

Whatcom Council of Governments  
Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Excerpt from the Whatcom Council of Governments' Personnel Manual as amended November 2013:

**1.4 DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT**

WCOG has earned a reputation for ethical business practices in addition to providing its members with the highest quality product. WCOG therefore expects its employees to treat each other, its members, and the public with the utmost respect. Along these lines, WCOG prohibits unlawful discrimination in the workplace and will strictly enforce the following rules.

**Anti-Discrimination**

WCOG believes that every employee has the right to work in surroundings that are free from unlawful discrimination. WCOG therefore strictly prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation (including gender identity), military or veteran status, genetics/genetic markers or any other legally-protected classifications. WCOG also prohibits the harassment of any individual based on these protected classifications. WCOG requires its employees to abide by this policy in practice and in spirit. WCOG encourages its employees to address any questions or concerns about this policy directly to the Executive Director. Employees may do so without fear of reprisal.

**Anti-Sexual Harassment**

WCOG does not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace. WCOG notes that sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, sexually suggestive objects or pictures, sexually explicit or offensive jokes or objects, or engaging in any sexually-oriented conduct which unreasonably interferes with another's work performance or creates a work environment that is intimidating, hostile or offensive. WCOG specifically prohibits any employee, male or female, from harassing another employee by taking any of the following actions:

- a. making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, a condition of an employee's continued employment, or

- b. making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for employment decisions affecting the employee, or
- c. creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment by such a conduct.

### **Employee's Response to Misconduct**

WCOG requires any employee who feels that he, she, they or others may have been subject to discrimination or sexual harassment, to bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Executive Director who will initiate an investigation. To assist in the prompt resolution of the complaint, employees should provide any supporting documents and identify any person who may have knowledge regarding the allegations. Allegations for harassment will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken. In the case of allegations that involve the Executive Director the Chair of the WCOG should be notified and he/she will initiate an investigation.

### **WCOG Investigation**

WCOG will take all reports seriously and conduct an appropriate investigation. WCOG will require that you cooperate in any investigation, whether or not you are directly involved. WCOG will attempt to keep the fact and results of its investigation confidential, although that is not always possible. Additionally, employees are expected to refrain from discussing investigatory matters with other individuals. WCOG may take appropriate disciplinary action against an employee found to have violated the policy, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Non-Retaliation**

WCOG prohibits retaliation because of an employee's good faith report of discrimination or harassment or participation in an investigation of such a claim. Any individual who is found to have engaged in retaliatory conduct will be subject to appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees who believe that they have experienced such retaliation should notify the Executive Director or the Chair of the WCOG if the Executive Director is involved.