DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY

This policy applies to all paid staff and members of the Board of Directors of Northwest VEG (collectively referred to herein as “employees”). Northwest VEG is committed to providing a safe working environment for all its employees, free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. In addition to complying with federal and state nondiscrimination laws, the goal of this policy is to (a) protect employees from discrimination and harassment, including employees not covered by existing law, and (b) create a culture where every individual is treated with respect.

Northwest VEG will operate a zero tolerance policy for discrimination or harassment in the workplace by investigating any complaint made by or about an employee. Any employee found to have harassed or discriminated against another will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment (paid staff) or removal from office (members of the Board of Directors).

All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be taken seriously, promptly investigated, and there will be no retaliation for making such allegations. Complaints will be confidential and records will be kept in a confidential file, not in the complainant’s personnel file. Limited disclosure may be required in order to conduct an investigation, or in the case of imminent danger to the employee or other party.

Northwest VEG recognizes that harassment, particularly sexual harassment, can be a manifestation of power relationships and often occurs between a supervisor and direct report, or between a donor and fundraiser. However, harassment can occur between any two or more people, regardless of their sex or gender identity and whether or not they are in a position of power. Northwest VEG understands the need to support employees in making complaints and supervisors in modeling appropriate behavior.

Northwest VEG recognizes that sexual harassment can occur between people of the same sex or gender, including those who don’t identify with a specific gender. During business travel, no employee will be required to share a bedroom with a person of a different sex or gender, or any other person that would result in their feeling vulnerable or unsafe. The employee must inform their supervisor if they’re uncomfortable rooming with a particular sex, gender, or person.

Definitions

**A Designated Person** is an employee, board member, mediator, or other professional who Northwest VEG determines is qualified to receive and investigate discrimination and harassment complaints. Each Designated Person will read and sign a copy of this policy and complete a yearly discrimination and harassment training. There is no requirement for a particular gender identity, racial identity, sexual orientation, or other characteristic. Northwest VEG acknowledges that this definition may need be revised in the future.

**Discrimination** is the differential treatment of an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other factor that is legislatively protected in the country in which you work (“Protected Classes”). Per federal law, discrimination is illegal in work-related decisions including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment.
**Harassment** is unwelcome conduct including physical, verbal, and nonverbal behaviors, and results in a hostile environment. Per federal law, harassment is illegal when unwelcome conduct is related to any of the Protected Classes and when enduring the conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or the conduct is so severe or pervasive that a reasonable person would consider the working environment intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Northwest VEG recognizes that existing federal and state nondiscrimination laws cannot cover all types of behavior or groups of people. Northwest VEG further defines discrimination as differential treatment of any person with regard to work-related decisions based on any characteristics outside of professional qualifications, and harassment as unwelcome conduct against any person where they feel threatened, publicly humiliated, or intimidated.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Humiliation in front of coworkers
- Repeated unwelcome remarks or jokes
- Exercising, attempting to exercise, or threatening to exercise physical force against an employee in the workplace that causes or could cause physical injury to the employee
- Comments that promote stereotyping of any of the Protected Classes
- Comments related to an employee’s ethnic, racial, or religious affiliation, or their sexual orientation, gender, or age, that are publicly humiliating, offensive, threatening, or that undermine the employee’s role in a professional environment

**Sexual harassment** is unwanted conduct that is sexual in nature. Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome physical contact including touching, patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging
- Sexual comments, stories, and jokes, including bragging about sexual prowess
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy
- The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favors
- Comments on an employee’s appearance or private life
- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material
- Insults based on the sex or gender identity of the worker
- Physical violence, including sexual assault
- Sending sexually explicit messages
- Sexually-suggestive gestures
- Whistling
- Leering

The **workplace** is any place where work-related activities are conducted, including, but not limited to, the physical work premises, work-related conferences or training sessions, work-related travel, work-related social functions, such as dinners with donors, and work-related electronic communication, such as email, chat, text, phone calls, and virtual meetings.

**Implementation**

- Northwest VEG will include this policy in the staff and volunteer handbooks and make it available online to employees and volunteers.
- Upon hiring (paid staff) or appointment (members of the Board of Directors), employees will sign the policy to indicate that they have read and understood it.
- It is the responsibility of every supervisor to ensure that all of their employees are aware of this policy.
At all times, Northwest VEG will designate more than one Designated Person to receive complaints.

The following will occur on an ongoing basis:

- On an annual basis, all employees will attend a refresher training course on the content of this policy.
- As part of the annual refresher course, supervisors will confirm that employees know the names and contact information for the Designated Persons and the resource for anonymous complaints.
- Designated Persons will report the number of incidents, their resolutions, and any recommendations to the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.
- The organization will evaluate the policy and make any changes as needed.

Complaints Procedure

Self-Help

Employees are encouraged to keep a written record of the date, time, details of the incident(s), and witnesses, if any. Where employees are comfortable doing so, they can attempt to resolve their concerns by directly communicating disapproval to the person whose conduct is offensive.

Initial Complaint

If an employee doesn’t feel comfortable approaching the alleged harasser to ask them to stop their behavior, or if the alleged harasser continues the behavior after being asked to stop, the employee can approach a Designated Person responsible for receiving discrimination and harassment complaints. When the Designated Person receives a complaint, they will:

- Record the dates, times, and facts of the incident(s).
- Ensure that the complainant understands the procedure for resolving the complaint.
- Identify the outcome wanted by the complainant.
- Discuss and agree on next steps: either an informal or formal complaint, with the understanding that resolving the matter informally will not prevent the complainant from pursuing a formal complaint if they are not satisfied with the outcome.
- Inform the complainant that they have the right to contact legal counsel, such as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or other legal counsel, if they think this is necessary. Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and corresponding state agencies investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited harassment, discrimination, and retaliation in employment. The nearest office can be found by visiting the federal agency website at www.eeoc.gov or the appropriate state agency website of the employee’s state.
- Respect the choice of the complainant to the extent that the fulfillment of the complainant’s wishes does not jeopardize the safety of the complainant or others.
- Keep a confidential record of all discussions.
- Ensure that the above is completed within 3 days of initial discussion of the complaint.

Informal Complaint

If the complainant decides to resolve the matter informally, the Designated Person will:

- Give the alleged harasser an opportunity to respond to the complaint.
- Ensure the alleged harasser understands the procedure for resolving the complaint.
• If the complainant is comfortable, facilitate discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution that is acceptable to the complainant.
• If the complainant is not comfortable, achieve an informal resolution by speaking with the complainant and alleged harasser separately.
• Inform the Board of Directors of the complaint, maintaining the anonymity of the parties to the fullest extent possible. If the Designated Person is unable to achieve an informal solution that is acceptable to the complainant, the Board of Directors may refer the matter to a mediator.
• Keep a confidential record of all actions taken to resolve the complaint.
• Ensure that the above is completed within 7 days of receiving the complaint. In the case where the Designated Person has difficulty completing these items within 7 days, they may work with another Designated Person to complete their duties.
• Follow up 2 weeks after the discussion to ensure that the behavior has stopped.

**Formal Complaint**

If the employee wants to make a formal complaint, or if the informal complaint mechanism does not lead to a satisfactory outcome for the complainant, a formal complaint should be made. At the time of the formal complaint, the Designated Person who initially received the complaint will form a committee of all Designated Persons currently responsible for receiving complaints. In the case that a Designated Person has a conflict of interest due to their relationship with the complainant or alleged harasser, or for another reason, they will excuse themselves from the investigation. This committee will proceed to investigate the complaint, or refer the matter to an outside investigator.

Note: The steps below are written assuming the committee is carrying out the investigation.

An investigation will be carried out:
• Inform the Board of Directors of the complaint, maintaining the anonymity of the parties to the fullest extent possible.
• Interview the employee and their alleged harasser separately.
• Interview other relevant third parties, such as witnesses, separately.
• Produce a report detailing the investigations, findings, and any recommendations. The committee may not be able to determine whether the incident(s) of harassment took place. For this reason, the committee will focus on a remedy that is appropriate to the alleged incident and ensures proper functioning of the workplace.

A remedy will be determined and implemented:
After completing the investigation, the committee of Designated Persons will consult with the complainant on their preference for a remedy, i.e. a plan for future interactions that is acceptable to all parties, an apology, a change to working arrangements, a promotion if the complainant was demoted as a result of the harassment, training for the alleged harasser, discipline, suspension, or dismissal. Based on the complainant’s input and the results of the investigation, the committee will determine a remedy. If necessary, the committee will consult with the Board of Directors regarding the appropriate remedy.

• Keep a confidential record of all actions taken to resolve the complaint.
• Follow up after 1 week to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, that the behavior has stopped, and that the complainant is satisfied with the outcome.
• If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, consult with them to determine why
the remedy was not satisfactory and if another remedy is available.
• Ensure that the above is completed within 30 days of the complaint.

Note: In the case where an employee makes multiple complaints against the same alleged
harasser, and the Designated Person(s) believes the complaints may be a form of harassment,
the complainant may face disciplinary action.

Witnessing Discrimination and Harassment

Any employee who becomes aware of discrimination or harassment in the workplace, even if
they are not directly involved, is expected to report the incident to a Designated Person. The
Designated Person will document the incident and consult with the alleged victim to determine if
the victim would like to file a complaint. If the alleged victim chooses to file a complaint, the
Designated Person will proceed as defined above with regard to informal and formal complaints.
If the alleged victim chooses to not file a complaint, documentation of the alleged incident will be
retained confidentially so that if the alleged victim or harasser is involved in another complaint or
accusation, Designated Persons can consult documentation of the previous complaint.

Complaints Against Third Parties

Northwest VEG recognizes that an employee can be subject to harassment from a non-
employee who supports or conducts business with Northwest VEG, such as a donor, overnight
host, contractor, consultant, or volunteer who is not on the Board of Directors (“third party”). An
employee who believes that they have been harassed by a third party is encouraged to file a
complaint with a Designated Person. The Designated Person will document the complaint and
take whatever action is appropriate in the circumstances. For example, if a fundraiser files a
complaint about a donor, the Designated Person may, with the permission of the employee,
recommend to their supervisor that the employee no longer be required to work with that donor.

Complaints By Third Parties

Northwest VEG recognizes that a non-employee can be subject to harassment from Northwest
VEG employees, such as a volunteer being harassed by an employee at a work-related
conference. If a non-employee believes that they have been harassed by an employee and
reports the conduct to a Northwest VEG employee or board member, the third party will be
referred to a Designated Person. The Designated Person will follow the procedure for informal
and formal complaints above.

Anonymous Complaints

An employee or third party may file an anonymous complaint by contacting a professional
mediator who is not an employee of Northwest VEG. The identity of the complainant will be
known to the mediator, but not to staff at Northwest VEG. The mediator will communicate the
complaint to a Designated Person at Northwest VEG while keeping the identity of the
complainant anonymous. Northwest VEG will not be able to conduct a thorough investigation
without interviewing the alleged witness or victim. However, if the complainant identifies a
harasser, the Designated Person will interview the alleged harasser and keep a confidential
record of both the complaint and the response from the alleged harasser.