

EEOC Commissioner Feldblum Talks to The Proactive Employer About EEOC Compliance

On March 16, 2012, EEOC Commissioner Chai Feldblum joined The Proactive Employer Podcast to share information about the Agency's outreach and education programs aimed at assisting the employer community with EEO compliance.

Host Stephanie R. Thomas, Ph.D., and Commissioner Feldblum discussed the EEOC's recently-approved Strategic Plan and how the Agency will engage employers in preventing employment discrimination.

Preventing employment discrimination through education and outreach has always been one of the EEOC's main objectives. Commissioner Feldblum noted that "from the beginning, from the perspective of Congress, education and outreach was an essential component of our responsibility as an Agency." The new Strategic Plan differs from previous plans in that education and outreach is specifically mentioned as an area of focus. Regarding the role of education and outreach in the new Strategic Plan, Commissioner Feldblum stated:

"I think the Agency has often been focused too much on just the investigations and not as much on the education and outreach. This Strategic Plan is really an effort to rebalance the focus... and elevate the importance of education and outreach."

The Strategic Plan also places emphasis on building relationships with the employer community. Commissioner Feldblum said that the EEOC is going to take a more active role in building these relationships:

"My basic sense, as I go around the country and talk to people, is most employers would like to comply with the law... The thing is, they're also just trying to make a business happen. They have a lot of other things on their mind other than figuring out how to comply with employment laws. So that's our job, as an Agency, to spend some time figuring out how do we reach out to them. That's our job. That's what I feel we should be responsible for."

Commissioner Feldblum summed up her thoughts on proactive EEO compliance as follows:

"If employers feel that learning about what the law requires is going to be too complicated and burdensome and costly, then they won't do it. My message... is that it doesn't have to be costly. All of these employers should be using social media, like Twitter, to learn information very quickly, very easily. So, it's not a huge burden to learn. And the Agency is here to make sure that it's not going to be a huge burden to learn. "

You can listen to the entire episode featuring Commissioner Feldblum at <http://www.theproactiveemployer.com>