
Minnesota Department of Health: Human Resources

Project Description

June 2024

BACKGROUND

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) employs roughly 2,000 individuals, all of whom are entitled to workplace protections, such as freedom from discrimination. When an employee believes their protections have been violated or a coworker is not complying with state policy, the employee may file a complaint with their supervisor, human resources staff, or department leadership, among others.

MDH's Human Resources Management Division (HR division) is responsible for managing complaints from department employees, including receiving and responding to these complaints. Additionally, the division informs and trains employees about workplace protections.

Generally, state and federal laws and state policies protect employees from retaliation for filing complaints. Examples of retaliation include threatening, penalizing, disciplining, or discharging an employee for filing a complaint.

Other entities may have a role in addressing employee complaints. For example, Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) may gather allegation information when complaints involve state agency leadership. MMB also issues relevant statewide policies and procedures for executive branch agencies. Further, employees may file complaints with other state or federal agencies, including the Office of the Legislative Auditor, or in court.

EVALUATION ISSUES

1. To what extent are HR division processes for investigating and addressing complaints fair and comprehensive?

2. How well does the HR division protect employees from retaliation for submitting complaints?

DISCUSSION

This evaluation will focus on the HR division's management of complaints. To conduct this evaluation, we will review MMB policies for executive branch agencies, state and federal laws, and court determinations to understand the requirements for investigating and addressing complaints, as well as protecting complainants from retaliation. We will also evaluate the HR division's policies and processes that guide its complaints management.

To better understand whether the HR division's processes for investigating and addressing complaints are fair, comprehensive, and protective of complainants, we will review complaint files and data. We will also use these to evaluate the division's efforts to respond to complaints. Additionally, we plan to survey all MDH employees and interview select employees, including those in the HR division.

This evaluation will focus on the HR division's processes to manage complaints from and involving MDH employees. We will not evaluate the outcomes of individual complaints. Additionally, we will not evaluate the division's processes for managing other types of human-resources-related issues, such as employee performances issues.

This evaluation is scheduled to be completed in early 2025. For additional information, contact Sarah Delacueva, evaluation manager, at 651-296-1226 or Sarah.Delacueva@state.mn.us.