



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

06-27-2024

Opportunities & Resources, Inc. to Pay \$325,000 in EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit

Settles Federal Charges Janitorial Contractor Did Not Provide Deaf Employees with Reasonable Accommodations

HONOLULU – Nonprofit organizations Opportunities and Resources, Inc. and ORI Anuenue Hale, Inc., recipients of federal contracts to provide janitorial services on military installations throughout Hawaii, will pay \$325,000 and provide other relief to resolve a disability lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

According to the EEOC’s lawsuit, from as early as 2015, ORI received multiple requests from Deaf employees for reasonable accommodations—such as American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters—for meetings, including critical safety meetings where ORI discussed chemical hazards and other safety precautions. ORI failed to provide sign language interpretation and failing to engage in the interactive process and employing ineffective accommodations like passing notes.

EEOC alleges that ORI was aware of the employees’ disabilities but failed to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing employees dictated by policies or practices

set by the very top of the organizations.

Such alleged conduct violates the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the form of denial of a reasonable accommodation and denial of the privileges and benefit of employment. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii (Case No.: 1:21-cv-00286-JMS-RT) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its voluntary conciliation process.

In addition to monetary relief, ORI agreed to new and robust compliance measures, including providing sign language interpreters for various workplace meetings to ensure effective accommodations for deaf and hard of hearing employees. ORI also agreed to hire an external EEO monitor, to designate an internal ADA coordinator, and to implement effective ADA policies and procedures to ensure reasonable accommodation requests are properly handled. The EEO monitor will oversee investigations of disability discrimination and will conduct and oversee ADA compliance, including Deaf Culture training. The case will remain under the Court's jurisdiction for a term of five years.

“The EEOC commends the brave employees who came forward and chose to assert their rights by reporting the discrimination that they faced,” said Anna Park, regional attorney for the EEOC's Los Angeles District, which includes Hawaii. “The ADA specifically provides that workers with disabilities have the right to the same privileges and benefit of employment as all other workers. The EEOC stands ready to enforce the ADA and I remind all employers that they must comply with their obligations to provide reasonable and effective accommodations to employees.”

EEOC's Honolulu Office Director Raymond Griffin, Jr. said, “It is troubling that a company that employs individuals with disabilities would be resistant to providing reasonable accommodations to those workers. The EEOC has prioritized protecting vulnerable and underserved workers and I hope that employers are taking notice of this resolution. Not only will the individuals receive monetary compensation, but the agency has put in place measures such as Deaf culture training to improve the workplace for Deaf applicants and employees.”

Protecting vulnerable workers and underserved workers, from employment discrimination is a priority for the EEOC under the Strategic Enforcement Plan for Fiscal Years 2024 - 2028 <https://www.eeoc.gov/strategic-enforcement-plan-fiscal-years-2024-2028> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/strategic-enforcement-plan-fiscal-years-2024-2028>)

fiscal-years-2024-2028). For more information on disability discrimination, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination>) or view the ASL video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGVmlmhj5KI> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGVmlmhj5KI>).

The Los Angeles District includes central and southern California, southern Nevada, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Wake Island, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands with offices in Los Angeles, Fresno, Las Vegas, San Diego and Honolulu.

The EEOC prevents and remedies unlawful employment discrimination and advances equal opportunity for all. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov (<http://www.eeoc.gov>). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our **email updates** (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>).

Recent Press Releases from the Honolulu Local Office

[Honolulu Restaurant and HR Company to Pay \\$115,000 in EEOC Sexual Harassment Lawsuit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/honolulu-restaurant-and-hr-company-pay-115000-eeoc-sexual-harassment-lawsuit) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/honolulu-restaurant-and-hr-company-pay-115000-eeoc-sexual-harassment-lawsuit>)

[Mexico Restaurant Settles EEOC Sexual and Racial Harassment Lawsuit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/mexico-restaurant-settles-eeoc-sexual-and-racial-harassment-lawsuit) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/mexico-restaurant-settles-eeoc-sexual-and-racial-harassment-lawsuit>)

[EEOC Sues Honolulu Restaurant and HR Company for Sexual Harassment of Male Employees](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-honolulu-restaurant-and-hr-company-sexual-harassment-male-employees) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-honolulu-restaurant-and-hr-company-sexual-harassment-male-employees>)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Disability

[GardaWorld to Pay \\$37,500 in EEOC Disability Discrimination Suit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/gardaworld-pay-37500-eeoc-disability-discrimination-suit) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/gardaworld-pay-37500-eeoc-disability-discrimination-suit>)

[Didlake, Inc. Pays More Than \\$1 Million in EEOC Disability Discrimination and](#)

[Retaliation Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/didlake-inc-pays-more-1-million-eeoc-disability-discrimination-and-retaliation-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/didlake-inc-pays-more-1-million-eeoc-disability-discrimination-and-retaliation-lawsuit)

[Pearl Interactive Network to Pay Over \\$23,000 for EEOC Disability Discrimination Charge \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/pearl-interactive-network-pay-over-23000-eeoc-disability-discrimination-charge\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/pearl-interactive-network-pay-over-23000-eeoc-disability-discrimination-charge)