



Commission on Human Rights

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NYC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LAUNCHES FREE, ONLINE ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES CITYWIDE

Pursuant to the Stop Sexual Harassment Act signed by Mayor de Blasio in 2018, anti-sexual harassment training will be mandatory for nearly every employee in New York City beginning April 1st

The training, developed by the Commission, will be available immediately in Spanish and English, with 9 additional languages to follow, interactive, optimized for mobile devices, and fully accessible for people who are blind, deaf, low-vision, and low-hearing

NEW YORK – The New York City Commission on Human Rights launched today a first-of-its-kind anti-sexual harassment training which can be used by NYC employers to meet the new mandatory training requirement beginning April 1, 2019. The training, created by the Commission with input from employers and workers, is available in English and Spanish (with 9 additional languages rolling out this spring), fully interactive and optimized for mobile devices. The training is adherent to the Mayor’s Office of People with Disabilities’ accessibility standards, providing the highest level of equivalent experience possible for all users. Additionally, the training was developed in coordination with the New York State Division of Human Rights and Department of Law to ensure that it meets state training requirements; accordingly, NYC employers may use this training to meet both State and City anti-sexual harassment training requirements.

“Combating gender-based harassment has been a Commission priority since I began my tenure in 2015. From wide-ranging and thorough investigations, to comprehensive settlement agreements to make victims whole, to issuing the Commission’s highest ever civil penalty in a sexual harassment case, we are demonstrating that the Commission is using every tool at our disposal to combat sexual harassment. This new, groundbreaking training is another, complementary step the Commission is taking to shift workplace culture and expectations,” says **Commissioner and Chair of the New York City Commission on Human Rights Carmelyn P. Malalis**. “Public awareness and enforcement are both critical, but education and outreach are also fundamental to this work. The Commission will continue its work to make sexual harassment a thing of the past. This training provides the tools and knowledge necessary to identify and report sexual harassment and those who perpetrate it.”

The training uses a story-based learning model, features scenarios drawn from real cases, and highlights the ways in which sexual harassment commonly intersects with other protected categories, including race, immigration status, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and pregnancy and lactation. It educates the user on the Commission’s encompassing definition of gender, which includes gender identity and gender expression, and of its broad and protective sexual harassment standard. It also provides tools and strategies for bystanders to disrupt patterns of sexual harassment.

The impetus behind the creation of a robust, interactive training stems from the Commission’s landmark 2017 sexual harassment hearing, at the height of the #MeToo movement, at which former Commissioner and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton spoke and multiple city agencies, advocates, and workers

from a vast cross-section of industries testified about sexual harassment in the workplace. The package of bills known as the Stop Sexual Harassment Act, signed into law in 2018, increased the statute of limitations for reporting sexual harassment from one to three years, expanded jurisdiction to employers with one or more employees, and requires any employer with 15 or more employees to conduct annual anti-sexual harassment training for its staff. The Stop Sexual Harassment Act training will be easily accessible online for free as part of this mandate.

As part of outreach ahead of the training, The Commission is ensuring large and small business owners alike are aware of these requirements, working with Business Improvements Districts, business associations, and Chambers of Commerce to maximize outreach. This spring, mailers in English and Spanish will be sent to upward of 275,000 small businesses across the City with information on how to access the training. Additionally, the Commission is running a digital ad campaign on LinkedIn, Google and Facebook.

New York City is home to one of the strongest anti-discrimination laws in the nation, the NYC Human Rights Law, which is interpreted more broadly than federal law with respect to sexual harassment. Federal and New York State courts have required that sexual harassment be “severe or pervasive,” to be unlawful, whereas the NYC Human Rights Law standard simply requires that an individual establish that they were treated less well because of their gender. Additionally, victims of sexual harassment in New York City may file claims at the Commission even when they are bound by arbitration agreements that prevent them from filing cases in court. An award-winning citywide integrated multimedia and multiplatform campaign called “It’s Sexual Harassment” ran city-wide in 2018 to increase public awareness of the Commission as a venue for justice. In early 2019 the Commission testified before State senators and assembly members as to the City of New York’s interpretation of the law and offered recommendations as to how the State may increase protections for victims of workplace sexual harassment.

The Commission has the authority to fine violators civil penalties of up to \$250,000 for willful, wanton, or malicious violations of the Law and can award unlimited compensatory damages to victims, including emotional distress damages and other benefits. A landmark Commission ruling in a sexual harassment case was recently upheld in New York State Supreme Court, confirming the Commission’s Chair’s decision to levy \$250,000 in civil penalties (the highest penalty in Commission history) against the owner of a company who engaged in sustained pattern of egregious sexually harassment over a three-year period. The Commission also awarded the victim of \$422,670 in front and back pay and emotional distress.

If you believe you are the victim of sexual harassment or any other type of discrimination under the NYC Human Rights Law, call the Commission’s Infoline at [718-722-3131](tel:718-722-3131). Reports may also be filed anonymously and reported on the [Commission’s website](#).

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“I am excited that the City of New York and the Commission on Human Rights are leading the way in the movement against endemic sexual harassment in our society,” said **State Senator Julia Salazar**. “We need a comprehensive strategy to fight patriarchal control over our institutions and mandatory sexual harassment training is a good first step.”

“Every worker has a right to a safe working environment,” said **Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Lorelei Salas**. “This fight against sexual harassment in the workplace begins with education and awareness, and I commend the City’s Commission on Human Rights for their efforts in creating this new training. With more workers learning how to identify and report harassment, we are moving closer to making sexual harassment in the workplace a thing of the past.”

“Under Mayor de Blasio’s leadership, the City is prioritizing the well-being of all New Yorkers in the workplace and creating a more inclusive local economy,” said **Gregg Bishop, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services**. “The Department of Small Business Services is proud to be a partner in the effort to educate businesses about the expanded harassment laws signed into law by the Mayor last year and being enforced by the NYC Human Rights Commission.”

"With this new comprehensive, interactive sexual harassment training, the Commission on Human Rights is leading the way in helping combat sexual harassment in the workplace," said **Dina Bakst, Co-Founder and Co-President of A Better Balance**. "Not only will workers and employers benefit from this new tool, but this training will also serve as a model for cities and state across the country. We are proud to work closely with the Commission to ensure New York City's human rights law remains not only the strongest in the country on paper, but also in practice."

“This training on Sexual Harassment comes at a time when domestic workers are speaking up about their experiences of #MeToo working in people’s homes behind closed doors and in isolation. We are so pleased to see a training that speaks to ALL workers because working in a place free from harassment is a right for ALL.” Says **Marrisa Senteno Enforcement Program Manager for the National Domestic Workers Alliance**. “New York City’s Commission on Human Rights has shown leadership in ensuring that all workers, especially the most vulnerable such as domestic workers, have the safety and dignity they deserve. With this training domestic workers will have added tools to understand when their rights have been violated and to whom they can turn to if they have been harassed. At NDWA we look forward to partnering with CCHR to roll out this training during April’s Sexual Harassment Awareness month as part of our month long series of events for education and outreach to domestic workers.”

“This online educational tool equips supervisors and employees with important information on workplace rights, frameworks for understanding the complexities and impact when employee rights are denied, including strategies for understanding the roles, responsibilities, and resources that exist inside and outside the organizational contexts in which harassment occurs,” says **KC Wagner, Chair of the Worker Institute’s Equity at Work Initiative**. Evaluating the impact of trainings and other interventions is important to the Worker Institute and this tool allows for group dialogue and discussion plus the possibility to follow up with surveys and other evaluatory instruments that can help adapt this tool to a broader set of forums and issue areas.”

NYCCHR's sexual harassment training is a thoughtful, important aid in creating a harassment-free workplace. NYCCHR successfully crafted a victim-focused training by centering the voices of survivors through the use of real-life examples. By also including important information for vulnerable populations, and highlighting the role of bystanders and allies, NYCCHR is leading the way for a #harassmentfreeNYC. – **Sexual Harassment Working Group**