

Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
FACTSHEET

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has a broad mission. OCR is responsible for carrying out four mission-critical programs. Three of these affect EPA's workforce, including: the processing, and resolution of discrimination complainants filed by EPA employees and applicants for employment; overseeing and coordinating EPA's Reasonable Accommodations Program for employees with disabilities; and, identifying and eliminating barriers to equal employment. OCR's mission also includes responsibility for enforcing several Federal civil rights laws that together prohibit discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin (including limited-English proficiency), disability, sex and age, in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance (FFA) from EPA.

External Compliance Program: This OCR Program is responsible for enforcing several civil rights laws which, together, prohibit discrimination on the basis of: race, color, or national origin (including on the basis of limited-English proficiency); sex; disability; and age by applicants for and recipients of federal financial assistance from EPA. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, respectively.) The External Compliance Program is also responsible for enforcing Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 which prohibits discrimination based on sex under programs or activities receiving financial assistance under the Clean Water Act.

Employment Complaints Resolution Program: This Program is responsible for addressing complaints of discrimination, including under Title VII Civil Rights Act of 1964, alleging discrimination based on race; color; religion; sex, including pregnancy, sex stereotyping, gender identity or gender expression; national origin; sexual orientation; physical or mental disability; age; protected genetic information; status as a parent marital status; political affiliation; or retaliation based on previous EEO activity, against federal EPA employees and applicant for federal EPA employment. The Environmental Protection Agency is committed to providing equal employment opportunity; eliminating discrimination in employment; and maintaining an environment that is free from any form of prohibited discrimination. The Agency will provide a prompt, fair and impartial review, and adjudication of any allegation of discrimination. We are committed to equal employment opportunity principles and practices in all of our management decisions and personnel practices.

Affirmative Employment Analysis and Accountability Program: The AEAA Program is responsible for providing leadership, direction and advice to managers and supervisors to assist them in carrying out equal opportunity and civil rights responsibilities. In addition, AEAA oversees the EPA's continuing affirmative program to promote equal employment opportunity, develops internal EEO policies/procedures, and provides oversight of, and technical assistance to, Headquarters, program management offices, regional offices and laboratories. AEAA is responsible for developing the EPA Affirmative Employment Program Plan and for requisite reporting under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Management Directive 715 (MD-715), which provides guidelines for identifying triggers and conducting barrier analysis within the workforce. The MD-715 plan includes all EPA program offices, regions and laboratories.

Reasonable Accommodation Program: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 501), as amended, requires EPA to provide reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities, unless it would cause undue hardship. A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment or in the way a job is performed that enables a person with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. Although many individuals with disabilities can apply for and perform jobs without any reasonable accommodations, workplace barriers may keep others from performing jobs which they could do with some form of accommodation. These barriers may be physical obstacles (such as inaccessible facilities or equipment), or they may be procedures or rules (such as rules concerning when work is performed, when breaks are taken, or how job tasks are performed). Reasonable accommodation removes workplace barriers for individuals with disabilities. OCR administers the EPA's national reasonable accommodation program and related activities that flow through the organization, including processing requests for accommodation, providing managers and supervisors with guidance and training on reasonable accommodation.