

Workplace Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Policy

Intent

VICTORIA HAND PROJECT is committed to the ideals of Canadian Multiculturalism, and celebrates the diversity of our employees. As an ethnically and culturally diverse workplace, we encourage our employees to practice their cultural beliefs and practices in a work environment free from discrimination, harassment or prejudice. At VICTORIA HAND PROJECT we intend to foster a culture of inclusion free of all forms of discrimination and violence, where people are treated with respect and committed to deepening appreciation of diversity and transforming all forms of exclusion.

Policy Statement

It is VICTORIA HAND PROJECT policy to foster an environment that respects people's dignity, ideas and beliefs, thereby ensuring equity and diversity in employment and ensuring consumers and others have access to VICTORIA HAND PROJECT facilities, products and services as defined by human rights legislation.

VICTORIA HAND PROJECT demonstrates its commitment to equity and diversity by providing a supportive work environment and corporate culture that welcomes members of designated groups. This policy prohibits discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of goods, services, and facilities to the public and the administration of contracts as defined by human rights legislation.

The Canadian Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, sex, record of offences, marital status, family status, handicap, and sexual orientation. Under the Canadian Human Rights Act, it is against the law to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, colour, age, national or ethnic origin, religion, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation and a pardoned criminal conviction.

VICTORIA HAND PROJECT does not condone any form of discrimination. It endorses and embraces the Canadian Human Rights Act, which prohibit discriminatory practices.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply.

Discrimination - the denial of equal treatment in employment, in the provision of goods, services and facilities to the public, and in the administration of contracts based on the prohibited grounds as defined by human rights legislation.

Harassment - any behaviour or practice that is deemed inappropriate by its adverse effects on an individual's employment, job performance and/or personal dignity. The four types of harassment are:

- Discriminatory,
- Personal,
- Poisoned Work Environment, and
- Abuse of Authority.

Designated Groups - for the purposes of its overall equity and diversity initiatives, VICTORIA HAND PROJECT has identified women, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minority groups and gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender (GLTB) individuals. The selection of these four groups does not preclude the possibility of addressing systemic discrimination for other identifiable groups.

Aboriginal Persons - are North American Indians or members of a First Nation, Métis or Inuit. Members of a First Nation include status, treaty or registered Indians. North American Indians include non-status and non-registered Indians.

Persons with Disabilities - are persons who have a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric or learning impairment and who:

- consider themselves disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment, or who
- believe that an employer or potential employer likely would consider them disadvantaged in employment by reason of that impairment.

Visible Minorities - are persons other than Aboriginal persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

Workplace Diversity Policy

VICTORIA HAND PROJECT is wholly committed to the principles of workplace diversity. VICTORIA HAND PROJECT has and will continue to develop and implement workplace diversity principles and strategies across all of its structures, policies, procedures, and decision making processes.

VICTORIA HAND PROJECT rejects and entirely disapproves of all biased distinctions based on the grounds of:

- Race
- Ancestry
- Place of origin
- Colour
- Ethnic origin
- Citizenship

- Creed
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Record of offences
- Marital status
- Same-sex partnership status
- Family status
- Disability
- Gender history
- Religious beliefs
- Political convictions
- Disability or medical condition (that does not affect work performance)
- Pregnancy

Efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination – whether they are direct or indirect – are fully endorsed by VICTORIA HAND PROJECT. Any harassment or intimidation against the profiles listed above is prohibited in all aspects of VICTORIA HAND PROJECT.

Men and women are considered by VICTORIA HAND PROJECT to be equally eligible for employment. Decisions will be based on job qualifications only. No religious, racial or political test shall be imposed upon any person as a condition of employment.

The main objective of VICTORIA HAND PROJECT's Workplace Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Policy is to ensure that its practices are free from direct and indirect discrimination. This Policy covers all aspects of employment, including candidate selection, appointment, promotion, compensation, benefits, training, layoffs, transfers, and any other terms and conditions of employment.

Complaints and Report Procedures

Individuals who believe they have been victimized by an act or acts of direct or indirect discrimination should report the incident(s) immediately to the Appropriate Authority and/or Human Resources. Any delays in reporting acts of direct/indirect discrimination can make the case against the Respondent more difficult to establish, and may even result in retaliatory acts by the Respondent.

Informal Procedures

If desired, the Complainant may attempt to resolve the matter directly with the Respondent. The Complainant must report the resolution, or lack thereof, to the Appropriate Authority.

The Appropriate Authority may notify the Respondent of the complaint, keeping all such communication confidential. The Appropriate Authority may then implement whatever steps

necessary to create an informal resolution that is acceptable to both the Complainant and Respondent.

If an informal resolution of the complaint is achieved, no record of the complaint will be entered in the Respondent's personnel records. However, the Appropriate Authority will record the occurrence of the complaint and the informal resolution achieved. Again, this record will remain confidential.

Complainants are always encouraged to file a complaint immediately after an alleged incident of direct/indirect discrimination. Nevertheless, VICTORIA HAND PROJECT is aware that such a timely response may not always be possible, due to feelings of humiliation or fear on the Complainant's part. Individuals who believe that they have experienced direct/indirect discrimination should lodge a complaint as soon as possible following an alleged incident.

Records

Records of all formal and informal resolutions, hearings, and reviews will be kept by the Human Resources department, except where otherwise stated in this Policy. The records will only be available to managerial members of the Human Resources department, and only in the following circumstances:

1. When determining an appropriate disciplinary action for subsequent direct/indirect discrimination complaints.
2. When a Respondent is a candidate for a promotion to a supervisory position.
3. When a complaint against retaliatory action is made.
4. When a decision or resolution is reviewed.