

Office of the Statewide EEO Coordinator **EEO Connection Newsletter**

Issue 4
October 2026 – December 2026

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Statewide EEO Coordinator's Message

Welcome to the latest edition of the EEO Connection newsletter, a quarterly publication for State of Maryland government employees. The Office of the Statewide EEO Coordinator's team appreciates your readership and support. As we begin the fourth quarter of 2026, we're excited to share some news and updates.

First, thank you to the statewide EEO community for submitting your FY 2026 EEO program data on time. As many of you know, the OSEEOC team develops the Annual Statewide EEO Report, which is legislatively mandated for publication no later than January 1 each year. Thanks to your timely submissions, the OSEEOC team has begun working on this time sensitive project.

Second, OSEEOC will host professional development trainings and meetings in October and November. Registration information is on pages 11-12. In addition, we will send meeting invitations directly to ADA Coordinators for the November quarterly meeting. Therefore, please accept the invitation if you plan to attend.

Third, as you continue working toward your goals over the next three months, I encourage you to take time to reflect on the progress you have made this year. Too often, we focus so intently on what comes next that we overlook what we have already accomplished. Taking time to reflect on our achievements provides valuable insight into what worked well, what we learned, and what we may need moving forward. I encourage you to make reflection a deliberate part of this process, as it will help inform both the development of your agency's annual EEO plans and the goals you set for your own professional growth.

With that said, turn to page 4 and read about the EEOC's proposal to rescind annual race and sex reporting requirements. On page 5, read about how the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights joins States urging EEOC to preserve workforce demographic reporting. On page 6, read about how the EEOC sued MedStar Health, Inc. and MedStar Southern Maryland Health Center for Disability Discrimination. On pages 7-9, read about more noteworthy rulings. That's not all: turn the page to read more.

Nicole Webb, MBA, SHRM-CP
Statewide EEO Coordinator

Office of the Statewide EEO Coordinator

Mission

- Administer and enforce state equal employment opportunity laws and policies.
- Promote a work environment free of any unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.
- Assist in building a well-diversified workforce for Maryland State Government employees and job applicants.

Ask the OSEEOC Team

Q: Can non-Maryland state government employees register for and attend trainings and meetings hosted by the OSEEOC?

OSEEOC Answer: The OSEEOC host trainings, meetings and events specifically for Maryland state government employees only. Additionally, employees of the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, St. Mary's College of Maryland and Baltimore City Community College are also eligible to attend.

Q: What is the retention schedule for EEO case files?

OSEEOC Answer: The Maryland State Archives Records Management Guidance maintains the retention schedule which can be found at [Maryland State Archives Records Management Guidance](#)

Q: After the OSEEOC concludes an EEO appeal, can the appeal records be shared with the responding agency?

OSEEOC Answer: No. The OSEEOC must comply with SPP 5-214 Confidentiality, which states “Information obtained as part of an investigation conducted under this subtitle is confidential within the meaning of Title 4 of the General Provisions Article”.

EEO Spotlight 1

EEOC Proposes Rescission of Annual Race and Sex Reporting Requirements

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) voted to issue a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(NPRM\)](#) to rescind the requirement for employers and other covered entities to file an annual report with the EEOC summarizing aggregate data on their employees' race and sex (reports known respectively as the EEO-1, EEO-2, EEO-3, EEO-4, EEO-5, and EEO-6 reports or EEO Data Reports), and the recordkeeping requirements related to these reports.

The EEOC's regulations currently require all organizations covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act — including over two million employers — to file these annual reports, regardless of whether or not an employer or other covered organization has ever been accused of a Title VII violation via a charge of discrimination filed with the EEOC. According to agency estimates, the EEOC's current data collection requirement imposes costs of almost \$275 million on employers every year, as well as almost \$4 million of costs on the EEOC to administer this data collection.

In the NPRM, the Commission determined that the EEO Data Reports are inconsistent with equal employment opportunity law, may raise constitutional concerns, and collect data that is not narrowly tailored or necessary to enforce anti-discrimination statutes. Under Title VII, the EEOC is not required to impose these reporting obligations and may eliminate them when they are inconsistent with the law, not useful, or counter to enforcement priorities. The NPRM concludes that any limited value of the reports is outweighed by the significant burdens they impose on employers and on the Commission — particularly because employers must submit them annually without any specific indication of a potential violation.

Read more at: <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-proposes-rescission-annual-race-and-sex-reporting-requirements>

EEO Spotlight 2

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Joins States Urging EEOC to Preserve Workforce Demographic Reporting

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “the Commission”) joined civil rights enforcement agencies, including the District of Columbia’s, provided a joint comment urging the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) to preserve longstanding federal workforce demographic reporting requirements that help agencies identify and address employment discrimination.

In joint comments submitted August 24, 2026, in response to [EEOC Docket No. EEOC-2026-0034](#), the agencies opposed the proposed rescission of Equal Employment Opportunity workforce demographic reporting requirements, including [the EEO-1 report](#).

For six decades, EEO workforce data has provided federal, state, and local civil rights agencies, employers, policymakers, and the public with information about patterns of representation across industries, regions, and occupations. The data does not identify individual employees, but can help reveal broader disparities and inform enforcement, education, outreach, and policy decisions.

“We should never confuse the absence of data with the absence of discrimination,” said **Cleveland L. Horton II, Executive Director of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights**. “If we choose not to measure inequity, inequity does not disappear—it simply becomes easier to deny. Civil rights enforcement requires us to be willing to see what is uncomfortable, confront what is unequal, and act when the evidence demands it. Progress has never been achieved by looking away.”

Read more at: <https://mccr.maryland.gov/about-mccr/news-updates/maryland-commission-civil-rights-joins-states-urging-eeoc-preserve-workforce-demographic-reporting>

Noteworthy Ruling 1

EEOC Sues MedStar Health, Inc. and MedStar Southern Maryland Health Center for Disability Discrimination

MedStar Health, Inc., a healthcare network in Maryland, and member hospital MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center in Clinton, Maryland, violated federal law by failing to hire an applicant with a disability and conducting an unlawful post-offer medical examination, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, in March 2024, MedStar extended a job offer to an applicant in an admitting registrar position, and the applicant accepted the job offer. MedStar then subjected the applicant to medical examinations and inquiries, including requiring him to undergo an occupational health evaluation, respond to medical inquiries, and otherwise comply with medical examination and inquiry requirements.

After discovering that the applicant is disabled, MedStar used results of the medical examinations and inquiries to discriminate against the applicant in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including denying him medical clearance to work and demanding that he stop receiving intravenous treatment for his disability. MedStar denied him reasonable accommodations, revoked the job offer, and refused to hire him, the EEOC said.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits employers from making hiring decisions based on stereotypes or fears of a disability," **said Debra M. Lawrence, regional attorney for the EEOC's Philadelphia District.** "Where an employer chooses to require an applicant to undergo medical examinations and inquiries, and to condition employment on the results of such examinations, the employer must use information gathered during that process in accordance with the law."

Read more at: <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-medstar-health-inc-and-medstar-southern-maryland-health-center-disability>

Noteworthy Ruling 2

North American Stamping Group to Pay \$620,000 in EEOC Sex Harassment and Discrimination Suit

Several subsidiaries of North American Stamping Group (NASG), a major international manufacturer of car parts, will pay \$620,000 and permit two years of monitoring by the EEOC to settle the sex harassment and discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced.

In its suit, the EEOC alleged that since at least 2018 through 2025 NASG discriminated against more than a dozen women at the company's facilities in Portland, Tennessee by limiting promotional opportunities in certain job categories, preventing or discouraging them from participating in apprenticeship programs, and by failing to respond adequately to sexual harassment complaints, including unwanted sexual attention and demeaning and belittling sex-based remarks, all in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

“Denying employment opportunities to workers in industrial settings because of their sex is illegal, and the EEOC remains vigilant in opposing sex discrimination based on sex stereotypes and sexual harassment in the workplace,” **said Christopher Lage, acting EEOC general counsel.** “The suit was resolved without the burden and expense of taking sworn testimony from witnesses. We appreciate NASG’s efforts in working cooperatively with the EEOC to come to a resolution that we believe will not just benefit the women who experienced sex discrimination and harassment but will also improve NASG’s practices going forward.”

Read more at: <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/north-american-stamping-group-pay-620000-eeoc-sex-harassment-and-discrimination-suit>

Noteworthy Ruling 3

EEOC Sues Blue Bell Creameries for Religious Discrimination and Retaliation

Blue Bell Creameries, Inc., a Brenham, Texas-based frozen snack manufacturer and distributor with a production facility in Sylacauga, Alabama, unlawfully terminated a Jewish body shop technician soon after he requested a beard-related religious accommodation, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Blue Bell fired the employee in March 2025, less than a month after he refused to shave his beard due to his religious beliefs. The EEOC said that Blue Bell's stated reason for firing the longtime employee, a timekeeping violation, was a pretext for religious discrimination and retaliation, and claimed that other workers routinely engaged in the same conduct without repercussion. The lawsuit also said a supervisor baselessly questioned the sincerity of the worker's religious beliefs on multiple occasions.

"Religious discrimination is illegal under federal law," said Marsha Rucker, regional attorney for the EEOC's Birmingham District. "The EEOC will continue to firmly enforce federal protections for religious freedom."

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination or retaliation based on religion. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Blue Bell Creameries, LLC, Case No. 1:26-cv-01694-GMB) in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its administrative conciliation process.

Acting EEOC Birmingham District Director Linda Sales-Long said, "Employees should never be penalized for seeking accommodation of their religious beliefs and practices. The EEOC remains steadfast in ensuring that workers' religious beliefs are respected with the full dignity and protection guaranteed by Title VII."

Read more at: <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-blue-bell-creameries-religious-discrimination-and-retaliation>

Noteworthy Ruling 4

EEOC Recovers Over \$97,000 in Two Pregnancy Discrimination Charges

The San Francisco District of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) successfully conciliated two discrimination charges on behalf of pregnant women, the federal agency announced.

In one case, the agency found that a pregnant worker at Vital Systems, a Reno-based company specializing in electronic equipment, was forced to ignore her doctor's orders or face termination. Separately, another EEOC investigation showed that management at Condor Club refused to allow an employee to work her shifts at the San Francisco nightclub and bar after she disclosed her pregnancy.

In both cases, the EEOC found that the employers violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) by their treatment of the pregnant workers.

In the charge against Vital Systems, the employee alleged she was denied a reasonable accommodation and discharged because of her pregnancy. The EEOC's investigation found that, upon learning of her pregnancy, the company attempted to impose an unwanted and unnecessary accommodation on her, reassigning her to a role operating machinery which used X-ray radiation.

The day after her reassignment in August 2024, she provided a doctor's note specifying that she should not be exposed to any form of radiation. Instead of weighing the expert medical advice of her doctor and providing a reasonable accommodation such as returning the employee to her original role — thus eliminating the need for an accommodation — Vital Systems fired her on the spot, according to the EEOC's investigation.

“All I did was tell them I was pregnant,” said the former Vital Systems employee who filed the charge. “I wanted to keep working; I didn't need anything to change. I certainly didn't expect to be fired for wanting to protect my baby from unnecessary risk.”

Read more at: <https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-recovers-over-97000-two-pregnancy-discrimination-charges>

2026 Diversity Calendar

October 2026

Date	Holiday
October 12	Columbus Day

November 2026

Date	Holiday
November 3	Election Day
November 11	Veteran's Day
November 26	Thanksgiving Day
November 27	American Indian Heritage Day

December 2026

Date	Holiday
December 25	Christmas

Meetings and Trainings

October 2026

Statewide EEO Program Overview - **Virtual Session**

Date: October 19, 2026

Time: 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Click here to register: [Google docs registration link for the Statewide EEO Program Overview](#)

MD Whistleblower Law Information Session: **Virtual Session**

Date: October 20, 2026

Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Click here to register: [Google documents registration link for the Maryland Whistleblower Law Information Session](#)

The Fundamentals of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA), Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act, State Disability Laws and Policies, and the Reasonable Accommodations Process – **Virtual Session**

Date: October 21, 2026

Time: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Click here to register: [Google documents registration link for the Fundamentals of the Americans with Disabilities, Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act, State Disability Laws and Policies, and the Reasonable Accommodation Process](#)

Reasonable Accommodation Requests and the Interactive Process – A Hands-on Approach: **Virtual Session**

Date: October 28, 2026

Time: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

Click here to register: [Google documents registration link for the Reasonable Accommodation Requests and the Interactive Process - A Hands on approach](#)

Meetings and Trainings

November 2026

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Train-the-Trainer – Virtual Session

Presented by: Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR)

Date: November 4, 2026, and November 5, 2026

Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm each day

Click here to register: [Google documents registration link for Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Train the Trainer session](#)

ADA Coordinators Meeting – Virtual Session

Date: November 10, 2026

Time: 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Please note: A meeting invitation will be sent to all ADA Coordinators.

Resources for EEO Professionals

Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)

dors.maryland.gov

US Department of Labor

www.dol.gov

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

www.dbm.maryland.gov/employees/Pages/EAP.aspx

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

www.eeoc.gov

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

askjan.org

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR)

mccr.maryland.gov

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

www.shrm.org

Maryland Department of Disabilities

mdod.maryland.gov

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates

outandequal.org

Chimes

chimes.org

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