

Services offered by the EOC

THE EQUAL Opportunity Commission (EOC) offers a range of services to organisations, communities and members of the public to empower them to exercise their right to equality of treatment, or to enable them to make more informed decisions. These services are accessible and free of charge up until the stage of conciliation.

Complaints and conciliation

If any person, who is legally in the jurisdiction, has been discriminated against based on any of the following seven status grounds, they can lodge a complaint at the EOC: sex, marital status, origin (including geographic origin), disability, religion, race and ethnicity. The Equal Opportunity Act specifies that a person must be discriminated against under the categories of employment, education, provision of goods and services and provision of accommodation.

The EOC takes all complaints seriously and investigates every complaint that is lodged at its office. After investigating the complaint, the EOC can offer conciliation to the complainant and the re-



spondent. Conciliation is an alternative dispute resolution procedure and encourages all parties to co-operate to settle the complaint and find a resolution in a timely manner.

Legal advice

Though not mandated by the act to offer advice, the EOC recognises that some people may be hesitant to lodge a complaint if they are unsure they have a rightful claim. The Legal Services Unit of the EOC facilitates these requests for guidance and point the prospective claimant in the right direction.

Public education

Virtual public education sessions to organisations: Employment continues to be the category that the EOC receives the most complaints. Public education sessions with organisations seek to proactively promote inclusivity in the workplace. Organisations and NGOs request these sessions when they are

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creating HR policies such as sexual harassment and accommodating people with disabilities.

The public education sessions are delivered virtually; a resulting measure of the covid19 pandemic.

Appearances on webinars/panels: As the leading state advocate on discrimination, EOC representatives appear on various platforms to speak to the subject matter. For instance, recently, the EOC appeared on a webinar entitled “Vaccine Status and Worker Discrimination” to discuss

mandatory vaccinations and avoiding stigmatisation.

Partnerships: The EOC is committed to partnering with organisations, NGOs and various communities to understand their plight and get to the source of the issues that they face.

The EOC partners and supports these programmes by contributing human resource expertise and magnifying their calls for justice. For instance, in August, the EOC partnered with the TT Football Association to host a round-table discussion on Racism in Sports: The Hard Conversation.

Publication of guidelines

The EOC is mandated to publish appropriate guidelines for the avoidance of discrimination. To date, the EOC has published four, which the public can access on our website www.equalopportunity.gov.tt:

- Guidelines for employers: covid19
- Sexual harassment in the workplace
- Guidelines for employers on disabilities
- Guidelines for employers in Trinidad and Tobago