

Equal employment opportunity in apprenticeship resource

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) conducts program reviews to assess the overall condition of a sponsor's program and compliance with registered standards and the relevant regulations at 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [part 29](#) and [part 30](#), and Minnesota Statute [§178](#).

This document is intended to assist programs in understanding equal employment opportunity, and in creating an equal opportunity pledge.

What is equal employment opportunity (EEO)?

This federal and state requirement is designed to make sure that all applicants and apprentices have an equal chance to participate in registered apprenticeship programs. That means you cannot discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), genetic information, or disability.

What are the EEO requirements for my RAP?

Discrimination prohibited

RAPs are required to ensure EEO for all applicants and apprentices. That means your program must be free from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age (40 or older), genetic information, or disability.

This applies to every part of your apprenticeship program, including:

- Recruitment, outreach, and selection processes
- Hiring, placement, and opportunities for advancement or promotion
- Work process rotations throughout the program
- Disciplinary actions, penalties, or demotions
- Pay and compensation, including raises or other forms of payment
- Working conditions and environment
- Hours of work and training provided
- Job assignments and duties
- Access to leave (sick leave, personal leave, etc.)
- Any other benefit or term related to participation in the apprenticeship program

In short, every decision or condition related to your apprenticeship must be handled fairly and consistently, without bias or discrimination. Sponsors must also take affirmative steps to promote diversity and equal access throughout their programs. For additional information on affirmative action plans, see the [Affirmative Action Plan Development](#) Resource.

Assignment of responsibility

One of the key steps is to designate a specific person—or team—with the authority and responsibility to oversee your commitment to EEO and carry out your affirmative action plan.

This individual must be given the time, tools, and authority to do their job effectively. Their key responsibilities include:

- Monitoring all aspects of your apprenticeship program to make sure it follows nondiscrimination laws and your affirmative action plan
- Keeping accurate records related to your program—such as applications, who applied, any complaints, demographic data, and your program standards
- Preparing and submitting reports to DLI, as required

The intent is to assign clear responsibility for EEO in your program and making sure that person has the support they need to help your program stay compliant, inclusive, and effective.

Internal dissemination

You are required to clearly communicate your commitment to EEO and affirmative action to everyone involved in your program—this includes applicants, current apprentices, and anyone who helps run or support the program.

This means you must:

- Publish your Equal Employment Opportunity pledge in key places like your apprenticeship standards, employee handbook, policy manuals, or company newsletters—anywhere it will be seen and understood by participants and staff.
- Post the EEO pledge in visible locations, such as physical bulletin boards or digital platforms like your intranet, so it's easily accessible to apprentices and applicants.
- Provide regular training and information sessions—during orientation and on a recurring basis—to make sure everyone involved in the program knows about your equal opportunity and affirmative action responsibilities.
- Keep detailed records that show you are meeting these requirements and be prepared to share them with DLI if requested.

Additionally, everyone who plays a role in administering or operating the program must actively support these efforts. They are expected to take necessary actions that help fulfill your nondiscrimination and affirmative action obligations.

Universal outreach and recruitment

You are responsible for implementing measures to ensure outreach and recruitment efforts extend to all persons available for apprenticeship within their recruitment area. This includes:

- Develop a list of [recruitment sources](#) that will create referrals from all demographics within the recruitment area.

- Identify a contact person and contact information for each recruitment source.
- Provide recruitment sources advance notice (30 days preferred) of apprenticeship openings and include EEO pledge

Maintaining programs free from harassment, intimidation, and retaliation

You are responsible for creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all apprentices. This means you must take active steps to prevent harassment, intimidation, and retaliation based on protected characteristics like race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age (40+), genetic information, or disability.

To meet this requirement, your program must:

- Provide anti-harassment training to everyone involved in the apprenticeship program. The training must:
 - Include active participation from attendees (not just passive watching or reading)
 - Clearly state that harassment is not tolerated
 - Define what harassment is, especially as it relates to legally protected groups
 - Explain the right to file a complaint and how to do so
- Make all facilities and activities inclusive and accessible, without discrimination. If your program provides restrooms or changing areas, they must offer privacy options, such as single-user restrooms or separate facilities for different sexes.
- Set up and follow a clear process for apprentices or staff to submit and resolve harassment or intimidation complaints quickly, fairly, and confidentially.

Your goal is to ensure apprentices not only have equal access to opportunities, but also feel safe, welcomed, and supported throughout their training.

What is an Equal Employment Opportunity pledge?

An EEO pledge is a formal statement that a RAP includes in its Standards of Apprenticeship and in apprenticeship opportunity announcements. It affirms the program's commitment to not discriminate against applicants or apprentices based on protected classes, listed above.

The pledge also confirms that the sponsor will take affirmative action to ensure equal opportunity in apprenticeship and will follow the regulations outlined in Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 30.

What is the exact language I need to include in my EEO pledge?

Your RAP's Standards of Apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunity announcements EEO pledge must include the following:

[Name of RAP] will not discriminate against apprenticeship applicants or apprentices based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, genetic information, or because they are an individual with a disability or a person 40 years old or older. [Name of sponsor] will take affirmative action to provide equal opportunity in apprenticeship and will operate the

apprenticeship program as required under [Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#), part 30.

Sponsors may choose to include additional protections based on state or local laws, but they cannot remove or exclude any of the federally protected categories listed above.

What do I need to know about the complaint process for EEO?

As a sponsor, you are required to inform all applicants and apprentices of their right to file a complaint if they believe they have experienced discrimination or retaliation based on a protected class (listed above) within your program.

Who can file a complaint?

Any individual whether an applicant, apprentice, or someone connected to the program—who believes they have been discriminated against based on a protected identity (listed above) has the right to file a complaint. Complaints should be submitted within 300 days; however, DLI may grant an extension if deemed appropriate.

What information is needed to submit a complaint?

Written complaints must include the following information:

- The complainant's contact information
- The name and contact info of the person or organization accused of discrimination
- A description of what happened, when, and why the complainant believes it was discriminatory
- The complainant's signature (or their representative's)

How do I communicate the complaint process?

You must give a written notice to every applicant and apprentice informing them of their right to file a discrimination complaint, how to file a complaint, and DLI's contact information. The notice must be included in all application materials and be posted in visible, public location where all apprentices can easily see it.

Is there specific language I should use?

Yes, the notice must contain the exact wording required by the regulations, starting with the heading "Your Right to Equal Opportunity" and outlining your legal obligation to provide EEO, the right to file a complaint within 300 days, the process for submission, and the contact information for DLI and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and your State Fair Employment Practices Agency (FEPA) (if applicable), using the official poster contact information.

You can find a template with the exact language required [here](#).

What is the DLI contact information I should provide?

You need to include the below contact information for DLI as the registration agency:

Department of Labor and Industry
443 Lafayette Rd
St. Paul, MN 55431
dli.apprenticeship@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-284-5090
Erin.Larsen@state.mn.us

What if I still need assistance or have additional questions?

Reach out to Vicky Castorena at Vicky.Castorena@state.mn.us to schedule a technical assistance meeting. Vicky can address your questions via email, or schedule time to discuss your specific RAP's questions regarding EEO requirements or complaint process.