

**Testimony submitted by Cary Brown, Executive Director of the Vermont Commission on Women  
Vermont Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs**

**January 17, 2019**

**Re: Act 183 - An Act Relating to the Prevention of Sexual Harassment**

In 2018, the Vermont General Assembly passed Act 183, which directed the Vermont Commission on Women (VCW), in consultation with the Vermont Attorney General and the Vermont Human Rights Commission, to develop a public education and outreach program that is designed to make Vermont employees, employers, businesses, and members of the public aware of:

1. Methods for reporting employment and work-related discrimination and sexual harassment
2. Where to find information regarding:
  - a. The laws related to employment and work-related discrimination and sexual harassment
  - b. Best practices for preventing employment and work-related discrimination and sexual harassment
3. Methods for preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace

VCW convened a working group made up of representatives of the staff and commissions of VCW and the HRC, staff of the Attorney General's Office, and a legislator in order to develop a plan for responding to this requirement of the bill. The group developed a vision that VCW then worked with various State offices to bring to a public bid process.

Two Requests for Proposals were issued, for components of the project that will work hand-in-hand. One is for a Public Education and Outreach Campaign, to include content strategy and design work for a website, and the other is for Resource Collection and Development, to provide specialized content for the Public Education and Outreach Campaign and the website.

The two RFPs received four bids each. The bids have all been scored by a committee made up of representatives from VCW, HRC, and AGO. The committee has made their final choice of bidder for each RFP, and is currently in the process of checking references and working with the Vermont Office of Purchasing and Contracting to award contracts. The work is slated to begin as soon as possible after the contract awards are made public.

Descriptions of the projects follow.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND WORK-RELATED DISCRIMINATION PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH CAMPAIGN PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**CONTENT STRATEGY & GRAPHICS:**

Develop the content strategy and create graphics for a one-point web presence, to be built by State of Vermont employees using the SOV content management system, that will:

- Integrate seamlessly with reporting mechanisms through the Vermont Attorney General and the Vermont Human Rights Commission, and others as appropriate
- House and make publicly accessible resources for training, education, reporting, and support for preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace
- Provide comprehensive information accessible to a wide range of audiences regarding the laws related to employment and work-related discrimination and sexual harassment, including changes enacted under 2018's Act 183

The website will be built by State employees, using a template within the State of Vermont content management system; this project is to develop the content strategy and do necessary graphic design work only. A separate RFP will solicit proposals to gather, curate, and/or develop resources.

Work collaboratively with appropriate partners within and outside of State government, including the Vermont Commission on Women, the Vermont Attorney General, the Vermont Human Rights Commission, and the Vermont Agency of Digital Services.

Develop a user-friendly and effective content strategy that considers structure and substance, and that complies with State of Vermont web standards and requirements and can be used in the building of a website in the State of Vermont content management system. Design the structure, develop the content strategy, and create graphics for the website, that can then be handed off to State employees to build the website in the State of Vermont content management system.

Work collaboratively with the individual or organization who gathers, curates, and/or develops resources under a separate contract related to this project.

Consider a wide range of audiences and their particular needs, including but not limited to: employers and employees in general, small business owners and employees, schools and students, attorneys, support providers, state agencies, lawmakers, people of color, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, LGBTQ people, New Americans, youth, and the general public.

Actively engage the participation and voices of people with a broad and diverse range of lived experiences, including but not limited to; victims and survivors, people of color, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, LGBTQ people, New Americans, and youth.

Include plans for ensuring an ongoing process of revisions and updates for at least two years beyond the contract period.

Deliverable: The content strategy and graphics for a webs presence meeting the guidelines specified above; to be built by State employees in the State of Vermont content management system.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION:**

Develop and implement a statewide, comprehensive public education campaign that makes Vermont employees, employers, businesses, and members of the public aware of:

1. Methods for reporting employment and work-related discrimination and sexual harassment
2. Where to find information regarding:
  - The laws related to employment and work-related discrimination and sexual harassment
  - Best practices for preventing employment and work-related discrimination and sexual harassment
3. Methods for preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace

Consider a wide range of audiences and their particular needs, including but not limited to: employers and employees in general, small business owners and employees, schools and students, attorneys, support providers, state agencies, lawmakers, people of color, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, LGBTQ people, New Americans, youth, and the general public.

Emphasize creating healthy workplace cultures as well as legal obligations and remedies to work-related discrimination and sexual harassment.

Work collaboratively with appropriate partners within and outside of State government, including the Vermont Commission on Women, the Vermont Attorney General, and the Vermont Human Rights Commission.

Actively engage the participation and voices of people with a broad and diverse range of lived experiences, including but not limited to; victims and survivors, people of color, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, LGBTQ people, New Americans, and youth.

The program may include the following elements, or others as appropriate:

- Public service announcements
- Print and electronic advertisements
- Web-based and electronic training materials

Deliverable: Development and implementation of a comprehensive and effective statewide public education and outreach campaign.

#### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND WORK-RELATED DISCRIMINATION RESOURCE COLLECTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Gather, curate, and if appropriate, develop resources for training, education, reporting, and support for preventing and addressing work-related discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, to be housed and distributed through a website to be developed under a separate contract.

Consider a wide range of audiences and their particular needs, including but not limited to: employers and employees in general, small business owners and employees, schools and students, attorneys, support providers, state agencies, lawmakers, people of color, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, LGBTQ people, New Americans, youth, and the general public.

Emphasize creating healthy workplace cultures as well as legal obligations and remedies to work-related discrimination and sexual harassment.

Work collaboratively with appropriate partners within and outside of State government, including the Vermont Commission on Women, the Vermont Attorney General, and the Vermont Human Rights Commission. Actively engage the participation and voices of people with a broad and diverse range of lived experiences, including but not limited to victims and survivors, people of color, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, LGBTQ people, New Americans, and youth. Work collaboratively with the individual or organization who designs a website under a separate contract related to this project.

Deliverable: A comprehensive collection of resources meeting the guidelines specified above that is ready for inclusion on a website to be designed under a separate contract related to this project.