



NONDISCRIMINATION & ANTI-HARRASSMENT POLICY

OBJECTIVE

Pottstown Area PAL is committed to fostering an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Every individual has the right to participate in an atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Pottstown Area PAL expects that all relationships among persons in our program will be professional and entirely free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

Pottstown Area PAL will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all concerned are familiar with these policies and are aware that any complaint in violation of such policies will be thoroughly investigated and resolved appropriately per determination of the executive director and Board.

These policies should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, or any other protected characteristic, from participating in any of the non-profit's activities. In other words, no one should make the mistake of engaging in discrimination or exclusion to avoid allegations of harassment. The law and the policies of Pottstown Area PAL prohibit disparate treatment on the basis of any protected characteristic, with regard to terms, conditions, privileges and perquisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination and retaliation are intended to complement and further those policies, not to form the basis of an exception to them.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of Pottstown Area PAL to ensure equal opportunity (including access to employment and volunteer positions) without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law. Pottstown Area PAL prohibits any such discrimination or harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, "sexual harassment" is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which is intended to coerce, intimidate, or make one uncomfortable.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognizes two types of sexual harassment: a) quid pro quo and b) hostile work environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; public display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

HARASSMENT

Harassment on the basis of any protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law, or that of his or her relatives, friends or associates, and that either: has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment OR has the purpose or effect of adversely affecting or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or volunteer/participant experience.

Harassing conduct includes but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating acts; denigrating jokes; written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group. Any such conduct shall be prohibited in any forum by any Pottstown Area PAL representative or participant – this internal organizational protection extends to third-party interactions and online messaging groups.

REPORTING AN INCIDENT

Pottstown Area PAL encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe that they have been the victim of such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor or directly with the executive director. See the complaint procedure described below.

In addition, Pottstown Area PAL encourages individuals who believe they are being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and to request that it be discontinued. Often this action alone will resolve the problem. Pottstown Area PAL recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures.

RETALIATION

Pottstown Area PAL encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of Pottstown Area PAL to promptly and thoroughly investigate such reports. The organization shall conduct its investigation through the executive director, who shall make his/her determination in writing with the Board's approval. Pottstown Area PAL absolutely prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment, or any individual who participates in an investigation of such reports.

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will likewise be promptly investigated and addressed.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Individuals who believe they have been the victims of conduct prohibited by this policy or believe they have witnessed such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor or directly contact the executive director. Pottstown Area PAL encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated as promptly as is feasible. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, referral to training/counseling or disciplinary action such as a written warning, withholding of a promotion, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay, termination, or dismissal, as Pottstown Area PAL believes appropriate under the circumstances.

If a party to a complaint does not agree with its resolution via the executive director, that party may appeal in writing to Pottstown Area PAL's executive Board.

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation (as opposed to complaints that, even if erroneous, are made in good faith) may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.