

Anti-Harassment and Nondiscrimination Policy

Hillside Public Library

Introduction

The Hillside Public Library is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, which are all illegal under the Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA) and Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII). In keeping with this commitment, the Hillside Public Library will not tolerate discrimination and harassment by anyone, including any supervisor, employee, vendor, customer, consultant, contractor, board member, or other regular visitor of the library. Violation of this policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Definitions

Discrimination

Discrimination consists of employment actions against an individual based on an actual or perceived characteristic protected by law, such as sex, race (and traits associated with race including but not limited to hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, ancestry, national origin, citizenship status, work authorization status, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, actual or perceived gender, gender identity, pregnancy, military or veteran status, genetic information, order of protection status, reproductive health decisions, family responsibilities, or any other category protected by applicable law. In other words, discrimination occurs when an individual is treated differently or unequally because the individual is a member or perceived member of a protected group.

Harassment

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's actual or perceived protected status such as race (and traits associated with race including but not limited to hair texture and protective hair styles), color, ancestry, national origin, citizenship status, work authorization status, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, actual or perceived gender, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, military or veteran status, genetic information, order of protection status, reproductive health decisions, family responsibilities, or any other category protected by applicable law. The library will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, as defined by the IHRA, consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment;
- Submission to or refusal to engage in such conduct is used as the basis for any employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- 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.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to:

- Uninvited sex-oriented verbal "kidding" or demeaning sexual innuendoes, leers, gestures, teasing, sexually explicit or obscene jokes, remarks, or questions of a sexual nature;
- Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- Displaying sexually explicit objects, photographs, writings, or drawings;
- Unwelcome touching, such as patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body; or
- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement of another individual, regardless of whether such suggestion or demand is accompanied by implicit or explicit threats concerning one's employment status or similar personal concerns.

Even if two or more individuals are engaging in consensual conduct, such conduct could constitute harassment of or discrimination against another individual who witnesses or overhears the conduct and is adversely affected by it.

Investigation Procedure

Everyone is responsible to help ensure that harassment and discrimination do not occur and are not tolerated. An individual who believes that they have been subjected to sexual or other types of harassment or discrimination, or who has witnessed harassment or discrimination, should immediately submit a complaint to their supervisor, any other manager or supervisor, or the Library Director. If a manager or supervisor receives a complaint of harassment or discrimination or becomes aware of such conduct, the complaint or conduct shall be immediately reported to the Library Director.

The Library Director, or a designated independent third party, shall promptly investigate all complaints and make all reasonable efforts to resolve the matter informally. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, convening conferences with the complainant and/or the accused harasser/discriminator to discuss the complaint and the results of the investigation.

Complaints by an elected or appointed official against another elected or appointed official shall be submitted to the Library Director. The Library Director shall, in consultation with the library's legal counsel, ensure that an independent review is conducted with respect to such allegations.

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected consistent with the library's legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

A substantiated complaint against an employee will subject the individual to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The library will also take appropriate action to address a substantiated complaint of discrimination or harassment by a third party or non-employee. If an investigation results in a finding that the complainant falsely accused another of harassment or discrimination knowingly or in a malicious manner, the complainant will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including the possibility of discharge.

Retaliation Prohibited

Reporting harassment or discrimination or participating in an investigation will not reflect adversely upon an individual's employment status or affect future employment. Any form of retaliation against an individual who reports harassment or discrimination or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited by IHRA, the Illinois State Officials and Employees Act, the Illinois Whistleblower Act, Title VII, and employer policy. Any individual who retaliates against another for exercising their rights under this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The library will also take appropriate action to address a third party or non-employee who engages in retaliation.

Outside Resolution

The purpose of this policy is to establish prompt, thorough, and effective guidelines for responding to every complaint and incident so that problems can be identified and remedied internally. However, an individual has the right to contact the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) about filing a formal complaint. Contact information is as follows:

IL Human Rights Commission (IHRC)
Chicago: 312.814.6269
TTY: 312.814.7460

IL Department of Human Rights (IDHR)
Chicago: 312.814.6200 or 800.662.3942
TTY: 866.740.3953

US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
Chicago: 800.669.4000
TTY: 800.869.8001

Approval

Approved by the Hillside Public Library Board of Trustees
October 15, 2025