

## PURPOSE:

The DAS SmART Affirmative Action Unit is committed to the policies and procedures that promote equal employment opportunity. The ultimate purpose of the Affirmative Action Program is to:

- Ensure equality
- Avoid discrimination
- Develop a workforce that is truly representative of all segments of the population, and
- Improve the operation of the agency's services

## WHAT WE DO:

In the Affirmative Action Unit, we are responsible for ensuring that all clients and employees are guaranteed rights and protection without regard to **race, color, religious creed, age, sex**, sexual orientation, marital status, **national origin, ancestry**, mental disability or history thereof, mental retardation, learning disability, **physical disability\*** – including but not limited to blindness, pregnancy, previous opposition, criminal record, genetic information or workplace hazards to reproduction systems unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification. We are also responsible for investigating all employee allegations of discrimination including sexual harassment; overseeing the Americans with Disabilities Act, and providing employees with information regarding upward mobility and career counseling.

Each year we produce the Affirmative Action Plan, outlining the agency's efforts over the past year and their hiring and promotional goals for the coming year. This plan is then submitted to the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities for review.

**\* Bolded classes are protected by the State of Connecticut and the federal government through the EEOC.**

## INTERNAL DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

### Who may file a complaint?

Any person applying for employment with, or currently employed by, any of the agencies covered under the DAS SmART unit who believes s/he has been subjected to employment discrimination because of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, developmental disability/learning disability, mental retardation or physical disability (including, but not limited to blindness and AIDS), prior conviction of a crime, or genetics, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in one of these protected classes, has a right to file a complaint with the Affirmative Action Unit.

### Procedure

All complaints regarding alleged employment discrimination should be filed with the agency's Equal Employment Opportunities Specialists. Complaints should be submitted within 30 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act, giving rise to the complaint. All complaints can be in writing and/or verbal. Time frames will not exceed 90 days for filing, processing and resolution of all alleged employment discrimination complaints.

The EEOS will act in an effort to mediate or conciliate complaints. Information concerning complaints will be kept confidential, except where disclosure is necessary or required by law.

A formal complaint of alleged employment discrimination submitted to the EEOS should contain a brief statement describing the alleged act of discrimination, including the date(s) of the alleged violation, name, job title, address or location of both the complainant and the respondent.

## INTERNAL DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

After the investigation of the complaint, if the EEOS concludes that no act of discrimination occurred, she/he will inform both the complainant and the Respondent of the findings. However, if after the investigation, the EEOS finds reason to believe that the rights of the complainant have been violated, she/he will meet with the respondent to conciliate the matter in order to bring about a proper remedy.

Employees are advised of legal options to file employment discrimination complaints with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, United States Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, and any other agencies, state, federal or local, that enforce laws concerning discrimination in employment.

### Important Websites:

Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities  
[www.ct.gov/chro](http://www.ct.gov/chro)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

US Dept. of Labor, Wage and Hour Unit  
[www.dol.gov/esa/whd](http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### **Does affirmative action give preference to underserving, unqualified women and people of color solely on the basis of their gender and/or race?**

No. Affirmative Action does not mean the hiring of unqualified people. In fact, the law especially prohibits these activities. Affirmative Action allows competent and qualified women and minorities to compete and excel in areas where they are, or have been under-represented.

### **Does affirmative action mean establishing a “quota” system for women and minorities?**

No. There is a difference between goals and quotas. Ideally, the percentage of women and minorities working in positions should be similar to the percentage of women and minorities qualified for such positions.

### **Is affirmative action a type of reverse discrimination; meaning it gives preferential treatment to people of color and women?**

No. Racism is power plus discrimination. The parameters of discrimination based on race are distinguished by the power dynamics. Reverse racism is not, therefore, a reality if people of color are not in positions of power and perpetuating the discrimination.

### **Does affirmative action hurt whites?**

No. Though affirmative action is believed to have harmed white men, this contradicts the reality that white men hold structural power in society. A Washington Post study shows that 95% of top executives are white males. According to statewide statistics, the public sector’s workforce (all state agencies combined) is composed of 75.7% whites; 14.8% blacks; 7% Hispanics and 2.5% others.

DAS  
Equal Employment Opportunity Unit  
and the Agencies we serve

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### **Equal Employment Opportunity Manager**

- Governor’s Office
- Department of Administrative Services
- Department of Consumer Protection
- Connecticut State Library
- Department of Agriculture
- Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities

# SmART

Small Agency Resource Team



## Affirmative Action



## Equal Employment in Connecticut’s Smaller State Agencies

# DAS

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Small Agency Resource Team  
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