

CHAPTER 6. COUNSELING

6-1. The Role of the FWP Managers/Coordinators.

FWP Managers and Coordinators provide counseling to those individuals who may need help while experiencing problems on the job. However, the role of the FWP Manager or Coordinator is neither that of an individual advocate nor an EEO Counselor. The EEO Counselor is a HUD employee, appointed by the EEO Officer with the approval of the Director of Equal Employment Opportunity, who has been trained to assist employees who feel they have been discriminated against on grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, or have been subject to reprisal or pay disparity based on sex, or sexual harassment. The EEO Counselor's role is to look into the matter and either resolve it informally or advise the employee on how to file a formal complaint of discrimination. The role of the FWP Manager or Coordinator is to assist individuals in finding ways to handle a particular situation, or act as a reference agent to identify for the employee the appropriate resource(s). In performing this role, FWP Managers and Coordinators should note individual problems that might point to trends or systemic barriers affecting members of a particular group, which may be brought to management's attention.

6-2. Scope.

The scope of counseling done by FWP Managers and Coordinators may extend to the following areas:

A. Career Development.

A major counseling concern of FWP Managers and Coordinators at all levels is career development. Whether FWP Managers and Coordinators conduct group discussions or counsel individual employees, the following points are important to relay during the discussions:

- (1) Ensuring that the participant is aware of the necessity of self-evaluation and assessment, and of the responsibility they must exercise in their own career development.
- (2) Aiding the participant in learning more about the job market, what skills are required, and how to match this knowledge with self-appraisal.
- (3) Assisting participants in translating information into an active career development plan, a plan which identifies an ultimate career goal, intermediate goals and needed training and development.

B. Individual personal problems.

FWP Managers and Coordinators are not expected to be experts on all kinds of employee problems and questions which may arise. Their function, however, makes them a natural point of initial contact for employees who suspect sex discrimination or sexual harassment. Such employees will often seek advice from FWP Managers and Coordinators before trying the more formal procedures, or to request their help in clarifying the existence and nature of a problem. If, after informal discussions with the FWP Manager or Coordinator, the employee still feels the problem involves sex or other forms of discrimination, the employee should be referred to an officially appointed and trained EEO Counselor.

Each recognized matter for complaint (discrimination, grievances, position classification, adverse action) has a specific procedure to be followed. FWP Managers and Coordinators should be knowledgeable about basic procedures in order to advise employees as to the type of complaint or action involved and to recommend them to the appropriate resources if the employee wishes to take further action. Therefore, it is strongly

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recommended that FWP Managers and Coordinators acquire some training in the elements of

complaint processing.

C. EEO Counseling (Pre-complaint Processing).

This is the first step in the resolution of allegations of discrimination. As previously stated, FWP Managers and Coordinators are not EEO Counselors. Therefore, they should avoid pre-complaint counseling on a one-to-one basis. The FWP Managers and Coordinators more appropriate counseling functions are individual or group career counseling, developing and/or publicizing career counseling sources for employees at all levels, and helping employees to determine the appropriate source of help in resolving individual personal problems for which specialized resources have been established.

D. Receipt of Sex Discrimination Complaints.

FWP Managers and Coordinators are designated as Departmental Officials who may receive complaints of discrimination based on sex. Their role, however, is to forward such complaints to the appropriate authorities for processing under controlling regulations. FWP Managers and Coordinators are not to become involved in the adjudication of complaints or serve as a representative for either the complainant or the Department in individual cases. Preliminary discussions with employees who eventually file formal complaints must not be substituted for, or interfere with, the timely pre-complaint counseling process specified in applicable Departmental regulations.