



## Harassment Policy

### I. Policy:

- A. The Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA) strives to create and maintain a work environment in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. LEDA will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation of any kind. Harassment based on protected characteristics is prohibited. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, sex, age, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship, disability and any other characteristic prohibited by law.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Derogatory remarks about such characteristics
- Offensive or inappropriate jokes or comments about individuals or groups
- Written, verbal, visual, or electronic conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment

- B. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and violates:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines
- Louisiana Employment Discrimination Law
- Louisiana Revised Statutes 42:341-345

Sexual harassment may be committed by an employee, Board member, contractor, vendor, client, or other non-employee with whom LEDA conducts business. Any employee who believes they have experienced sexual harassment also has the right to file a charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

- C. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

- D. Conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, including but not limited to business travel, conferences and meetings, work-related social events, electronic communications or virtual interactions.

- E. Unwelcome actions such as the following are inappropriate and, depending on the circumstances, may constitute sexual harassment or contribute to a hostile work environment. These examples are illustrative and not exhaustive: sexual propositions; lewd comments about an individual's body; touching or grabbing of a sexual nature; sexual jokes, teasing, pranks, or innuendo; displaying sexually suggestive images or materials; sending sexually explicit or

suggestive messages, emails, texts, or social media communications. Sexual statements can be made in person, in writing, or electronically, including through email, instant messaging, text messaging, blogs, web pages, social media.

- F. Charges of harassment or sexual harassment are serious and should be reported promptly. Employees are expected to make complaints in good faith. Knowingly false or malicious complaints may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **II. Complaint Procedure:**

- A. Any employee who believes they have been subjected to harassment should take the following steps:
- Continue to report to work unless otherwise directed.
  - If the employee feels safe and comfortable doing so, inform the offending individual that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop.
  - Document the occurrence(s), including dates, times, locations, witnesses, and specific details.
  - Report the conduct immediately to the President. If the complaint involves the President, the employee should report the matter to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or their supervisor.
- B. Complaints will be reviewed promptly. LEDA will conduct an appropriate investigation and take corrective action if warranted. Disciplinary action may include counseling, reprimand, suspension, termination, or other appropriate measures depending on the severity of the conduct.
- C. Employees are expected to cooperate fully in any investigation of a harassment complaint. Information related to complaints and investigations will be shared only with individuals who have legitimate need to know in order to investigate or resolve the matter.
- D. LEDA will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality during the investigation process. However, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because information may need to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation or comply with legal obligations. Employees involved in investigations are expected to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible.
- E. Retaliation against any employee who makes a good faith complaint under this policy, participates in an investigation, assists in resolving a harassment complaint is strictly prohibited. Any acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be investigated and addressed promptly.

## **III. Training - Sexual Harassment Prevention**

- A. In accordance with Louisiana Revised Statutes 42:343, all employees and members of the Board of Commissioners must complete annual sexual harassment training by December 31st of each year. The CAO shall maintain records of compliance for each employee and Commissioner. Failure to complete the mandatory training requirements may result in disciplinary action.

## **IV. Reporting**

- A. In accordance with Louisiana Revised Statutes 42:344, LEDA shall compile and submit an annual report to the Louisiana Division of Administration by February 1st of each year. These reports shall be public record and available to the public in accordance with the Louisiana Public Records Law.