

216.6 Unfair employment practices.

1. It shall be an unfair or discriminatory practice for any:

a. Person to refuse to hire, accept, register, classify, or refer for employment, to discharge any employee, or to otherwise discriminate in employment against any applicant for employment or any employee because of the age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability of such applicant or employee, unless based upon the nature of the occupation. If a person with a disability is qualified to perform a particular occupation, by reason of training or experience, the nature of that occupation shall not be the basis for exception to the unfair or discriminatory practices prohibited by [this subsection](#).

b. Labor organization or the employees, agents, or members thereof to refuse to admit to membership any applicant, to expel any member, or to otherwise discriminate against any applicant for membership or any member in the privileges, rights, or benefits of such membership because of the age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability of such applicant or member.

c. Employer, employment agency, labor organization, or the employees, agents, or members thereof to directly or indirectly advertise or in any other manner indicate or publicize that individuals of any particular age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability are unwelcome, objectionable, not acceptable, or not solicited for employment or membership unless based on the nature of the occupation.

(1) If a person with a disability is qualified to perform a particular occupation by reason of training or experience, the nature of that occupation shall not be the basis for exception to the unfair or discriminatory practices prohibited by [this subsection](#).

(2) An employer, employment agency, or their employees, servants, or agents may offer employment or advertise for employment to only persons with disabilities, when other applicants have available to them other employment compatible with their ability which would not be available to persons with disabilities because of their disabilities. Any such employment or offer of employment shall not discriminate among persons with disabilities on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, or national origin.

d. Person to solicit or require as a condition of employment of any employee or prospective employee a test for the presence of the antibody to the human immunodeficiency virus or to affect the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment or terminate the employment of any employee solely as a result of the employee obtaining a test for the presence of the antibody to the human immunodeficiency virus. An agreement between an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or their employees, agents, or members and an employee or prospective employee concerning employment, pay, or benefits to an employee or prospective employee in return for taking a test for the presence of the antibody to the human immunodeficiency virus, is prohibited. The prohibitions of this paragraph do not apply if the state epidemiologist determines and the director of health and human services declares through the utilization of guidelines established by the center for disease control of the United States department of health and human services, that a person with a condition related to acquired immune deficiency syndrome poses a significant risk of transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus to other persons in a specific occupation.

2. Employment policies relating to pregnancy and childbirth shall be governed by the following:

a. A written or unwritten employment policy or practice which excludes from employment applicants or employees because of the employee's pregnancy is a prima facie violation of [this chapter](#).

b. Disabilities caused or contributed to by the employee's pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth, and recovery therefrom are, for all job-related purposes, temporary disabilities and shall be treated as such under any health or temporary disability insurance or sick leave plan available in connection with employment. Written and unwritten employment policies and practices involving matters such as the commencement and duration of leave, the availability of extensions, the accrual of seniority, and other benefits and privileges, reinstatement, and payment under any health or temporary disability insurance or sick leave plan, formal or informal, shall be applied to a disability due to the employee's pregnancy

or giving birth, on the same terms and conditions as they are applied to other temporary disabilities.

c. Disabilities caused or contributed to by legal abortion and recovery therefrom are, for all job-related purposes, temporary disabilities and shall be treated as such under any temporary disability or sick leave plan available in connection with employment. Written and unwritten employment policies and practices involving matters such as the commencement and duration of leave, the availability of extensions, the accrual of seniority, and other benefits and privileges, reinstatement, and payment under any temporary disability insurance or sick leave plan, formal or informal, shall be applied to a disability due to legal abortion on the same terms and conditions as they are applied to other temporary disabilities. The employer may elect to exclude health insurance coverage for abortion from a plan provided by the employer, except where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term or where medical complications have arisen from an abortion.

d. An employer shall not terminate the employment of a person disabled by pregnancy because of the employee's pregnancy.

e. Where a leave is not available or a sufficient leave is not available under any health or temporary disability insurance or sick leave plan available in connection with employment, the employer of the pregnant employee shall not refuse to grant to the employee who is disabled by the pregnancy a leave of absence if the leave of absence is for the period that the employee is disabled because of the employee's pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, or for eight weeks, whichever is less. However, the employee must provide timely notice of the period of leave requested and the employer must approve any change in the period requested before the change is effective. Before granting the leave of absence, the employer may require that the employee's disability resulting from pregnancy be verified by medical certification stating that the employee is not able to reasonably perform the duties of employment.

3. [This section](#) shall not prohibit discrimination on the basis of age if the person subject to the discrimination is under the age of eighteen years, unless that person is considered by law to be an adult.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of [this section](#), a state or federal program designed to benefit a specific age classification which serves a bona fide public purpose shall be permissible.

5. [This section](#) shall not apply to age discrimination in bona fide apprenticeship employment programs if the employee is over forty-five years of age.

6. [This section](#) shall not apply to:

a. Any employer who regularly employs less than four individuals. For purposes of [this subsection](#), individuals who are members of the employer's family shall not be counted as employees.

b. The employment of individuals for work within the home of the employer if the employer or members of the employer's family reside therein during such employment.

c. The employment of individuals to render personal service to the person of the employer or members of the employer's family.

d. Any bona fide religious institution or its educational facility, association, corporation, or society with respect to any qualifications for employment based on religion or sexual orientation when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose. A religious qualification for instructional personnel or an administrative officer, serving in a supervisory capacity of a bona fide religious educational facility or religious institution, shall be presumed to be a bona fide occupational qualification.

[C66, 71, §105A.7; C73, §601A.7; C75, 77, 79, 81, §601A.6]

[87 Acts, ch 201, §1](#); [88 Acts, ch 1236, §2](#)

C93, §216.6

[96 Acts, ch 1129, §27, 113](#); [2007 Acts, ch 191, §3, 4](#); [2009 Acts, ch 41, §220](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1026, §67, 68](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §284](#); [2025 Acts, ch 1, §8, 9](#)

Referred to in [§216.2, 256.27, 400.8](#)

Employment protection, see [§139A.13A](#)

Employment discrimination against witnesses prohibited, see [§915.23](#)

Subsection 1, paragraphs a, b, and c amended
Subsection 6, paragraph d amended