



Community Services Foundation, Inc.

doing business as

The Imperial Court of Buffalo

HARASSMENT-FREE POLICY

This Imperial Court of Buffalo is committed to being an organization free of all forms of harassment; including sexual, racial, and gender harassment. It is the policy to regard any unlawful harassment of members or volunteers as a very serious matter. Unlawful harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, in the organization by any person is strictly prohibited.

DEFINITIONS

A. "Unlawful Sexual Harassment" includes: Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

1. Such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's membership, or
2. Rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for membership decisions affecting such individual, or
3. Such conduct is severe or pervasive and has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's volunteer performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or abusive environment.
4. Conduct which falls within the definition of unlawful sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Unwelcomed physical contact of a sexual nature such as patting, pinching or unnecessary touching.
 - b. Overt or implied threats against an individual to induce them to perform sexual favors or engage in unwelcomed sexual relationships.
 - c. Verbal harassment or abuse of a sexual nature, including intimating by way of suggestion a desire for sexual relations or the making of jokes or remarks of a sexual nature to or in the presence of an individual who finds them offensive.
 - d. Use of sexually suggestive terms or gestures to describe an individual's body, clothing or sexual activities.
 - e. Displaying, printing, or transmitting offensive sexually suggestive pictures or materials in the organization.

B. "Racial Harassment" is unwelcome behavior that happens to an individual because of their race, such as verbal or physical conduct of a racial nature. Harassment can include, racial slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks about a person's race or color, or the display of racially offensive symbols. Although the law doesn't prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive environment within the organization or when it results in an adverse decision of the organization.

1. Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name-calling.
 - b. Physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs.
 - c. Offensive objects or pictures.
 - d. Interference with performance within the organization.



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C. “Gender Harassment” or gender-based harassment occurs when a person harasses another based on their gender or gender identity. The harassment does not need to be based on anything of a sexual nature. Instead, gender harassment usually involves stereotypes based on the roles and functions associated with a particular gender.

1. Conduct which falls within the definition of gender harassment may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Inappropriate displays of material that degrades a particular gender, such as a comic or other type of visual.
 - b. Comments or remarks that are gender degrading, such as inappropriate jokes or stories (especially if they are directed at a particular person or group of persons).
 - c. Insults or derogatory actions directed towards a person based on their gender.
 - d. Actual physical contact, assault, or interference with the person due to gender issues.

D. All types of actions and/or remarks that continue after the person has requested them to stop, or has indicated that they are offensive, are considered forms of harassment.

E. This policy is not intended to create needless intrusions on the freedom of speech or expression of the membership, or to regulate the membership’s personal morality. It is intended to prevent any unlawful harassment in the organization.

F. This policy shall be included in the Imperial Court of Buffalo’s Policies and Procedures Manual. Members shall read this policy and familiarize themselves with it. Upon acceptance of membership application, each member shall sign an acknowledgment of having received, reviewed and understood this policy. The Board of Directors shall keep these acknowledgment forms on file.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A. Anyone who believes that they have been subjected to any form of unlawful harassment in the organization is expected and has a responsibility to report the matter. Any complaints of unlawful harassment should be made to the Board President. A member need not contact anyone that they believe to be an involved party. All complaints of unlawful harassment should be made within 30 days of the alleged harassment. Thereafter, a formal complaint form must be completed and signed by the complainant. Any Board of Directors Member who becomes aware of an alleged incident of unlawful harassment must report it to the President.

1. If the matter involves the President, the complaint should be made directly to an Executive Officer of the Board of Directors who shall serve as the Alternate for investigating the complaint.



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B. The President or Alternate shall immediately record any complaint they receive on a complaint form regardless of the manner in which the complaint is received, indicating the date, persons involved, and a brief statement of the complaint. The complainant shall sign the complaint form. They shall give a copy of the complaint to the alleged offender. All complaints shall be confidential to the extent possible.

C. The President or Alternate shall conduct an investigation within 10 days of receiving the complaint. The investigation shall include an interview with the complainant, the alleged offender, and any other persons who have knowledge of the subject of the complaint. The President or Alternate shall confer with the Executive Board, within 30 days of receiving the complaint; they shall make written findings and a written determination.

D. If the President or Alternate, along with the Executive Board, finds that the complaint is unsubstantiated, the complainant and the alleged offender shall be advised of the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Directors. The appeal must be made within 14 days of receipt of notice to the complainant. The notice for an appeal should be sent to the official Imperial Court of Buffalo corporate mailing address, sent to the attention of the President or Alternate.

E. Should the President or Alternate, along with the Executive Board, find that there is a basis for the complaint, they shall take the appropriate remedial action, including but not limited to suspension or termination of membership. They shall advise the complainant and the alleged offender of the decision. They shall also advise the complainant of the remedial action taken against the alleged offender, as well as the right of the complainant to appeal to the Board if they are not satisfied with the decision and/or the remedial action taken. Any appeal shall be filed with the Board Secretary with a copy to the President or Alternate, within 14 days of notice to the complainant of the Executive Board's decision. The notice of appeal shall contain a statement of the grounds relied upon by the complainant.

F. The Imperial Court of Buffalo encourages and expects members and volunteers to immediately report any incidents of perceived unlawful harassment and to cooperate with any investigation of a complaint of unlawful harassment. The Imperial Court of Buffalo strictly prohibits any retaliation against any members or volunteers for filing a complaint of perceived unlawful harassment or participating in the investigation of such complaint.



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HARASSMENT-FREE POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As a member in good standing of the Imperial Court of Buffalo:

1. I have been supplied a copy of the Imperial Court of Buffalo Harassment-Free Policy
2. I have been made aware that an electronic copy of this policy is available on the Imperial Court of Buffalo web site.
3. I have read and understand the Imperial Court of Buffalo Harassment-Free Policy.

Legal Name: _____
(Please print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE NOTE:

All members of the Imperial Court of Buffalo must have a signed copy of this Acknowledgement Form on file with the Board of Directors.

The signed form may be turned in at the General Membership Meeting, Meeting of the Board of Directors, or sent by USPS to the court mailing address below. An electronic scan of the signed form may also be submitted via email to the Board Secretary at: secretary@imperialcourtofbuffalo.com