



Reasonable Accommodation of Religious Observance or Practices for Applicants and Employees

Policy Statement

Each agency, department, office and facility of New York State shall follow the Statewide Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedures, and communicate its commitment to provide reasonable accommodation for employees and applicants who engage in religious observances or practices.

The State and the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) are committed to assuring equal employment opportunity for persons who engage in religious observances or practices. To this end, it is the policy of OPWDD to provide reasonable accommodations for religious observances or practices. This policy is based on the New York State Human Rights Law, the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, and all applicable Executive Orders and Memoranda. The policy applies to all employment practices and actions, and includes, but is not limited to: recruitment, the job application process, examination and testing, hiring, training, disciplinary actions, compensation, advancement, classification, transfer and reassignment, promotions, and other terms, condition or privileges of employment.

By providing reasonable accommodations of religious observances or practices OPWDD, can:

- Avoid requiring employees to forego the observance of Sabbath or holy days, in accordance with the requirements of their religious beliefs;
- Avoid requiring employees to unnecessarily compromise their observance of particular manners of dress, hairstyle, beard, or other religious practices, in accordance with the requirements of their religious beliefs; and,
- Enhance the retention and upward mobility of qualified employees without regard for their religious observances or practices.

Reasonable accommodation must be considered in all employment decisions. OPWDD may not deny any employment opportunity to a qualified employee or applicant who is religiously observant in an attempt to avoid the need to make a reasonable accommodation, unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship. This protects the right of persons to equal job opportunity regardless of religion.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kerry A. Delaney".

Kerry A. Delaney
Acting Commissioner