

WORKPLACE JUSTICE

## 10 WAYS YOUR COMPANY CAN HELP PREVENT HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

- 1. Start from the top:** Have your top leadership report annually on the steps your company is taking to prevent and address harassment. Workplace culture starts at the top and this will send a company-wide message about expectations and ramifications.
- 2. Track and monitor:** Conduct an annual survey that allows your employees to anonymously disclose workplace harassment. The survey can also ask if employees feel comfortable intervening or reporting harassment, and lastly, whether they understand the company's policies and complaint process. Use the results to inform internal processes and training.
- 3. Prioritize effective training:** Conduct regular, in-person, interactive training for all employees on preventing and responding to harassment.. The training should help employees and supervisors a) recognize sexual harassment in the context of their specific workplace; b) understand their rights and responsibilities; c) provide tips on how bystanders can speak out and intervene; d) explain how to report harassment as a victim or a witness; e) explain the company's reporting and investigation process; and f) make clear the consequences for harassing others.
- 4. Create a one-stop shop:** Make it easy for your employees to find and access your company's resources on harassment. For example, post on your intranet, internal website, or your employee handbook all relevant information including anti-harassment and anti-retaliation policies, avenues for reporting or making a complaint, who to contact for complaints, an explanation of the complaint and investigation process, training materials, and company resources and external resources. This page should be easy to understand and find.
- 5. Don't impose mandatory arbitration requirements:** Do not require employees to sign employment agreements that require arbitration of harassment and other discrimination claims and prevent your employees from bringing these claims in court.
- 6. Don't require non-disclosure agreements:** Do not require your employees to sign nondisclosure and non-disparagement agreements as a condition of employment, with terms that prevent employees from discussing harassment that they experience, or reporting harassment or assault to enforcement authorities or others outside the workplace.
- 7. Provide multiple ways to report harassment:** Ensure your company has several avenues for reporting harassment. Include at least one option for anonymous reports, including by witnesses or bystanders.
- 8. Be transparent:** Ensure that your employees understand the process triggered by a report or complaint, including what an HR investigation entails, how long it will take and the time it will take for HR to follow up and advise the employee of the final resolution. When your employees understand the process and have clear expectations for how it will proceed, they are more likely to trust the process and the result.
- 9. Be accountable:** Create a mechanism for holding HR accountable for addressing harassment. For example, use performance reviews to assess HR employee's handling of reports/complaints in a timely, fair and satisfactory manner. If you don't have an HR department, ensure supervisors and managers are held accountable for responding to and following up on complaints.
- 10. Be Prepared:** Make sure the company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) providers are trained to provide assistance to victims of sexual harassment and assault, and have a list of referrals to trauma-informed service providers. If you don't have an EAP, reach out to experts in your community to help you develop a referral list of appropriate service providers.