



## **MEMBER RESOURCES TO ADDRESS WORK RELATED GRIEVANCES**

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Do you know what to do if something has happened to you or someone you know? Knowing the correct next step can be difficult to determine.

The following may assist in navigating the “what to do” question. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) provides this general information as a helpful resource. This is not intended to be legal advice or a definitive guide on professional or ethical conduct. We hope that the information below can be of assistance if you experience or witness what you perceive as unprofessional, unethical, or illegal behavior in the workplace or during a work function. Note, links are provided to several third-party entities to further your understanding.

### **Know the Facts**

A starting point is to know what happened. Did you see something, hear something, or experience an event or action? Consider collecting the details: Who are the parties involved? Where and when did the matter occur? Are there witnesses? What evidence can you gather?

This can be a very tough situation, and you may find that there is no single answer or correct path and that you may have to change directions throughout the process as you consider next steps.

### **Remedy**

What relief are you seeking from a third party? Do you seek to stop the behavior or action? Or do you need the third party to take an action that they have so far not taken? Understand that you may be asked to expend valuable resources such as your time and money and be asked to reveal your identity to get the relief you seek.

### **Talk to Others**

Is it possible and appropriate for you to talk with someone or an entity who may help you? This may raise for you professional and personal considerations. Examine whether you can resolve the matter through a conversation or an e-mail.

### **Anonymity**

Deciding to involve anyone is a challenging personal decision. You may hope to get a remedy and remain anonymous, although anonymity may not always be possible, as the involved persons may need to have knowledge of the situation in question.

## Third Party Involvement

Here is a list of places that may provide you with relief. You may find other options beyond what is provided. This is not an exhaustive compilation.

- **Professional Misconduct.** State Licensing Boards provide a complaint process for such actions including unprofessional conduct, negligence, willful misconduct, conviction of a substantially related crime, fraud, aid and abetting unlicensed practice, incompetency, recklessness, etc. See, for example, [Complaint - Process | California Architects Board](#).
- **Third Party Agencies/Companies.** Other places that may be of assistance:
  - [Better Business Bureau](#)
  - [Scams and Safety – FBI](#)
  - [Reporting Crime | USAGov \(e.g., criminal activity, sexual assault\)](#)
  - [Google Ads questions, complaints, and feedback - Google Ads Help](#)
  - [How to report abusive behavior on Twitter | Twitter Help](#)
- **Mental Health Resources.** As you navigate difficult situations it is important to know how to care for yourself and others.
  - For affordable access to mental health courses or peer support groups, you may consider options such as this, for example: [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#).
  - To find a therapist, the following provides some resources, for example: [Ayana Therapy](#) or [Therapy Den](#) or [Loveland Foundation](#) or [Psychology Today](#).
  - To learn more about selfcare, meditation, and mindfulness, you may consider these resources, for example: [Headspace](#) or [Calm](#) or [Shine](#).
- **Employment Matters.** Employment matters may be handled by multiple government entities or your employer.
  - For complaints involving worker protection laws, please review information from the Department of Labor, at [How to File a Complaint | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#).
  - [Reporting Crime | USAGov \(e.g., criminal activity, sexual assault\)](#)
  - You can file a formal job discrimination complaint with the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC) when you believe as noted on the EEOC website that you are:
    - Being treated unfairly on the job because of your race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, disability, age (age 40 or older) or genetic information; or
    - Being harassed at work for any of these reasons; or
    - Being treated unfairly or harassed because you complained about job discrimination or assisted with a job discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

## **The American Institute of Architects**

Depending upon your situation, the AIA offers several resources, such as the [Harassment prevention resources – AIA](#). AIA also offers resources on ethics through The National Ethics Council (NEC), appointed by the AIA Board of Directors to enforce the Code. Information can be found here: [AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct – AIA](#). Note that AIA is not a government agency, does not have subpoena power, and can handle ethics matters as a private not-for-profit corporation.

## **Legal Counsel**

Legal counsel can help to further explain the array of resources as you consider what to do next. Your situation will dictate what type of legal counsel you may want to seek to represent your personal or professional interests and in what jurisdiction. For example, if this is an employment dispute, you may look for employment counsel in your state. AIA offers information on securing legal counsel, found here: <https://theaiatrust.com/legal/>. Please know that AIA cannot provide legal advice or guidance for your particular situation but encourages the use of appropriate legal counsel.

## **What to Do**

Handling a grievance or dispute is complex and can feel overwhelming and for some may feel personally or professionally risky. Taking action or not taking action requires careful review of many different considerations, personally, factually, legally, and ethically. The above is intended as a resource and helpful overview. We will continue to update this page.