

Organization Responsibilities

Equal Employment Opportunity

The organization is committed to the principles of equal employment. We are committed to complying with all federal, state and local laws providing equal employment opportunities, and all other employment laws and regulations. SEDA-COG provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment on the bases of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), parental status, national origin, age, disability, family medical history or genetic information, political affiliation, military service, or other non-merit based factors or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.

SEDA-COG has an Affirmative Action Plan, which is available in the Human Resources office. The Human Resources Director is the Affirmative Action Officer and is responsible for implementation of the Affirmative Action Plan.

From time to time, SEDA-COG may adopt specific policies and or procedures in response to contract conditions. These policies and procedures will be sent out electronically (printed when necessary) to all employees. It is their responsibility to replace the current page(s) or add in the amendment section of your handbook. These will also be on file in the Human Resources office and posted on the employee bulletin board in the Human Resources office as well as any facility under the control of the organization.

Harassment

Consistent with SEDA-COG's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, we will not permit any form of harassment based upon race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), parental status, national origin, age, disability, family medical history or genetic information, political affiliation, military service, or other non-merit based factors or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment that is in any way unwelcome. SEDA-COG's prohibition of harassment extends to managers, supervisors, co-workers, customers, and suppliers.

All employees are expected to immediately report any harassment by another employee of SEDA-COG or any non-employee third party to Human Resources. If you feel that anyone from the Executive staff is harassing you, you should report this conduct to the Human Resources Director, who will notify the SEDA-COG Board President. If you feel that the Human Resources Director is harassing you, you should report this to the Executive Director. SEDA-COG will take proper and immediate action when this policy has been or has thought to have been violated.

Sexual Harassment

Statement of Policy

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, or national origin. Sexual harassment is included among the prohibitions.

Sexual harassment, according to the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), consists of “unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical acts of a sexual nature” where:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment.
2. An employment decision is based on an individual’s acceptance or rejection of such conduct.
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment is unlawful, and such prohibited conduct exposes not only SEDA-COG but individuals involved in such conduct to significant liability under the law. Employees should treat each other respectfully and with dignity in a manner so as not to offend the sensibilities of a co-worker. Accordingly, SEDA-COG is committed to vigorously enforcing its sexual harassment policy at all levels.

It is also unlawful to retaliate or take reprisal in any way against anyone who has articulated any concern about sexual harassment or discrimination, whether that concern relates to harassment of, or discrimination against, the individual raising the concern or against another individual. Examples of conduct that would be considered sexual harassment or related retaliation are set forth below; *the list is not exhaustive*.

Sexual harassment may take many forms: Verbal, nonverbal, and physical.

-) Verbal sexual harassment includes obscene or inappropriate sexual jokes, remarks or threats, suggestive comments, etc.
-) Nonverbal sexual harassment includes displaying sexually suggestive pictures or posters, obscene and inappropriate gestures, offensive emails, voicemails, text messages or any other form of communication that includes sexual material.
-) Physical sexual harassment includes unwelcome and unwanted physical contact including but not limited to hugging, tickling, pinching, kissing or forced sexual intercourse or any intentional physical conduct which is sexual in nature.

Mutually respectful interactions between employees that are appropriate and welcomed by both parties is not considered sexual harassment.

Retaliation in response to a co-worker's grievance will not be tolerated and violates the policy. Retaliation can be described as below:

1. Disciplining, changing work assignments, or providing inaccurate work information to, or refusing to cooperate or discuss work-related matters with any employee because that employee has complained about or resisted harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
2. Intentionally pressuring, falsely denying, lying about, or otherwise covering up or attempting to cover up conduct.

Penalties for Misconduct

Any employee's commission of acts of sexual harassment or retaliation against a sexual harassment complaint will result in appropriate sanctions, up to and including dismissal, against the offending employee, depending upon the nature and severity of the misconduct.

A written record of each action taken pursuant to this policy will be placed in the offending employee's personnel file. The record will reflect the conduct, or alleged conduct, and the warning given, or other discipline imposed.

All sexual harassment claims are taken very seriously, and SEDA-COG will investigate each claim before settling on a course of action, based on the conclusion of the investigation.

Complaint Procedure

SEDA-COG has assembled the below procedure for filing a complaint based on harassment, discrimination or retaliation.

1. Complaints of acts of sexual harassment and retaliation that are in violation of the sexual harassment policy will be accepted, preferably in writing. Oral statements can be made in the event the complainant refuses to write a statement. Human Resources may assist the complainant in the written statement, or in the case the complainant cannot or will not write a statement, Human Resources will take the written statement verbally.
2. The Human Resources Director will review the written statement with Executive staff members as well as the organization's legal counsel.
3. The Human Resources Director will conduct a thorough investigation of the complaint and will involve all parties, including witnesses, to determine if the alleged violation took place.
4. At the end of the investigation, the Human Resources Director along with the legal counsel's guidance, will provide a written statement of the findings to the organization. If it is determined that a violation of the policy occurred, the Human Resources Director will meet with Executive staff to discuss appropriate action. Appropriate actions will be based on the severity of the violation, history of similar complaints by the complainant or against the accused.

A complaint is not limited to someone who was the target of harassment or retaliation. Anyone who has observed sexual harassment or retaliation should report it to their immediate