



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

04-24-2024

EEOC Sues Sureste Property Group for Race Discrimination

Federal Agency Charges Real Estate Operating Company Fired Black Employee Because of His Race

ATLANTA – Sureste Property Group and its divisions, Sureste Property Services and Sureste Development Group, an integrated real estate operating company and asset management firm, violated federal law when it terminated a Black employee because of his race, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed today.

According to the EEOC’s suit, the aggrieved employee was the only Black individual ever employed as a project development manager for Sureste Property Group. The project development manager performed well in his role, despite being assigned more work than his white counterparts. However, less than a year after the Black project development manager was hired, the company terminated his employment, claiming first that he was “lazy” and not a good fit for the company’s “culture” and subsequently that his role had been eliminated. Despite claims that the project development manager role had been eliminated, Sureste Property Group promoted a significantly less-qualified white employee to the project development manager position less than a month later.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits companies from discriminating against their employees based on race. The EEOC filed suit (1:24- CV-1769 LMM WEJ) in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division, after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its administrative conciliation process. The EEOC is seeking back pay, compensatory damages, and punitive damages for the employee, as well as injunctive relief to prevent future discrimination.

“Federal law prohibits employers from making employment decisions based on race,” said Marcus G. Keegan, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Atlanta District Office. “While the aggrieved employee in this case entered into a mandatory arbitration agreement as a condition of his employment, the EEOC continues to be available to him as a vehicle for asserting his civil rights.”

Darrell Graham, district director of EEOC’s Atlanta District Office, said, “Combating and deterring race discrimination in the workplace continues to be a critical priority of the EEOC’s Atlanta District Office. It is disappointing that employers continue to engage in these types of employment practices, but the EEOC remains committed to redressing such violations when they occur.”

For more information about laws prohibiting race discrimination in the workplace, visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination>).

The Atlanta District Office has jurisdiction over the Georgia and the South Carolina counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown, Hampton, Jasper and Williamsburg.

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 \(https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new\)](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new).

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