
2 Gateway Center, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
(973) 645-4684

\*\*Philadelphia District Office  
801 Market Street, Suite 1300  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3127  
(215) 440-2600

\* Newark Area Office has jurisdiction over the State of New Jersey Counties of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

\*\* The Philadelphia District Office has jurisdiction over the State of New Jersey, Counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean and Salem.

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See *N.J.A.C. 4A:7-3.2*