

# U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

# **EEOC Public Portal User's Guide Vol 2 – Submit an Online Inquiry to the EEOC**

February 12, 2025

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## **Introduction to the EEOC Public Portal**

The EEOC Public Portal is a secure, web-based application developed for individuals to interact with the EEOC regarding a complaint of employment discrimination. Using the EEOC Public Portal, you may file a complaint against an employer in the Private Sector (i.e. Business or non-profit) or a State or Local Government Agency. If you work or worked for the U.S. Federal Government as an employee or a contractor, or applied to work for the Federal Government, you may request a hearing with or appeal a decision to the EEOC regarding your formal EEO complaint. The EEOC Public Portal is the primary point of communication between you and the EEOC.

## About the User's Guide

The EEOC Public Portal User's Guide ("User's Guide") provides comprehensive guidance for using the EEOC Public Portal's features and functions. The User's Guide is published as individual documents, each of which covers a feature or related features of the EEOC Public Portal.

The following EEOC Public Portal User's Guide documents are available; the highlighted Document Name is the one you're reading now:

- Vol 1 Getting Started (learn about EEOC Public Portal access, structure, and other basic information)
- ❖ Vol 2 Submit an Online Inquiry to the EEOC
- Vol 3 Post-Inquiry Tasks (learn about scheduling an interview with the EEOC, entering additional information about an online inquiry, and signing a Charge of Discrimination)
- ❖ Vol 4 Post-Charge Tasks (learn how to check the status of your charge, respond to an Invitation to Mediate, and request/respond to a Respondent's Position Statement)
- ❖ Vol 5 Charge Closure (learn what happens when your charge has been closed)
- ❖ Vol 6 Hearings with the EEOC
- ❖ Vol 7 Appealing Federal Agency Decisions to the EEOC
- Vol 8 Manage Case/Charge Information (learn how to display information about your case, enter/update your personal information, add representatives, and submit/receive documents associated with your case)

## **Chapter 1** Submitting an Online Inquiry

The first step in the online process of filing a charge with the EEOC is to submit an inquiry. This will provide the EEOC with basic information to evaluate your complaint and to determine if the agency can help you.

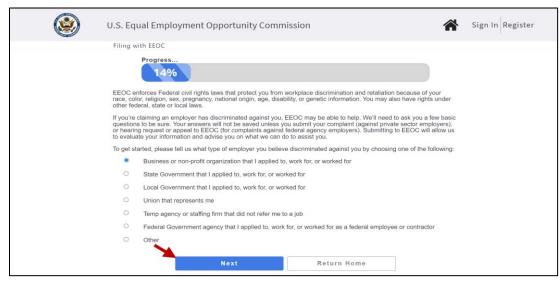
> **Tip!** If you believe that a Federal Agency has discriminated against you, and wish to file a formal complaint, you must file it with the agency's EEO office.

To submit an inquiry online perform the following steps:

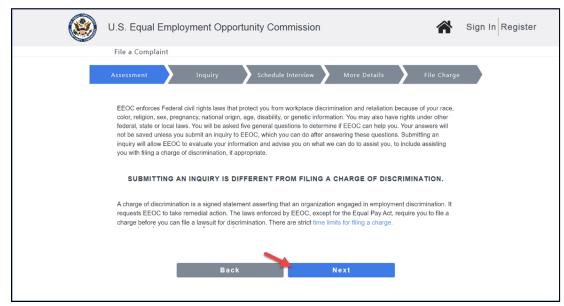
**Step 1.** On the Home Page, select **Open an Inquiry/Case** on the left-hand side to begin the process.



- > **Tip!** The recommended browsers to use are Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome. Using other browsers may result in diminished performance or compatibility issues.
- > **Tip!** Turn off Pop-Up blockers in your browser.
- > **Tip!** Do not use the browser buttons to navigate the application. Use the **Back** and **Next** buttons.
- **Step 2.** When asked to identify the **Type of Employer** you believe discriminated against you, select the employer from the available choices and select the **Next** button.







**Step 4.** A page displays with links to a video in English or Spanish that explains the basics of filing a charge with the EEOC. Select the Play button ( ) to view the video to learn more before getting started. There are also links provided at the bottom of the page to help you learn more about the EEOC and its processes.

Select the **Next** button when you are ready to start.

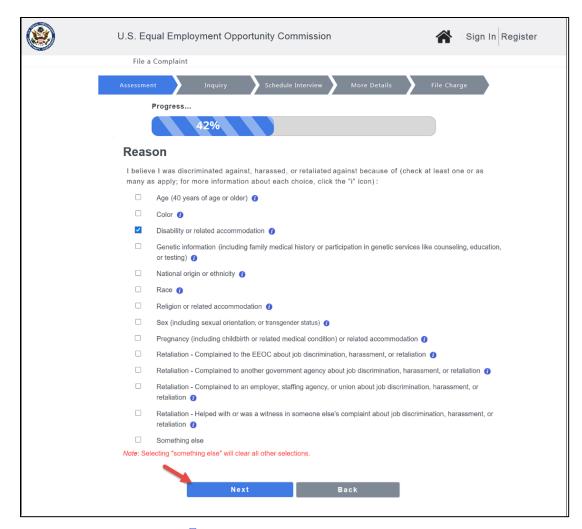
**Step 5.** You will now be asked four general questions about the nature of your complaint, to determine if the EEOC can help you. Your answers will be saved only if you submit an inquiry. Select the **Next** button after answering each question.

The assessment may end early if it detects an answer indicating the EEOC may not be able to help you. In that event, a reason will display as to why the assessment ended and a list of additional resources will be provided that you can contact.

**Timeliness.** Enter the date you believe the discrimination occurred<sup>1</sup>.

**Reason.** Select the Reason why you believe you were discriminated against. Check all reasons that apply to your complaint.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The date you provide helps EEOC determine how much time you have to file. In most states, you have 300 days from the date the discrimination took place to file a charge, but in some states you have only 180 days to file with the EEOC.



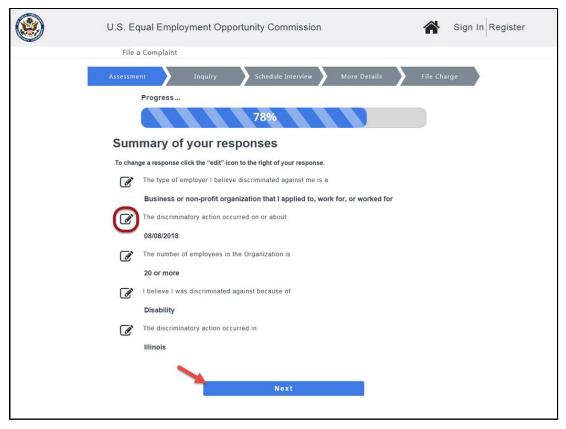
- > **Tip!** Select an "I" icon (1) to learn more about an available reason.
- > **Tip!** Selecting "Something else" will clear all other selections.

Depending on the reason(s) you selected, you may be asked for additional information to aid the EEOC in determining if it can help you.

**Number of Employees.** Depending on your previous answers, you may be asked to select the approximate number of employees who work for the employer that you believe discriminated against you. Select from the available choices.

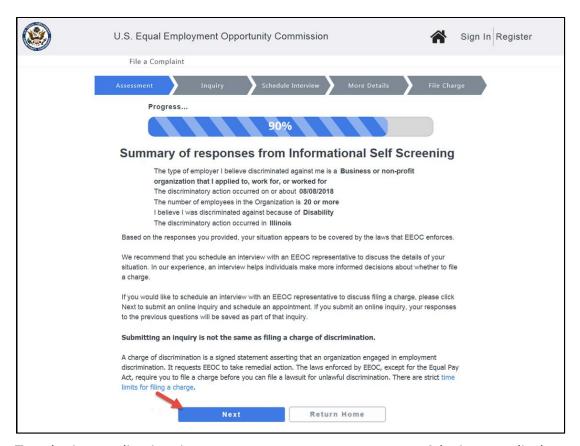
**Location of Work.** Choose the state where you believe the discrimination occurred from the list provided.

**Step 6.** After you complete the questions, review your answers on the summary page that appears. To change any answer, select the **Edit** icon next to that answer ( ). If you are satisified with your answers, select the **Next** button to continue.

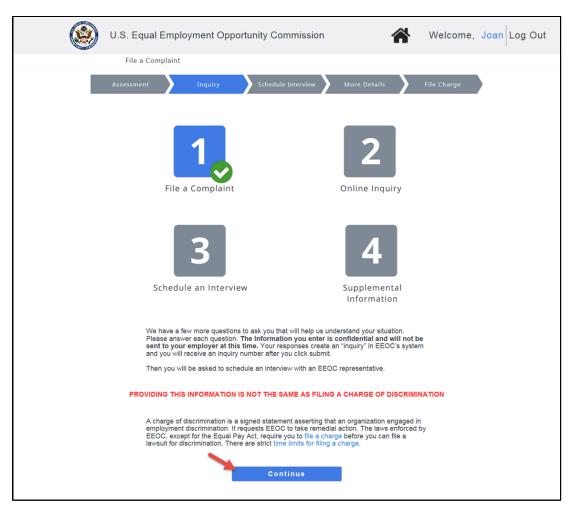


**Step 7.** The next page will let you know if you may continue the online inquiry process. Anti-discrimination laws give you a limited amount of time to file a charge of discrimination (typically 180 or 300 days from the date the discrimination occurred, depending on the law and state in which the discrimination occurred), and your answers help to determine if you have enough time left to file. If your time to file has not run out, you will be able to select the **Next** button to continue.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> If your time has run out, you may still file a charge with EEOC in person, although EEOC may not be able to assist you and will be required by law to notify your employer that the charge was filed.

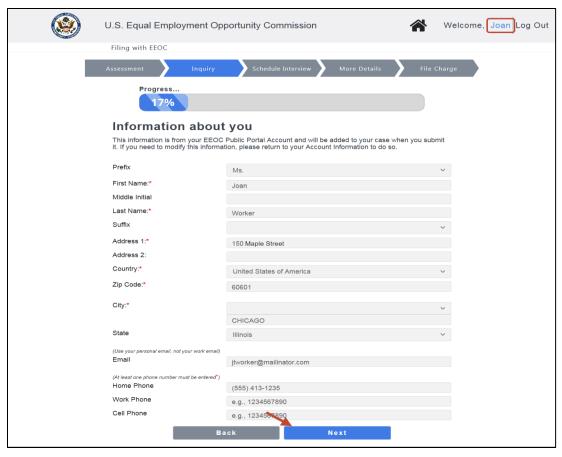


- **Step 8.** To submit an online inquiry, you must set up a user account. A login page displays to enable you to login/register to submit an online inquiry. If you have not used the EEOC Public Portal before, Select the **Register** link (refer to EEOC Public Portal User's Guide Vol 1 Getting Started for details on creating a user account).
  - > **Tip!** If you already registered with the EEOC, enter your user ID and password in the fields provided.
- **Step 9.** Once you are logged in, a status page displays that shows which parts of the inquiry process you have completed. Select the **Continue** button to proceed to part 2 Online Inquiry.



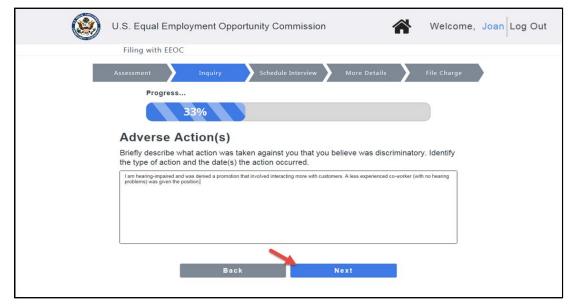
**Step 10.** Your personal information is displayed, which will be submitted with the online inquiry. This screen is view-only. Select the **Next** button to proceed.

> **Tip!** If you need to modify this information, select the link at the top of the page to go to your User Account Information. When you have finished and submitted your changes, you will be returned to inquiry submission process.



- **Step 11.** After confirming the information about yourself, you will be asked to provide additional details about your situation to complete the inquiry. Select the **Next** button after answering each question.
  - > Tip! You must provide information wherever a red asterisk is displayed (\*) to continue.

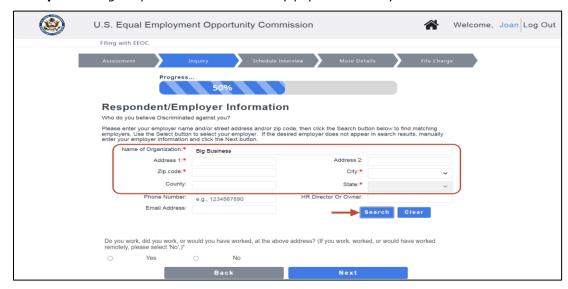
**Adverse Action**. First, briefly describe the action taken against you that you believe is discriminatory.



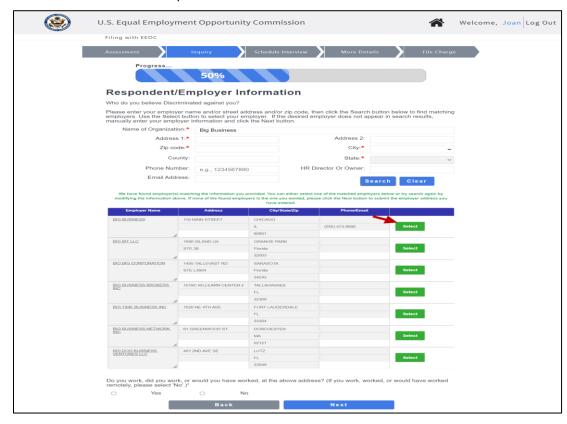
**Step 12. Respondent/Employer Information.** Provide the contact information for the employer you believe discriminated against you (the "respondent").

First, search the Employer Master List for your employer. You may enter the name and/or street address and/or zip code of your employer. When you have entered the search criteria, select the **Search** button.

> Tip! Entering a zip code will automatically populate the city and state fields.



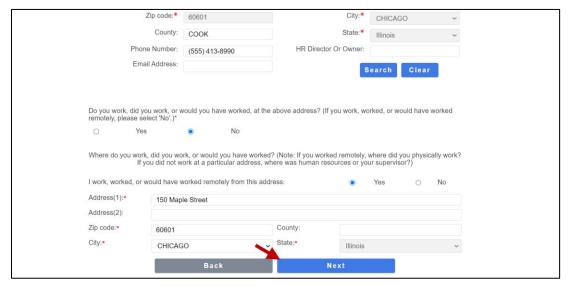
A list of matching employers displays. Select the **Select** button next to your employer to select it. If your employer is not found, manually enter the employer information in the fields provided.



- **Step 13. Work Location.** If you work, worked, or would have worked at the employer's primary address when the discrimination occurred, answer **Yes** to the question on this page. If you work, worked, or would have worked at a different address, or remotely, answer, **No**.
  - > **Tip!** If you select **No** to the question "Do you work, did you work, or would you have worked, at the above address?" the screen will change to provide fields to enter your work address and ask if this was remote work.

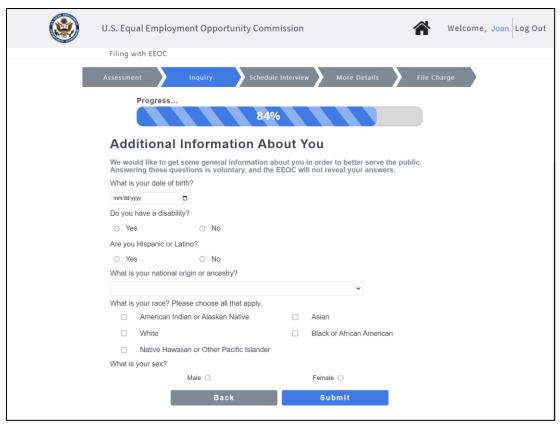
If you work, worked, or would have worked at a location other than the employer's primary address (or <u>remotely</u>) when the discrimination occurred, enter the address where you worked and indicate whether this was remote work.

> **Tip!** If you worked remotely, enter the address where you physically worked. If you did not work at a particular address, enter the location of human resources or your supervisor.

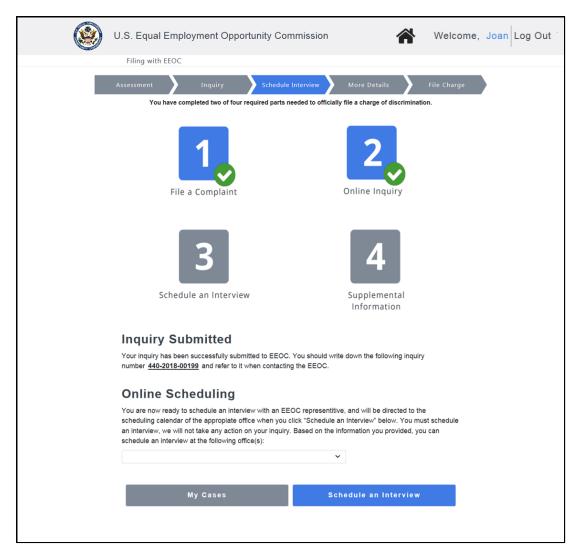


- **Step 14. Previous Filing Information.** Indicate whether you have previously filed a complaint about this matter, either with the EEOC or another agency.
  - > **Tip!** If you select **Yes** to the question "Have you already filed a charge with the EEOC about this matter?" the screen will change to provide fields to enter the date you filed (required) and the charge number.
  - > **Tip!** If you select **Yes** to the question "Have you filed a complaint with another agency about this matter?" the screen will change to provide fields to enter the agency name, date you filed, and what the complaint was about (all three are required).
- **Step 15. Demographics.** Finally, you will be asked some general demographic questions (date of birth, disability, ethnic background, sex, etc.). This information is important to the EEOC for research purposes that help them better serve the public. It is voluntary and the EEOC will not reveal your answers.
  - > **Tip!** Previously your age could be entered as a number. To enter your age, you must provide your date of birth.

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- **Step 16.** Select the **Submit** button to submit the inquiry. The EEOC will evaluate your information and advise you on what they can do to assist you.
- **Step 17.** When the inquiry is successfully submitted, a page displays confirming your submission with an inquiry number as shown below. (Note: the inquiry number displayed is for a fictional case.) Be sure to write the inquiry number down so you can refer to it later.
  - > **Tip!** If you choose not to pursue your inquiry, you may close it at any time, by selecting the **Opt Out** button (refer to Chapter 2 for details).



- **Step 18.** You will be presented with the instructions for Preservation of Evidence. You must read and confirm you have read them by checking the **I confirm** box at the bottom of the screen. You will not be able to take further action on your inquiry until you have confirmed that you have read the instructions.
  - > **Tip!** If you prefer to read and confirm the instructions later, you may select the **I do not wish to confirm at this time** box. However, the instructions will continue to be displayed when you open this case until you confirm them.



#### KEEP YOUR DOCUMENTS - BOTH PAPER AND ELECTRONIC

You must retain anything that might be evidence related to your charge. This includes ALL documents, communications, and electronic information that are potentially related to the claims of discrimination in your EEOC charge, including the harm caused by the discrimination, and all records of your communications with the EEOC. Even if you are not sure whether the information is relevant to your discrimination claim, please do not throw it away or delete it. PLEASE READ THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION BELOW.

#### > WHAT INFORMATION MUST YOU KEEP?

The following are some examples, not a complete list, of information you must keep. If you have questions about what you should or should not do, please contact your investigator

- Paper documents, such as:
  - Employee manuals, pay stubs, work schedules
  - · Letters, memos, your notes, diaries, and calendars
- Pictures, drawings, charts, whether or not they contain words
   Electronic information, such as:
- - · E-mails, text messages, instant messages, tweets, social media posts and pictures
- Voice messages, video and sound recordings
   Word processing documents, electronic calendar entries
   Electronic memory on devices or the devices themselves, such as:

  - Memory on computers, laptops, tablets, cell phones
     Computers, laptops, tablets, cell phones

Do not delete, replace, alter, "wipe," or "clear" your computer hard drive, electronic Do not detete, replace, airer, whee, or clear your computer hand arrive, electrome tablet, or cell phone. Also ensure that settings for emails and text messages are not set to delete content after a certain period of time. If you experience a hard drive failure or need to upgrade your phone or device, please keep the hard drive or original phone or device. If you post to any social media platform like Facebook and Instagram, do not delete any posts related to your work or discriminatory conduct and consider making your accounts private.

WHY MUST YOU KEEP THIS INFORMATION? The information you must keep might be evidence related to your charge. We are required by the courts to ensure that all potentially relevant information is retained. Please note that if a lawsuit is filed based on your charge and you do not keep these records, this may cause you to lose your case, or to lose the right to recover money lost due to the discrimination.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR INFORMATION? Your investigator will discuss with you what information is needed by the EEOC to investigate your charge. Information that you provide that happens to be private or personal in nature will not be disclosed by the EEOC during its investigation, and if the EEOC files suit on your charge, we will do our best to keep such information out of the court proceedings.

## LOOK FOR WORK AND KEEP RECORDS OF YOUR JOB SEARCH IF YOU ARE UNEMPLOYED

If you lost your job or were not hired due to discrimination, you may be entitled to the pay or wages you lost. However, you cannot receive lost wages unless you can show that you looked for another job to replace the one you lost or were denied due to discrimination. To prove that you searched for work, you must keep copies of all letters, emails, or other evidence of your job search. If you find a new job but it pays less than the job you lost, you may be entitled to the difference in pay. Keep all evidence of your job search even if you find another job.

#### > WHAT IS EVIDENCE OF YOUR JOB SEARCH?

The following types of information can prove that you have tried to find work. If you have questions about what you are required to do, please contact your investigator.

- Copies of job applications and resumes
   Alist of all the companies you contact about jobs by phone, letter orin-person
   Copies of e-mails or letters that you send to or receive from companies whereyou have
- asked about work or submitted an application
- Alist of all the places where you apply, and for each one:
   the date of the application;

  - · the position you were seeking:
  - the response you received from your application, such as rejection letters orinvitations to interview;
     whether you were interviewed and the date of the interview;

  - · the results of the interview;
- whether you turned down a job offer, and if you did, why

  Notes about what you did to look for work (for example, searching thenewspaper or Internet, attending job fairs or contacting employmentagencies) and the dates that you onduct the search
- Copiesof your pay stubs or earnings records if you find another job.

### > KEEP YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION UP-TO-DATE

Once you file a charge with the EEOC, you must tell us if you move or get a new address, telephone number, or e-mail address. Just log into the EEOC Public Portal and update your contact information. We may need to talk to you to get more information. If EEOC cannot reach you to get necessary information, your charge may be dismissed.

To continue, you must confirm that you have read the above instructions.

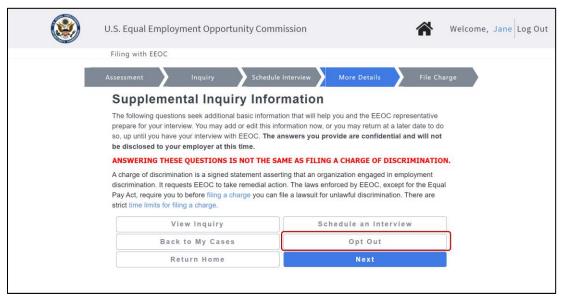
□ I confirm that I have read these instructions ☐ I do not wish to confirm at this time

## Chapter 2 Opt Out of an Inquiry

If you decide not to pursue your inquiry, you may notify the EEOC at any time by selecting the **Opt Out** button in the EEOC Public Portal. This action will close your inquiry and cancel any appointments you have scheduled with the EEOC regarding this inquiry. This button appears in several places on the EEOC Public Portal for your convenience.

To cancel your inquiry, perform the following steps:

- **Step 1.** Open the EEOC Public Portal and select **My Cases**.
- **Step 2.** The login page displays. Enter your user ID and password to login.
- **Step 3.** If you have more than one case submitted with the EEOC, the **My Cases listing** displays first; select the EEOC Number to access your inquiry.
- **Step 4.** The inquiry status page displays. Select the **Opt Out** button.



> **Tip!** If you are scheduling an appointment, you may select the **Opt Out** button from the **Appointment Scheduling** Page.



> **Tip!** If you have already scheduled an appointment, and are rescheduling it, you may select the **Opt Out** button from the **Appointment Scheduling** page.



- **Step 5.** The confirmation page displays. Select the **Confirm Opt Out** button to close your inquiry.
  - > **Tip!** If you change your mind, you may keep your inquiry open by selecting the **Keep My Inquiry Open** button instead (you can still opt to close it at any time). This will return you to the inquiry status page.



**Step 6.** The inquiry is closed, and any appointments you scheduled with the EEOC regarding this inquiry are cancelled. You will receive the following email notification:

FROM: U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC) <noreply@eeoc.gov> SUBJECT: Notice of Closed Inquiry



## U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

This email confirms your voluntary closure of EEOC Inquiry {EEOC Number} and your request that the EEOC take no further action related to this Inquiry. If you had an appointment scheduled through the EEOC's Public Portal, this email confirms its cancellation. Should you later want to file a charge on this or any other matter, you must submit a new Inquiry in the EEOC Public Portal. Please note there are strict time limits for filing a charge.

## **Chapter 3** Additional Steps

After you submit your online inquiry, you may schedule an interview to discuss your inquiry with an EEOC representative. You should provide additional information about your complaint prior to the interview (refer to EEOC Public Portal User's Guide Vol 3 – Post-Inquiry Tasks for details).