

Affirmative Employment Program

Federal agencies must position themselves to continually attract, develop, and retain a top-quality workforce that can deliver results to meet the complex needs of the nation and ensure its continued growth and prosperity. Equal Employment Opportunity in the federal workplace is key to accomplishing this goal.

A top-quality workforce flourishes in an environment in which all workers' talents - without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or genetic information - are fully utilized. Federal agencies must promote workplace practices that free up opportunities for the best and brightest talent available. All workers must be able to compete on a fair and level playing field and have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential.

Title VII and Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act mandate that all federal personnel decisions be made free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, reprisal or disability and also require that agencies establish a program of equal employment opportunity for all federal employees and job applicants (42 USC. §2000e-16 and 29 USC. §791).

Management Directive 715 provides policy guidance and standards for establishing and maintaining effective affirmative programs of equal employment opportunity under Section 717 of Title VII (PART A) and effective affirmative action programs under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act (PART B).

Management Directive 715 requires agencies to take appropriate steps to ensure that all employment decisions are free from discrimination. It also sets forth the standards by which EEOC will review the sufficiency of agency Title VII and Rehabilitation Act programs, which include periodic agency self-assessments and the removal of barriers to free and open workplace competition.

Each manager, supervisor and EEO official will be held accountable for the effective implementation and management of the EEO program based on the six essential elements:

Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program

- Demonstrated commitment from agency leadership;
- Integration of EEO into the agency's strategic mission;
- Management and program accountability;
- Proactive prevention of unlawful discrimination;
- Efficiency; and
- Responsiveness and legal compliance.

Affirmative Employment Programs also include Special Emphasis Programs.