



Town of Chester Anti-Harassment & Equal Opportunity Policy

Last Updated: 12/18/2025

Approved: 12/29/2025

Introduction

It is the policy of the Town of Chester to guarantee equal opportunity to all qualified applicants and to all employees with respect to initial hiring, advancement, compensation and general working conditions, without regard to age, race, color, religious creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability or handicap, results of genetic testing, service in the military, gender identity, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, veterans status, or any other characteristic protected under state or federal law.

It is the goal of the Town of Chester to promote a workplace that is free of sexual and other unlawful harassment. Sexual harassment of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this municipality. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other unlawful harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. Our goal is to provide a workplace free from sexual and other prohibited harassment. Conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated and a procedure has been provided here by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with if encountered by employees.

Because the Town of Chester takes allegations of sexual and other unlawful harassment seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of prohibited harassment and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate up to and including termination.

In addition to a strict prohibition against sexual harassment, the Town of Chester prohibits any harassment based on a protected category. Such categories include age, race, color, religious creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability or handicap, results of genetic testing, service in the military, gender identity, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under state or federal law.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting a workplace that is free of sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to

discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment of any employee, male or female, whether engaged in by managers, supervisors, or co-employees, is contrary to this policy and will not be tolerated. Violation of this policy will be grounds for immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has issued guidelines regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. Under those guidelines, sexual harassment will be treated as unlawful sex discrimination in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The guidelines are as follows:

Unwelcome sexual advances requests for sexual favors and other 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 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.

Complaints of Prohibited Harassment

If any of our employees believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual or other unlawful harassment, the employee has the right to file a complaint with the Town. This may be done in writing or orally.

If you would like to file a complaint, you may do so by contacting the Town Administrator and/or a member of the Board of Selectmen. To contact the Town Administrator by phone at 413-354-7760 or email at townadministrator@townofchester.net or the Board of Selectmen via email at selectmen@comcast.net . These persons are also available to discuss any concerns you may have to provide information to you about our policy on prohibited harassment and our complaint process in person.

Investigation into Unlawful Harassment

When we receive the complaint, we will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Our investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. We will also interview the person alleged to have committed illegal harassment. When we have completed our investigation, we will inform, to the extent appropriately, the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct, and where it is appropriate, we will also impose disciplinary action up to termination and prosecution under the full extent of the law.

Disciplinary Action

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of our employees, we will take such action as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling to termination from employment and may include such other forms of disciplinary action as we deem appropriate under the circumstances.

State and Federal Remedies

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual or other unlawful harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. The Town encourages you to file complaints with all three forms. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of these agencies has a limited period of time for filing claims: EEOC - 300 days, MCAD – 300 days.

1. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)

1 Congress Street - 10th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
(617) 565-3200

2. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)

Boston Office: One Ashburton Place - Room 601
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
(617) 727-3990

Springfield Office: 436 Dwight Street - Room
220
Springfield, Massachusetts 01103
(413) 739-2145

Reasonable Accommodation

It is the policy of the Town of Chester not to discriminate against any qualified person on the basis of disability. This policy applies to all employment policies and practices, including hiring, promotion, discipline, etc.

The Town of Chester strives to make reasonable accommodation, consistent with federal and state law, to a qualified employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of his/her job, with or without accommodation, unless the requested accommodation poses an undue hardship upon the Town. An employee in need of accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of their job should notify his/her supervisor.

Verification of the disability by the treating physician may be required. (If medical verification is required the person requesting accommodation must sign the release form “Authorization for the Release of Medical Information”).

The determination to provide accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis. This is an individual process through which the department and the individual with a disability discuss the request for accommodation and the Town's ability to accommodate this request. The department will make a "reasonable effort" to determine the appropriate accommodation.

Print Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date: