

COUNTY OF SONOMA
Human Resources Department
Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Division
Investigation Interview Fact Sheet

The information contained in this Fact Sheet has been prepared to answer some of the questions most frequently asked about the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Investigative Process. Applicants and employees are directed to the *County's Policy and Program of Equal Employment Opportunity* and the *Discrimination Complaint Procedure*, for specific information and guidance on the County's overall policy and program of equal opportunity.

Purpose of Investigation Interviews

The County of Sonoma investigates complaints of discrimination when those complaints are based on race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, or any other category protected by law. This responsibility encompasses recruitment, appointment, training, promotion, retention, discipline, and any other covered aspect of employment. The County also investigates claims of retaliation in connection with the filing of discrimination complaints.

The letter you have just received with this fact sheet specifies whether you are the:

- A) **complainant** - an individual who has made a complaint of discrimination;
- B) **witness** - an individual who may have information about the matter under investigation;
- C) **alleged perpetrator** - an individual accused of engaging in discriminatory conduct.

On the day of your interview you will meet with an Investigator. At the start of your interview, the investigator will explain why you have been contacted and what will be expected of you during and after the investigation (i.e. maintaining work performance standards). Specific allegations will also be discussed, and you will have an opportunity to ask questions. If you have any concerns about the investigator's ability to be fair and objective in this process, you may contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Manager or the Human Resources Director.

Confidentiality

This is a confidential investigation and your role in it is extremely important. Your cooperation is required so that we may properly and thoroughly investigate this complaint. To maintain the integrity of the investigation, we must limit the disclosure of information to those with a bona fide need to know. Therefore, you are not to discuss with other employees: **1)** the existence of an investigation; **2)** the fact that you are being or have been interviewed; or **3)** any information shared by or with you during this investigation. *Please note that disciplinary action could result if contents of the investigation report are revealed after the complaint is resolved.*

Any information that you provide will also be maintained as confidential, to the extent possible. You are advised that while investigations are confidential, the information obtained (including any tape-recorded transcripts) may be revealed under the following circumstances:

- A) the investigation results in disciplinary action;
- B) under the formal complaint process, the complainant appeals the report recommendation to the Civil Service Commission; or
- C) a lawsuit is filed by any of the parties involved.

NOTE: *The above is not an all-inclusive list.*

Retaliation is Prohibited

The County prohibits retaliation against anyone for filing a complaint, serving as a witness, or otherwise participating in an investigation. If it is alleged that you have engaged in discriminatory conduct, you must not take any action that could be perceived as retaliatory against anyone involved in the investigation. Nor should anyone retaliate against you. Retaliatory behavior should immediately be reported to the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Manager.

Tape Recording

Interviews may be tape recorded. Please refer to your cover letter to determine if this interview will be tape recorded.

Cooperation and Truthfulness

Whether you are the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, or a witness, your cooperation is essential to this investigation. You are asked to be on time for your interview, and to answer all questions truthfully and to the best of your ability.

Please note that refusal to cooperate, or failure to be truthful during the investigation may result in disciplinary action up to, and including dismissal.

Representation

If you are an alleged perpetrator, you have a right to representation at any time during this process. Should the allegations prove true you may be disciplined. If you are a witness or a complainant, you may bring a representative with you. In the event you are not a member of a represented group, you may wish to secure representation. *Please note that the County does not provide or pay for representation.*

Length of Investigation

The Equal Employment Opportunity Office has 30 County business days to investigate complaints of discrimination. Additional time may be required. You will be notified of the reason if time beyond 30 days is necessary to complete the investigation.

Contacts in the County's EEO Office

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