Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Information

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action towards its achievement is the policy of all departments and units of RI state government - it should be your goal as well.

Important laws on discrimination include:

- **Equal Pay Act of 1963**
  - Prohibits sex discrimination in payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work in the same establishment.

- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**
  - Prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

- **Age Discrimination Act of 1967**
  - Prohibits discrimination based on age in employment for employees 40 years old and older.

- **Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1973**
  - Prohibits discrimination in employment based on pregnancy and related conditions.

- **Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974**
  - Prohibits discrimination based on Vietnam-era veteran status or special disabled veteran status in federally assisted programs and requires affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified special disabled veterans.

- **Title I and V of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990**
  - Prohibits employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector and in state and local governments.

- **Civil Rights Act of 1991**
  - Provides monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.

**Discriminatory Practices Include:**

- Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age;
- Retaliation against an individual for filing a charge of discrimination, participating in an investigation, or opposing discriminatory practices;
- Employment decisions based on assumptions about the abilities, traits, or performance of individuals of a certain sex, race, age, religion, or ethnic group, or individuals with disabilities;

**Whistleblowers’ Protection Act**

An employer shall not discharge, suspend, demote or discriminate against an employee who reports a violation of a law/regulation; or because an employee is requested to participate in an investigation; or because an employee refuses to violate a law. For more information, visit www.whistleblowers.org.

**Develop your own Affirmative Action Plan**

Brainstorm with staff and put in writing your efforts to combat workplace discrimination. For more information visit the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at www.eeoc.gov.

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**Questions you should ask...**

- Are you authorized to work in the United States?
- Are you over the age of 18?
- What schools did you attend?
- Would you be willing to relocate?
- Are you willing to travel as needed?
- Will you be able to work overtime if necessary?
- Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? Can you demonstrate how you would perform this job?
- Have you ever been convicted of the following crime?
- Have you ever been hospitalized?
- Are you over the age of 18?
- What schools did you attend?
- Have you ever been hospitalized?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Do you have any disabilities? Please complete this medical history.
- Have you ever been hospitalized?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- Are you over the age of 18?
- What schools did you attend?
- Have you ever been hospitalized?
- Have you ever been arrested?
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- What schools did you attend?
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Treat employees with respect and dignity
Above all, show them they are important and let them know they make a difference.

Offer nonmonetary incentives to increase productivity
Salary increases are costly, but dress-down days, flex-time and an occasional free lunch are not, and they can give your staff an additional boost for better productivity.

Reward employee creativity; Encourage new ideas; Give Credit
Comment on your employees' work well-done; use their good ideas; give them the credit when their ideas turn into success for the company; if possible, offer rewards and bonuses.

Conduct Employee Reviews on a regular basis...Let them review you as well
This is a great way to open the door of communication between you and your employees. Let them know how they are doing, and how they can do better. Show them how their work is affecting your business. Give them the opportunity to speak freely about their jobs.

Set obtainable goals for your employees
Grant your employees the input to determine how they will reach specific goals; make sure that goals set are actually achievable. Offer rewards for goals reached early.

Offer competitive salaries; Compare local occupational wages
Are you paying your employees as much as a company in the next town? Paying decent salaries often reduces costly employee turnover. Not sure how much to pay for certain positions? Check local wage data for occupations on LaborMarket Information’s web site at www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/oes.htm.

Avoid rigid company rules, policy and regulation
Nothing de-motivates like a multitude of rules and guidelines that employees feel forced to follow......your workers will spend many hours per week at their desks; make them feel as comfortable as possible; make them feel “at home.”

Act upon and correct negative performance; Don’t overlook it
Hard working employees will also see negative performance. If it’s allowed, your dedicated staff will feel over-worked and under appreciated.

Promote Job Ownership
Job Ownership boosts employee responsibility and motivation. Employees feel responsible for their workloads and feel proud of their efforts.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate, and Communicate!!!
Let your employees know what is expected. Spell out for them as easily as you can; point them in the right direction; you can’t receive what you don’t ask for;...and above all, be a good LISTENER.

Legal Holidays in Rhode Island:
- New Year’s Day, Jan 1st
- Memorial Day, last Monday in May
- Independence Day, July 4th
- Victory Day, second Monday in August
- Labor Day, first Monday in September
- Columbus Day, second Monday in October
- Veterans’ Day, November 11th
- Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day, December 25th

Employer Service Unit......assistance for all your business needs
Phone: (888) 615-JOBS (5627), Fax: (401) 462-8722 www.dlt.ri.gov/esu

Labor Standards......where the business laws can be found
General labor laws, child labor and required forms, holidays, and minimum wage Phone: (401) 462-8550, Fax: (401) 462-8530 www.dlt.ri.gov/l

Labor Market Information.....your source for statistics on RI’s Economy
You can find data on occupational wages, industry projections, tax credit info., posters and more Phone: (401) 462-8740, Fax: (401) 462-8766 www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi

RI COBRA Law affects employers with two or more employees
You must grant former employees the option of paying their health care coverage for up to 18 months. www.rillon.state.ri.us/Statutes/title27/27-19.1/27-19.1-1.htm

RI Unemployment Insurance and Temporary Disability Insurance
Quick Reference Information........http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/news.htm

Tax Credits and Grants
There are numerous opportunities available to RI businesses today. Talk to an Employer Service Rep. to learn more. Phone: (888) 615-JOBS (5627), Fax: (401) 462-8722, www.dlt.ri.gov/esu/taxcredits.htm

Workers’ Compensation
Employees injured while on the job may be entitled to collect Workers’ Compensation Phone: (401) 462-8100, Fax: (401) 462-8105, www.dlt.ri.gov/wc

Workshare Program in Rhode Island
An alternative to layoffs in times of economic hardship; allows employers to reduce staff hours and retain valuable employees. Phone: (401) 243-9177, www.dlt.state.ri.us/ui/W5.htm

Rapid Response Services
Before a layoff occurs, a team of specialists will meet with employees to ease their fears, assist with mass filing of Unemployment Insurance claims and inform workers of their options. Phone: (401) 462-8811, www.dlt.state.ri.us/ui/rapidresponse.htm

As of January 1st, 2007, Rhode Island’s Minimum wage is $7.45 per hour
For more information on minimum wage, visit www.dlt.ri.gov/is/minimumwagem.htm