

	<i>Administrative Regulation</i>	
	<b>Open Door</b>	
	Policy#	1.1
	Effective:	05/02/2017
	Revised:	03/14/2025
	Owner:	Human Resources

**Note:** Terms in ***bold and italics*** throughout this policy are defined below.

## PURPOSE:

To promote open dialogue and facilitate the early resolution of workplace concerns before they escalate. This approach aligns with the City's ***LiveWell*** program, which emphasizes transparent communication, employee well-being, and a positive workplace culture. Unlike a formal grievance procedure, this policy provides employees with a process to voice concerns, offer feedback, and seek guidance in a supportive and inclusive environment where they feel valued and respected.

## SCOPE:

All employees, including management, volunteers, and interns. It covers a wide range of workplace matters, from team dynamics and job-related concerns to workplace culture and personal challenges that may impact performance or well-being.

For employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement, the provisions outlined in applicable collective bargaining agreements take precedence over policy where applicable.

## POLICY:

The City is committed to fostering a workplace where employees can communicate openly with supervisors and managers without fear of ***retaliation***. Employee concerns, questions, and feedback are valued and should be addressed promptly, professionally, and at the lowest level possible whenever appropriate to foster a collaborative and responsive work environment.

Supervisors and managers are responsible for creating a safe work environment where employees feel supported in bringing forward work-related concerns. They should actively listen, encourage open dialogue, and make every effort to address and resolve concerns fairly and in accordance with the employee's collective bargaining agreement or, for non-represented employees, the City's Grievance Administrative Regulation.

Employee are encouraged to engage in honest and respectful conversation regarding workplace issues, seek clarification, and provide feedback to help improve the work environment. All discussions should be approached with mutual respect, professionalism, and a focus on solutions.

Retaliation against employees who raise concerns under this policy is strictly prohibited. Any reports of retaliation will be taken seriously and addressed in alignment with City policies.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **1. Bringing Forward Concerns, Feedback, or Requests for Clarification**

- 1.1. Employees should bring work-related concerns, feedback, or requests for clarification to their direct supervisor or manager.
- 1.2. If an issue is urgent, employees should notify their supervisor or manager to expediate a meeting. Providing agenda topics in advance is encouraged to ensure productive discussion.
- 1.3. If a concern involves the immediate supervisor or manager, employees may escalate the matter to the next level of management or Human Resources (HR).

### **2. Escalation Process**

- 2.1. If an employee feels their concern has not been resolved or adequately addressed through initial discussions, they may escalate the matter through the appropriate channels:
  - 2.1.1. Department Leadership: Employees may seek guidance from a department director or another senior leader.
  - 2.1.2. Human Resources (HR): HR is available to provide policy clarification, facilitate discussions, and assist in finding appropriate resolutions.
  - 2.1.3. City Manager: If necessary, unresolved concerns may be escalated to the City Manager's Office for further review.
- 2.2. Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement should also refer to their contract for grievance procedures, as those may provide additional avenues for resolution.
- 2.3. HR may facilitate discussions, mediate disputes, or provide guidance to both employees and management to ensure fair and transparent resolution processes.

### **3. Confidentiality & Professionalism**

- 3.1. Discussions will be handled with discretion and **confidentiality** to the extent possible while ensuring that the issue is addressed appropriately.

- 3.2. Employees and supervisors are expected to engage in open and respectful dialogue throughout the resolution process, maintaining a focus on problem-solving and workplace improvement.

## DEFINITIONS:

1. **"Confidentiality"** refers to the practice of ensuring that discussions and information shared by employees and management under this policy are kept private, except as necessary to address or resolve the issue effectively.
2. **"Escalation"** is the process employees use to bring unresolved workplace concerns to higher levels of management or HR for further review and resolution.
3. **"Retaliation"** is any adverse action or behavior taken against employees because they raised a concern, provided feedback, or filed a complaint in good faith under this policy.
4. **"LiveWell"** is the City of Springfield's comprehensive employee wellness program, designed to support the health, well-being, and financial security of employees and retirees. LiveWell encompasses a range of benefits, including medical and dental insurance, retirement benefits, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), access to the City's Wellness Center, financial wellness resources, and other initiatives aimed at enhancing quality of life both during and after employment with the City.

## RESOURCES:

### Administrative Regulations:

1. [Employee and Labor Relations](#)
2. [Grievance: Non-Union](#)

### Standard Operating Procedures:

1. [Open Door Policy Guide for Managers](#)

### Labor Contracts & Handbook:

1. [AFSCME](#)
2. [IAFF Battalion Chiefs](#)
3. [IAFF Firefighters](#)
4. [SEIU/OPEU](#)
5. [SPA](#)
6. [Employee Handbook](#)