STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICE

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy and practice of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to ensure that no person is discriminated against or denied the benefits of any activity, program or employment process receiving public funds, in whole or in part.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) means employment of individuals without consideration of age, race, ancestry/alienage, national origin, color, marital status, civil union status, familial status, religion, religious creed, criminal record (in state employment and/or licensing), disability (includes learning, intellectual, past or present history of mental disability and physical disability including but not limited to blindness), genetic information, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, transgender status, veteran status, harassment (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), previously opposed discrimination (retaliation), and workplace hazards to reproductive systems unless the provisions of Sections 46a-60, 46a-80 and 46a-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes are controlling or if there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in one of the above protected groups.

Connecticut law prohibits discrimination which affects employment terms and conditions including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, testing, promotion, assignments, transfer, salary, referrals, classifications, benefits, leave/layoffs, training opportunities, performance evaluations, demotion, discharge, terms and working conditions, and advertising and compensation.

Equal Employment Opportunity is the purpose and goal of Affirmative Action (AA) under the provisions of Section 46a-68 *et seq.* of the Connecticut General Statutes and the corresponding Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The basis of this policy statement for equal employment opportunity is not only to affirm the law, but also to highlight Affirmative Action as an essential part of the philosophy of DESPP.

Additionally, DESPP has a separate Sexual Harassment Policy Statement. DESPP recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct used as a condition of employment and/or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment is a violation of both state and federal equal employment opportunity laws.

It is DESPP's policy that all employees, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, vendors, visitors, parties, and others have a right to work and exist in an environment free of discrimination, which encompasses freedom from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment undermines the integrity of the workplace and the personal dignity of the individual.

1111 Country Club Road, 2 North, Middletown, Connecticut 06457
Phone: (860) 685-8657/E-Fax: (860) 706-1325

It is the policy of DESPP to implement the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action by providing employment and advancement opportunities solely on the basis of job-related skills, ability and potential.

What is Affirmative Action?

Affirmative Action means positive action, undertaken with conviction and effort, to overcome the present effects of past practices, policies or barriers to equal employment opportunity; and to achieve the full and fair participation of women, people of color, the LGBT community, and any other protected group found to be underutilized in the work force or affected by policies or practices having an adverse impact. The ***purpose*** of AA is to secure the full and fair utilization of protected groups in the work force. The need for such action is measured by any lack of such utilization. DESPP recognizes the need to remedy the hiring difficulties, to the extent possible, experienced by the physically disabled and also by many older persons. To this end, program goals for past discrimination, if any, have been established and are described in the Program Goals Section 46a-68-88 of the Affirmative Action Plan.

Electronic Harassment

Electronic harassment is defined as repeated, unsolicited, threatening behavior by a person or group using mobile and/or Internet technology including audio/video or other recording devices with the intent to bother, terrify, intimidate, humiliate, threaten, harass or stalk someone else because of their protected class basis. The harassment can take place in any electronic environment where communication with others is possible, such as on social media, on message boards, in chat rooms or through email. DESPP is committed to preventing electronic harassment and responding to any instances by investigating and providing appropriate disciplinary action.

Steps of the Employment Process with Affirmative Action

The role of affirmative action in the advertising/recruiting step is to create the largest pool of qualified applicants by expending sufficient resources and exercising creativity to reach likely sources of applicants from protected groups. The role of affirmative action in the testing step is to work with state personnel to ensure that all testing procedures are free of adverse impact.

Affirmative action and equal employment opportunity ***are always immediate and necessary agency objectives***. DESPP pledges to affirmatively provide services and programs in a fair and impartial manner. It is the goal of DESPP to ultimately achieve full utilization of minorities, women, older persons, and the physically disabled and other protected classes, to the extent possible, within DESPP's work force.

Complaints

All DESPP employees are advised of DESPP's Internal Discrimination Complaint Process.

Complaints Against Agency Heads and Affirmative Action Officers

Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 46a-68(b)(4)(B), the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) shall receive any complaint alleging that the executive head of a state agency or department, any member of a state board or commission or any affirmative action officer engaged in discriminatory conduct to determine whether it should be forwarded to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for investigation. If the complaint is made against DAS, CHRO conducts the investigation. The purpose of this legislation was to eliminate the conflict that may arise if an affirmative action officer has to investigate allegations against their manager, commander, or supervisor, as such officers report directly to the appointing authority.

Reporting a Complaint

All DESPP employees are responsible for complying with this policy, for maintaining a high level of professional conduct in the workplace, and providing a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and fairness.

Each DESPP manager, commander, and/or supervisor has the responsibility to maintain a workplace free of any form of retaliation, and to monitor working conditions in order to detect any violation(s) of this policy.

In accordance to DESPP's Discrimination Complaint Procedure, if a person believes he or she has been discriminated against and would like to file an internal discrimination complaint, DESPP's Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist 2 should be contacted. Ms. Lewis can be reached at the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protections, 1111 Country Club Road, Middletown, CT 06457. Email: Daphne.Lewis@ct.gov Telephone: (860) 685-8657.

Investigating Complaints

DESPP shall promptly investigate all complaints and reports of retaliation and take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. DESPP employees are expected to cooperate with all investigations and any actions taken by DESPP as a result of such investigations.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICE

I, James C. Rovella, Commissioner of DESPP, direct all personnel to adhere to this policy statement and to familiarize themselves with DESPP's Affirmative Action Plan. In order to satisfy these lawful obligations, DESPP maintains an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office.

Our policy statement is posted and distributed annually to all DESPP employees. All DESPP employees have the right to review and comment on the DESPP's Affirmative Action Plan. Copies of the Affirmative Action Plan are kept on file in the EEO/AA Office, the Office of the Commissioner, Human Resources, Western District Headquarters, Eastern District Headquarters, Central District Headquarters, the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, the Connecticut State Police Training Academy, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), the Division of Scientific Services, the Division of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications, Emergency Management and Homeland Security, and the Bureau of Criminal Investigations.

If you have any questions regarding the DESPP Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy Statement, please contact:

Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist 2, Daphne L. Lewis
1111 Country Club Road, Middletown, Connecticut 06457-2389
Telephone: (860) 685-8657 Email: Daphne.Lewis@ct.gov

As the Commissioner and Appointing Authority of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, I am committed to achieving the goals within the timetables set forth in the Affirmative Action Plan.

2-8-2022
Date

James C. Rovella
Commissioner