

# **Champaign County Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct November 2019**

## **Statement of Policy:**

It is Champaign County's policy that it will not tolerate or condone discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender-identity, gender-expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, medical or common conditions relating to pregnancy and childbirth, genetic information, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, ancestry, marital status, military status, arrest record, unfavorable discharge from military service, order of protection status, citizenship status or any other classification protected under federal or state law. Sexual misconduct is also prohibited. Champaign County will neither tolerate nor condone discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct by employees, managers, supervisors, elected officials, co-workers, or non-employees with whom Champaign County has a business, service, or professional relationship. "Employee," for purposes of this policy only, includes any individual performing work for Champaign County, an apprentice, an applicant for apprenticeship, or an unpaid intern. Champaign County has appointed the Deputy Director of Administration as its ethics officer to receive and oversee investigations of complaints made pursuant to this policy and s/he is referred to in this policy as Champaign County's "Ethics Officer." Champaign County reserves the right to change the Ethics Officer from time to time.

Retaliation against an employee who complains about or reports any act of discrimination, harassment or misconduct in violation of this policy is prohibited. Retaliation against any employee who participates in an investigation pursuant to this policy is likewise prohibited. Champaign County is committed to ensuring and providing a work place free of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct and retaliation. Champaign County will take disciplinary action, up to and including termination, against an employee who violates this policy.

As set forth above, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are prohibited. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects a term or condition of individual's employment;

2. submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee or;
3. the harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment because of the persistent, severe or pervasive nature of the conduct.

Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

- The employee as well as the harasser may be a woman or a man. The employee does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser can be the employee's supervisor, an agent of the employer, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The employee does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
- Unlawful sexual harassment may occur without economic injury to or discharge of the employee.
- The harasser's conduct must be unwelcome.

Each employee must exercise his or her own good judgment to avoid engaging in conduct that may be perceived by others as sexual harassment or harassment based on any status protected by law. The following are illustrations of actions that Champaign County deems inappropriate and in violation of our policy:

1. Unwanted sexual advances.
2. Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors.
3. Retaliating or threatening retaliation after a negative response to a sexual advance or after an employee has made or threatened to make a harassment complaint.
4. Visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, calendars or posters.

5. Verbal conduct such as making derogatory comments, using epithets or slurs, making sexually explicit jokes or suggestive comments about a person's body or dress.
6. Written or electronic communications of a sexual nature or containing statements or images which may be offensive to individuals in a particular protected group, such as racial or ethnic stereotypes or stereotypes about disabled individuals.
7. Physical conduct such as unwanted touching, assaulting, impeding or blocking movements.

Sexual misconduct is strictly prohibited by Champaign County and can include any inappropriate and/or illegal conduct of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, rape, sexual assault, or ANY sexual contact or sexual communications with a minor (including, but not limited to, conduct or communications which are written, electronic, verbal, visual, virtual or physical).

## **Responsibilities:**

### **A. Supervisors**

Each supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, including the following:

1. Monitoring the workplace environment for signs of discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct;
2. Immediately notifying law enforcement where there is reasonable belief that the observed or complained of conduct violates the criminal laws of the State of Illinois.
3. Immediately notifying the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE or 1-800-252-2873) if the observed or complained of conduct involves the abuse of a minor.
4. Immediately stopping any observed acts of discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct and taking appropriate steps to intervene, whether or not the involved employees are within his/her line of supervision;

5. Immediately reporting any complaint of harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to the State's Attorney to the Ethics Officer, and:
6. Taking immediate action to limit the work contact between the individuals when there has been a complaint of discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct, pending investigation.

## **B. Employees**

Each employee is responsible for assisting in the prevention of discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct through the following acts:

1. Refraining from participation in, or encouragement of, actions that could be perceived as discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct;
2. Immediately reporting any violations of this policy to a supervisor, the Ethics Officer, or the State's Attorney and law enforcement (if appropriate under the circumstances) and/or DCFS (if appropriate under the circumstances); Employees are obligated to report violations of this policy as soon as they occur. An employee should not wait until the conduct becomes unbearable before reporting the prohibited conduct. All employees are obligated to report instances of prohibited conduct even if the conduct is merely observed and directed toward another individual and even if the other person does not appear to be bothered or offended by the conduct. All employees are obligated to report instances of prohibited conduct regardless of the identity of the alleged offender (e.g. man, woman, supervisor, elected official, co-worker, volunteer, vendor, member of public).
3. Encouraging any employee who confides that he/she is the victim of conduct in violation of this policy to report these acts to a supervisor.

Failure to take action to stop known discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct may be grounds for discipline.

There is a clear line most cases between a mutual attraction and a consensual exchange and unwelcome behavior or pressure for an intimate relationship. A friendly interaction between two persons who are receptive to one another is not considered unwelcome or harassment. Employees are free to form social relationships of their own choosing. However, when one employee is pursuing or forcing a relationship upon another who does not like or want it, regardless of friendly intentions, the behavior is unwelcome sexual behavior. An employee confronted with these actions is encouraged to inform the harasser that such behavior is offensive and must stop. You should assume that sexual comments

are unwelcome unless you have clear unequivocal indications to the contrary. In other words, another person does not have to tell you to stop for your conduct to be harassment and unwelcome. Sexual communications and sexual contact with a minor are ALWAYS prohibited.

If you are advised by another person that your behavior is offensive, you must immediately stop the behavior, regardless of whether you agree with the person's perceptions of your intentions.

Champaign County does not consider conduct in violation of this policy to be within the course and scope of employment and does not sanction such conduct on the part of any employee, including supervisory and management employees.

## **Applicable Procedures:**

Champaign County takes allegations of discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct very seriously. It will actively investigate all complaints.

It is helpful for the employee to directly inform the offending individual that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop. The employee should use Champaign County's complaint procedure to advise Champaign County of any perceived violation of this policy as soon as it occurs.

### **A. Bringing a Complaint**

Any employee of Champaign County who believes that there has been a violation of this policy may bring the matter to the attention of Champaign County in one of the following ways:

1. Advising his or her supervisor or the Ethics Officer for Champaign County; or
2. Advising the offending employee's supervisor or the State's Attorney, or the County Executive in the event that the alleged harasser is the State's Attorney.

If the complaint involves someone in the employee's direct line of command, then the employee should go directly to the State's Attorney or the Ethics Officer.

The complaint should be presented as promptly as possible after the alleged

violation of this policy occurs.

Champaign County will take steps to ensure that complaints made are kept confidential to the extent permissible under the law. Individuals who are involved in an investigation under this policy are required to keep the matter confidential to the fullest extent permitted under the law.

**B. Resolution of a Complaint**

Promptly after a complaint is submitted, Champaign County will undertake such investigation, corrective and preventive actions as are appropriate. In general, the procedure in resolving any complaints can (but will not necessarily) include any of the following items:

1. A meeting between the employee making the complaint and an individual designated by Champaign County to investigate such complaints. Important data to be provided by the complaining employee includes the following:
  - a. A description of the specific offensive conduct;
  - b. Identification of all person(s) who engaged in the conduct;
  - c. The location where the conduct occurred;
  - d. The time when the conduct occurred;
  - e. Whether there were any witnesses to the conduct;
  - f. Whether conduct of a similar nature has occurred on prior occasions;
  - g. Whether there are any documents which would support the complaining employee's allegations;
  - h. What impact the conduct had on the complaining employee.
2. While not required, Champaign County encourages anyone who makes a complaint under this policy to provide a written statement setting forth the above details and attaching any pertinent records.
3. After a complaint is submitted by the employee, the alleged offending individual should be contacted by a designated representative of Champaign County. The alleged offending individual should be advised

of the charges brought against him or her, and may be provided with a copy of the written statement of complaint made by the complaining employee (if applicable). The alleged offending individual should have an opportunity to fully explain his or her side of the circumstances, and may also submit a written statement, if desired.

4. After the alleged offending individual is interviewed, any witnesses identified by either the complaining employee or the alleged offending individual may be interviewed separately.
5. Once this investigation is completed, Champaign County will take such action as is appropriate based upon the information obtained in the investigation. In the event that Champaign County finds merit in the charges made by the complaining employee, disciplinary action will be taken against the offending employee. This disciplinary action may, but need not necessarily, include:
  - a. Verbal or written reprimand;
  - b. Placing the offending employee on a corrective action plan for a period of time to be identified;
  - c. Delay in pay increases or promotions;
  - d. Suspending the offending employee from work without pay;
  - e. Demotion;
  - f. Immediate termination.
6. Upon completion of the investigation, Champaign County will advise the complaining employee of the results of the investigation, including action taken, if any, against the offending individual.

When investigating alleged violations of this policy, Champaign County looks at the whole record including, but not limited to, the nature of the allegations, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, and the statements of the parties and witnesses. A determination on the allegations is made from the facts on a case-by-case basis.

### **Non-Retaliation:**

Under no circumstances will there be any retaliation against any employee making a complaint of discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct. Any act of retaliation by any party directed against a complaining employee, an accused employee, witnesses, or participants in the process will be treated as a separate and distinct complaint and will be similarly investigated. Complaints of retaliation should be addressed to the Ethics Officer, State's Attorney, or **County Executive**. Illinois law provides protections to whistleblowers as set forth in the Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/15 and the Illinois Human Rights Act, 775 ILCS 5/6-101.

### **Discipline, Fines and Penalties:**

In addition to any and all other discipline that may be applicable pursuant to Champaign county policies, employment agreements, procedures, employee handbooks and/or collective bargaining agreement, any person who violates this policy or the Prohibition on Sexual Harassment contained in 5 ILCS 430/5-65, may be subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 per offense, applicable discipline or discharge by Champaign County and any applicable fines and penalties established pursuant to local ordinance, state law or federal law. Each violation may constitute a separate offense. Any discipline imposed by Champaign County shall be separate and distinct from any penalty imposed by an ethics commission and any fines or penalties imposed by a court of law or a state or federal agency.

### **False Reports Prohibited:**

It is a violation of this policy for an employee to knowingly make a false report of discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, or retaliation. An employee who is found to have knowingly made a false report is subject to disciplinary action, as set forth in Section III.B.5, above.

### **Additional Resources:**

If you have any questions concerning Champaign County's policies on this matter, please see your supervisor, the Ethics Officer, or the State's Attorney.

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

Federal law provides protection against unlawful discrimination and harassment. Further information may be obtained from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), 800-669-4000.

### **Illinois Department of Human Rights**

The Illinois Human Rights Act (“the Act”) states that you have the right to be free from unlawful discrimination and sexual harassment. This means that employers may not treat people differently based on race, age, gender, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation or any other protected class named in the Act. This applies to all employer actions including hiring, promotion, discipline and discharge.

You also have the right to reasonable accommodations based on pregnancy and disability. This means you can ask for reasonable changes to your job if needed because you are pregnant or disabled.

It is unlawful for employers to treat people differently because they have reported discrimination, participated in an investigation, or helped others exercise their right to complain about discrimination.

Confidential reports of harassment or discrimination may be made to the Ethics Officer, to the offending employee’s supervisor or the State’s Attorney, or the County Executive in the event that the alleged harasser is the State’s Attorney.

You can also contact the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) to file a charge at the locations listed below. You can also call the Illinois Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Helpline at 1-877-236-7703 to talk to someone about your concerns.

IDHR Chicago Office  
James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph St., Suite 10-100  
Chicago, IL 60601  
(312) 814-6200  
(866) 740-3952 (TTY)  
(312) 814-6251 (Fax)

IDHR Springfield Office  
535 W. Jefferson Street  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Springfield, IL 62702  
(217) 785-5100  
(866) 740-3953 (TTY)  
(217) 785-5106 (Fax)

### **Department of Children and Family Services**

For matters involving the abuse of minors the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) may be contacted by dialing 800-25-ABUSE.