

# **ADAMS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## **SECTION 3.160 – HARASSMENT** (adopted 8/08/2007)

### A. Harassment in General

The Library is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of illegal discrimination or illegal harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the Library will not tolerate harassment of its employees based upon their protected class status by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, vendor or client.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based on a person's protected status, such as sex, color, race, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, physical handicap, disability, veteran status, citizenship status, or other status protected by applicable law. The Library will not tolerate harassing conduct which it believes affects tangible job benefits, that it feels interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment based on the person's protected class status.

### B. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment deserves special mention. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct based on sex.

When:

- a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the individual's employment,
- b) submission to or rejection of the conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual, or
- c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of explicit and even subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to, explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing", "practical jokes", jokes about gender-specific traits, foul or obscene language or gestures, display of foul or obscene printed or visual material, leering, and physical contact such as patting, pinching, or brushing against someone else's body.

All employees are responsible for helping to assure that we avoid harassment. Employees who feel they have been subjected to such treatment are encouraged to report these incidents as soon as possible.

It is important for employees to understand that no one has the authority to condition any aspect of their job, which includes but is not limited to, raises, bonuses, hiring, firing, transfers, job assignments, etc., on sexual favors. Any such instances must be reported to the executive director or the assistant director immediately.

### C. Reporting Illegal Harassment

If any employees feel that they have experienced, witnessed or become aware of any type of unwelcome harassment (i.e., age, race, sexual, disability, etc.) they are to first tell the person that they do not appreciate the comment, behavior, etc. The "offending" person is then expected to respect the other person's wishes and end the behavior. Most "harassment" or offensive acts can be quickly and easily ended in this manner.

# **ADAMS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

## **SECTION 3.160 – HARASSMENT ... cont'd**

However, if a simple request does not end the offensive conduct, the person who is offended should notify the executive director or assistant director.

Preventing and stopping illegal harassment in the workplace is a shared responsibility between the employees and management. It is important to speak up in an honest and respectful manner to either the alleged harasser and/or to the proper member of management, as outlined above, as soon as possible. The Library cannot correct what it does not know about.

Keeping an environment free from harassment is a **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEES.**

The Library's policy is to investigate all such complaints thoroughly and promptly. To the fullest extent possible, the Library will keep all such complaints confidential. If an investigation concludes that some form of prohibited harassment has occurred, the Library will take corrective action designed to stop the harassing conduct from reoccurring, including such discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment, as it deems appropriate.

### **D. Retaliation**

The Library forbids retaliation against anyone who has reported incidents of illegal harassment or has participated in such an investigation. Committing such acts of retaliation is a serious violation of policy and may result in the offending employee's immediate termination. Any acts of retaliation should be reported to the executive director or assistant director.

The Library encourages individuals who believe that they have been victims or witnesses of harassment to come forward and report such harassment to the executive director or assistant director. The Library will not take any adverse action against an individual who in good faith comes forward to report harassment, or provides assistance in an investigation, regardless of whether the allegation is substantiated.