

**ALLEGAN COUNTY  
POLICY/PROCEDURE**



**TITLE: HARASSMENT AND EMPLOYEE DIGNITY  
POLICY/PROCEDURE NUMBER: 201**

**APPROVED BY: Board of Commissioners**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: January 12, 2017**

1. Harassment for any discriminatory reason (that is, based on a legally-protected factor) is prohibited by state and federal laws. The policy of Allegan County is that each employee has the right to work in a positive environment for all parties involved, free from unlawful harassment and discrimination. Harassing anyone, including, but not limited to, sexual or racial harassment, will not be tolerated.

The County prohibits not only unlawful harassment, but also other unprofessional or discourteous actions. The County expects all employees to conduct themselves with civility and respect for the dignity of all other employees, as well as citizens, consumers, vendors, and others. Any employee who violates this policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination.

2. The County does not condone or allow harassment, whether engaged in by fellow employees, by supervisors or managers, or by citizens, consumers, vendors, or other non-employees who conduct business with the County.
3. Any person who believes in good faith that he or she has been subjected to or has witnessed harassment may, but is not required to, speak with the offending individual directly and inform the offending individual that the behavior in question is unwelcome and must be stopped. The next step, if necessary, is to report the matter immediately to the person's supervisor or department head. If the person is uncomfortable with this, the report may be made directly to the Executive Director of Human Resources. Employees should not allow an inappropriate situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating that situation. In response to every good-faith complaint, the County will promptly investigate and take appropriate corrective and preventative actions, which may include discipline up to and including termination. Employees who bring good-faith complaints to the attention of the County or participate in investigations in good faith will not be retaliated against for doing so.
4. A supervisor or leader who observes or has reported to them instances of harassment should notify the Executive Director of Human Resources immediately.
5. Under this policy, all employees are expected to act in a responsible and professional manner to establish a working environment that supports employee dignity and is free from discrimination.
6. Unlawful harassment includes:
  - a. Sexual Harassment – Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is unlawful sexual harassment when:

- i. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; or
  - ii. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
  - iii. 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.
  - iv. Examples of prohibited actions and statements include derogatory or vulgar comments regarding a person's gender, sexually suggestive language, remarks about a person's anatomy, threats of physical harm, and distribution of written or graphic sexual materials. Also prohibited are nude pictures, sexually oriented publications or posters, and other words or pictures of a sexually suggestive nature. Prohibited actions include touching another person in a sexually suggestive way or in a gender/sexual location, and physical contact such as hitting and pushing or threats to take such action.
- b. Racial/National Origin Harassment – Unwelcome hostile, intimidating, or offensive actions by a person based on an individual's racial or ethnic origin, or incitement to commit such conduct including, but not limited to, derogatory comments, racial jokes, slurs, epithets, graffiti, or physical acts.
- c. Other Unlawful Harassment – Unwelcome verbal, physical, or other conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment based on protected status or protected activities. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, derogatory comments, jokes, slurs, epithets, graffiti, gestures, displays, touching, or other physical acts.