



Minnesota NOW

Minnesota Women's Building
550 Rice Street, #102
St. Paul, Minnesota 55103
Phone: 651-222-1605
Fax: 651-292-9417
E-mail: mnnow@mnnow.org

Minnesota NOW Guidelines Regarding Support of Legal Actions

(Adopted by MN NOW Board on 09/09/2000)

The use of legal action to improve the conditions of women at work, in education and other areas of society is a proven strategy in achieving the goal of equality for women.

1. Minnesota NOW supports this strategy and offers the following guidelines for actions taken by Minnesota NOW on behalf of, or in conjunction with, the complainants in legal cases affecting the women of Minnesota.

A. Minnesota NOW leadership must hear the complaint from the complainant.

B. Minnesota NOW leadership must assess the impact of the legal action on women in Minnesota. Some criteria to be considered are:

1. Multiple complaints
2. Multiple locations throughout the state
3. The case is on-going and without resolution
4. Complainants have tried to get redress through standard means without success (Company policies, etc.)
5. On-going risk to other women
6. Possibility for setting new legal precedents that would determine future cases

C. Minnesota NOW (in a letter signed by the President) must contact the Company (or other entity involved) outlining Minnesota NOW's concerns and receive either no reply (after a reasonable period of time) or a reply that indicates that the problem is not being resolved. This guideline may be waived if there is reason to believe such an action would harm the complainants or their case.

D. The Minnesota NOW Board or executive committee must determine a specific action plan for Minnesota NOW that will benefit the women of Minnesota and can be carried out within the available resources.

E. There must be specific agreements for cooperation between Minnesota NOW, the complainants, and if applicable, their representatives. (For example, who speaks for Minnesota NOW to the press or to the public.)

II. Minnesota NOW can offer several levels of support. The level of support offered will depend on such factors as available resources and impact of the legal action on the women of Minnesota.

A. *Endorsement*: Allow Minnesota NOW's name to be listed as a supporter of an action organized and taken by others. *Optional*: Make a contribution, inform Minnesota NOW members of the action, ask Minnesota NOW members to participate.

B. *Collaboration*: Plan an action with other organizations. Take responsibility for carrying out specific parts of the action and make some contribution of resources.

C. *Leadership*: Minnesota NOW takes responsibility for all aspects of the action, including seeking participation of other organizations/entities as appropriate. Minnesota NOW has authority to choose to veto spokespeople, message, and materials.

III. Minnesota NOW requests that local chapters consult with the state executive committee before taking action on a case.