

“Glass ceiling” blocking advancement leads to settlement that provides guidelines for every employer

In a settlement, in the form of a Consent Decree, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provided employers with a blueprint for avoiding similar lawsuits. The EEOC alleged that female sales employees faced a “glass ceiling,” which blocked advancement while they were employed at Trendwest Resorts, Inc.

Trendwest, a leading company in the timeshare industry headquartered in Redmond, Washington, settled a sex discrimination lawsuit brought under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The lawsuit alleged that Trendwest failed to provide promotional opportunities for a class of female sales employees because of their gender.

Non-monetary settlement requirements

In addition to a monetary settlement, Trendwest agreed to a non-monetary settlement.

The company agreed to:

- Reaffirm its commitment to comply with employment anti-discrimination laws
- Retain a consultant to review and audit its promotional and advancement practices and implement a new written policy setting out criteria for advancement opportunities
- Oversee management training regarding discrimination
- Provide the EEOC with information on future complaints of discrimination

What This Means to Counties

This settlement is important to counties because it emphasizes the trend toward standard non-monetary settlement requirements.

Every county should look at the list of the EEOC’s non-monetary requirements in this case to see if similar policies are in place.

For more information, visit the EEOC’s website at www.eeoc.gov, or contact CTSI at 303-861-0507.