

(H) "COMMISSION STAFF" MEANS EMPLOYEES OF THE MARYLAND COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSION TO PROCESS, INVESTIGATE, AND PURSUE COMPLAINTS FILED UNDER THIS TITLE.

[(g)] (I) "Contract" means an agreement with a business entity that is let by or on behalf of the State for that business entity to sell or lease supplies or goods, or to provide construction, real estate development, financial, insurance, professional, or other services to the State in return for a fee or any other form of compensation to be paid or provided by the State.

[(h)] (J) (1) "Discrimination" means any disadvantage, difference, distinction, or preference in the solicitation, selection, hiring, or commercial treatment of a vendor, supplier, subcontractor, or commercial customer on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or on the basis of disability or any otherwise unlawful use of characteristics regarding the vendor's, supplier's, or commercial customer's employees or owners.

(2) "Discrimination" does not include lawful efforts to remedy the effects of discrimination that have occurred or are occurring in the marketplace.

[(i)] (K) "Economic development project" means a real estate development, construction, or renovation project for which the State provides:

- (1) funding or other financial assistance, other than payments in exchange for goods or services;
- (2) land;
- (3) road improvements;
- (4) tax credits; or
- (5) a below market purchase price.

[(j)] (L) (1) "Financial institution" means a person:

- (i) engaged in the business of lending money, guaranteeing loans, extending credit, securing bonds, or providing venture or equity capital; or
- (ii) that offers financial services in connection with State projects or the administration of State government.

(2) "Financial institution" includes banks, savings and loans, venture capital companies, insurance companies, bonding companies, mortgage companies, credit unions, and brokers.