

RED RIVER PARISH ASSESSOR'S OFFICE
SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The Red River Parish Assessor's Office is committed to providing its employees a work environment free from sexual harassment. All employees are expected to accept certain responsibilities, adhere to acceptable business principals in matters of personal conduct, and always exhibit a high degree of personal integrity. This not only involves sincere respect for the rights and feelings of others, but also demands both in your business and personal life. Refrain from any behavior that might be harmful to you, your co-workers and/or the Office, or that might be viewed as unfavorable.

Whether you are on or off-duty, your conduct reflects on our office. You are always consequently encouraged to observe the highest standards of professionalism.

Any type of sexual harassment is against RRPAO policy and is strictly prohibited by **ALL** employees of the RRPAO. Certain forms of sexual harassment can be unlawful. Should an alleged incident rise to this level, the employee will be appropriately disciplined and/or reported to the authorities immediately.

It is illegal and against the employer's policy for any worker, supervisor, administrator or vendor/visitor, male or female, to harass another worker by: making unwelcome sexual advances or favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature a condition of any worker's employment; using a worker's submission to or rejection of such conduct as the basis for or as a factor in any employment decision affecting the individual; or otherwise creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment by such conduct.

The creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment may include such actions as persistent comments on a worker's sexual preference or the display of obscene or sexually oriented photographs or drawings. However, conduct or actions that arise out a personal or social relationship and that are not intended to have a discriminatory employment effect may not be viewed as harassment. The employer will determine whether such conduct

constitutes sexual harassment based on a review of the facts and circumstances of each situation.

Sexual harassment is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or c) 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.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions.
- Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, or inquiries.
- Unwelcome sexual looks or gestures.
- Verbal or written abuse of a sexual nature.
- Requests for sexual favors.
- Graphic, verbal or sexual comments about an individual or to describe an individual's body.
- Unwelcome physical contact (i.e., touching, rubbing against, leaning over, brushing, pinching).
- Sexually degrading words and demeaning or inappropriate terms (i.e., referring to a person as "Babe", "Honey", etc....).
- Sexual or insulting noises.
- Using crude and offensive language.
- Discussing sexual activities or exploits.
- Inappropriate commenting on a person's attributes and/or
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, statements, graffiti, books, magazines, photographs, cartoons or pictures.

Any employee experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment by anyone in the RRPAO, including any supervisor, administrator, co-worker, vendor, client or visitor, shall immediately report the inappropriate conduct. Any such complaint may be verbally or in

writing. Under most circumstances, complaints should be made to the employee's supervisor. If the complaint involves the employee's supervisor or if, for any reason, the employee is uncomfortable in reporting to his/her supervisor, he/she may contact the Assessor or Chief Deputy.

All reports of sexual harassment will immediately be reported to the Assessor or Chief Deputy. The Assessor and/or Chief Deputy will then carefully investigate the matter, questioning all employees who may have knowledge of either the incident in question or similar problems. Both the complaint and the investigative steps and findings should be documented thoroughly. To ensure the prompt and thorough investigation of a harassment complaint, the complainant should provide as much of the following information as is possible:

1. The name and position of the person or persons allegedly causing the harassment.
2. A description of the incident(s) including the date(s), locations(s), and the presence of any witnesses.
3. The effect of the incident(s) on the complainant's ability to perform his/her job or on other terms and conditions of his/her employment.
4. The names of other individuals who might have been subject to the same or similar harassment.
5. What, if any, steps the complainant has taken to try to stop the sexual harassment. **(Please note employees are not expected to handle any sexual harassment situation on their own, at any time!)**
6. Any other information the complainant believes to be relevant to the sexual harassment complaint.

Persons called upon to participate in the investigation are required to answer all questions truthfully and cooperatively. Employees do not have the option of remaining silent or declining to be involved. Given the nature of this type of discrimination, the Assessor recognizes that false accusations of sexual harassment can also have serious effects on innocent individuals. Therefore, the investigative process will be conducted expeditiously and professionally, with appropriate emphasis on the rights of all involved.

All inquiries, complaints, and documentation of investigations are treated confidentially. Information is revealed strictly on a need-to-know basis. Information contained in a formal complaint is kept as confidential as possible. However, the identity of the complainant may be revealed to the respondent and witnesses. The Assessor will take adequate steps to ensure that the complainant is protected from retaliation. All information pertaining to a sexual harassment complaint or investigation is maintained by the Assessor in secure files. The Assessor can answer any questions relating to the procedures for handling information related to sexual harassment complaints and investigations to the complainants and respondents.

The Assessor and/or Chief Deputy will not retaliate against nor tolerate any retaliation against any employee because of reports of alleged sexual harassment or because of cooperation with any investigation.

The Assessor and/or Chief Deputy may consult with the District Attorney in order to determine whether any conduct found to have occurred constitutes sexual harassment, as well as if a criminal law has been violated. If sexual harassment is found to have occurred, the Assessor and/or Chief Deputy will make subsequent inquiries; this is to ensure that any such sexual harassment has not resumed and that the complainants/witnesses of any such harassment have not suffered any sort of retaliation during or after the investigation and throughout the duration of their employment with the RRPAO.

Upon completion of the investigation, the complaining employee and accused will be apprised of the outcome of the investigation, with appropriate emphasis on the rights of all involved. After any investigation, any employee found to have sexually harassed another employee will be disciplined in accordance with applicable laws. Such action may include counseling, reprimand, suspension, demotion or termination.

The RRPAO adheres to the highest legal and non-harassment standards applicable. RRPAO operations are conducted in strict observance of all applicable laws and the integrity of each employee is of the utmost importance. All employees of the RRPAO are required annually to complete the mandated one hour sexual harassment prevention training course set forth by the RRPAO.

Failure to complete this mandatory training will result in disciplinary actions. All employees will be notified of changes or updates to the sexual harassment prevention policy of this office.

The RRPAO will compile an annual report by February 1st of each year containing information from the previous calendar year regarding the Agency's compliance with the requirements of RS 42:341-344. This report will include the number and percentage of public servants in the agency who have completed the training requirements, the number of complaints which resulted in a finding that sexual harassment occurred, the number of complaints in which the finding of sexual harassment resulted in discipline or corrective action, and the amount of time it took to resolve each complaint. This report will be public record and available to the public in the manner provided by the Public Records Law.

This policy establishes a procedure to report and address complaints of sexually inappropriate behavior. This policy is intended to supplement rather than replace or supersede the private and/or statutory procedures regarding sexually inappropriate workplace behavior available to employees under state and federal law, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and LA RS 23:311 et seq. Employees should be aware that there are certain procedures and time delays, including the filing of a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or the Louisiana Commission on Human Rights (LCHR), which must be satisfied prior to initiating civil litigation regarding inappropriate workplace sexual behavior. An employee has the right to contact the local Equal Employment Opportunity Commission – New Orleans District Office at 500 Poydras St., Suite 800, New Orleans, Louisiana. Phone 1-800-669-4000 or Louisiana Commission of Human Rights at 1001 N 23rd St., Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Phone: 1-225-342-6969 to file a complaint.