

Avoiding Discrimination and Harassment in Registered Apprenticeship Programs



Office of Apprenticeship

A Quick Reference Guide for Apprenticeship Sponsors

The Apprenticeship Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) regulations are designed to ensure all qualified individuals, including women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities, have a level playing field for apprenticeship selection, retention, promotion, and program success. The regulations require apprenticeship sponsors to take specific actions to provide a work environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

Key Responsibilities of Sponsors to Prevent Discrimination and Harassment



- Communicating the sponsor's EEO policy to applicants, apprentices, and other staff connected with the program
- Maintaining an apprenticeship environment free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and retaliation
- Engaging in selection procedures that are uniformly and consistently applied to all applicants

What Do the EEO Regulations Require Sponsors to Do?

Protected Characteristics. Sponsors must refrain from discrimination on the basis of [protected characteristics](#) in every aspect of their Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP). The protected characteristics are race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, genetic information, and disability.

EEO Pledge and Complaints. Sponsors are required to post their [EEO pledge and information regarding the right of apprentices to file discrimination complaints](#). The EEO pledge must also be published in RAP standards, apprenticeship opportunity announcements, employee handbooks, and other publications. Posting this information ensures that all apprentices and applicants for apprenticeship have current knowledge of the sponsor's EEO policies. Sponsors must also ensure that all claims of harassment or retaliation are investigated thoroughly. In addition to fulfilling a requirement of the regulations, doing so sends the message throughout the program that these behaviors will not be tolerated.

Anti-Harassment Training. As one of the steps to maintain apprenticeship programs that are free from harassment and intimidation, sponsors must provide [anti-harassment training](#) to all apprentices, journeymen, supervisors/ mentors, and administrative personnel that regularly work with apprentices. This training must be:

- Interactive – including active trainee participation
- Presented in person (preferably) or online
- Provided routinely enough to ensure that all apprentices and staff that work with them are trained

You may feel that you do not have the time or resources to provide anti-harassment training. *What's the answer?* A set of training materials that has everything you need to deliver this training. Another tip...you can incorporate the training into the existing onboarding process for new hires.

EEO Includes:

- Preventing discrimination, including harassment in apprenticeship programs
- Making good faith efforts to ensure all interested, qualified individuals have the opportunity to apply for and be selected for apprenticeship programs
- Ensuring that all selection procedures are uniformly and consistently applied and do not discriminate

EEO Does NOT Include:

- Establishing quotas
- Creating set-asides for specific groups
- Hiring individuals who do not meet qualifications for the apprenticeship program

Selection Procedures. Under the EEO regulations, sponsors may use one or more procedure(s) to select apprentices, as long as the method(s) is uniformly and consistently applied to all applicants, complies with the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and Americans with Disabilities Act, and is otherwise non-discriminatory. [Resources](#) are available to help you develop or evaluate selection procedures, including information on direct-entry procedures.

Notes on procedures to select apprentices:

- Sponsors may accept recruitment recommendations from current apprentices and other employees, but that should not be the only way a program recruits, as it may severely limit the diversity of applicants.
- Direct-entry selection is permitted; however, it should be used in concert with other selection methods to promote a diverse pool of applicants.

Tools and Resources

If you need:

Use these resources:

 Help delivering anti-harassment training using ready-to-use materials	www.apprenticeship.gov/eoo/sponsors/prevent-harassment
 Information about non-discriminatory procedures for selecting apprentices	www.apprenticeship.gov/eoo/sponsors/recruit-and-hire
 An EEO pledge and complaint poster to easily customize and download	www.apprenticeship.gov/eoo/sponsors/inform-apprentices
 Help understanding the protected characteristics	www.apprenticeship.gov/eoo/protected-characteristics

Looking for more tools and resources on the EEO regulations? Visit www.apprenticeship.gov/eoo.