



**By The Office of Equal Opportunity, Kristal White**

Each month, the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) looks forward to providing content that celebrates the diversity across our state's workforce and embraces the differences that help make us better together. We believe diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility and we hope all state employees carry such responsibility with honor, courage, and passion. Check us out [here](#)!

### **What is a religious accommodation?**

A religious accommodation is any adjustment to the work environment that will allow an employee or applicant to practice his or her sincerely held religious beliefs or practices. Religious accommodations are a protection under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII prohibits discrimination against race, color, religion, sex and national origin.

In a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, they have ruled that employers can only deny an employee's request for a religious accommodation under federal law if they can prove it would result in substantial increased costs for the business.

### **How can employers offer religious accommodations in the workplace?**

It's important for company culture and morale that employers do their best to accommodate the religious beliefs and practices of employees. When accommodation requests aren't met, employees may feel alienated or discriminated against. Successful accommodations can become a retention tool and increase employee loyalty.

It is important that employees feel safe coming forward to request religious accommodations eliminating the fear of possible retaliation. Develop messaging or have conversations with employees that make it clear that we, as employers, are more than happy to make reasonable religious accommodations within the workplace. Optional religious accommodations may include;

- Flexible scheduling
- Job/task reassignments
- Modifications to appearance and dress policies to accommodate religious garb or grooming practices – supporting employees who wear religious clothing or articles like a cross, a kirpan,

Contact us if you have ideas on diverse groups to celebrate at [CelebrateDiversity@oa.mo.gov](mailto:CelebrateDiversity@oa.mo.gov).



hijab (headscarf), yarmulke, or a turban. As well as adhering to shaving or hair length observances (e.g., uncut hair and beards for Sikhs, dreadlocks for Rastafarians, or peyes [sidelocks] for Jews).

You can also start by learning about different holidays/celebrations. Check out OEO's [Diversity and Culture Calendar](#)! Or create your own.