

Age Discrimination stories collected by AARP Oregon in January, 2019

Jean O.	BEAVERTON	I worked at DAT Solutions from 1999 to 2017. I was a loyal, hardworking employee that always went above and beyond. I never called in sick ever in all those years. My boss for the last 3 years decided I was too old for the job. She was constantly putting me down, calling me stupid, etc. She is about 2 years younger than me. Finally she was able to fire me by saying they were eliminating my position. Though they were still having someone cover the front desk from another department. They wanted me gone and have someone younger. They are now having to have 4 people do the job I did and they are paying one person more than they paid me--all because she is younger. Shortly after firing me, they fired 8 other people all over 50. Then another 2 people a month ago that had been there for over 20 years each. Everyone that was fired was over 50 and had been with the company for at least 15 years. All of us that we were going to retire from DAT Solutions, but now we all are having to start over again--all because of them. The worst part is we can't actually prove it, though we all know it is age discrimination.
Montie B.	GRANTS PASS	My husband wanted to help fight the wild fires we had last summer. My husband is a very experienced heavy equipment operator fighting wildlands fires (38 1/2 yrs). We had many of them at the time. If they didn't want to have him run the equipment they could have used him for his knowledge. They told him "he was too old." Many people asked him why he wasn't helping with the fires. He would just tell the people with the questions what the forest service said.
Lori M.	BEAVERTON	In January 2009 I was Laid Off at that time I was 55 years old. I had a BS degree in the tech field. I sent out hundreds of résumés logged into many job search website. Over 5 years I received only ONE job interview after the interview I was never notified from that company again. I even tried getting a job in the fast food industry never received any call after the job application was submitted on line. I even tried looking for entry level jobs and was told I was over qualified. I continued to look for employment until 2013 with no avail and stopped looking that same year due to a near death caused by a heart attack.
Clare S.	Eugene	I worked at a large nonprofit as a senior research associate. A new CEO came on board and suddenly most of the older staff were disappearing because their departments were being closed even though they provided revenue stream to the organization. Most of these people had been long term employees and held the institutional memory that the new CEO was threatened by. The research department was closed and I (age 59 at the time) and the other senior researcher (age 65) were let go while they absorbed the IR researcher with less seniority (age 30) into another department. At the same time a number of young professionals were brought on to manage social media. I looked for a comparable job for a year before I gave up and opted for early retirement...at a big financial loss to me.
Boyd S.	MEDFORD	I worked at a federal agency and my co-workers referred to me as "an old man." At the time I was in my mid-forties and they were in their early

		<p>thirties. They would also say to me that I wear old man shirts. I felt I dressed more appropriate than all of them and my clothes were definitely more expensive. I filed an EEOC complaint and the investigator indicated this complaint and others were valid. However, I felt my co-workers and my immediate boss were dishonest. My attorney at the time indicated it would take a minimum of two to three years in court to prove they were dishonest and over \$50,000 in legal fees. I walked away!</p>
Anne C.	Brownsville	<p>The signs were so vague I didn't realize them immediately. From a very early age I have normally applied for and been considered for employment almost anywhere I have been. I have a B.S. degree and a colorful lifetime of experiences including time abroad, the study of languages, etc. At the age of 50 it was 2006. Our economy hadn't yet seen the full signs of what was to happen in the next few years. We had lost our 21 year old daughter to brain cancer in August. Because of this, the onset of menopause, and the grief surrounding our family I had trouble sleeping. Nevertheless, I needed to find at least part time employment to supplement my husband's full time income. Each application I submitted resulted in a very strange form of silence. Because so many applications are submitted online I assumed data analysis was disqualifying me. Like many other mothers my work history reflected my parenting years. I'd always done something, usually part-time, while our children were young just to make sure when they left home I would still be employable. Now, I couldn't even raise a reply online. I would have welcomed an old-fashioned sign on a door stating "Hiring," so I could go in and have a conversation with an employer! It finally dawned on me that my age was kicking me out of every system before any other factor had been analyzed. Without actually ASKING my age, work history and other dates can easily place you in an age category. Eventually, I took a few different part-time positions. They were low pay and, quite frankly, embarrassing. But, by then, the recession had begun and my husband had been laid off. He took a one year course of study and my meager income was necessary. I decided to start my own business then and had that for a period of nearly 10 years until we sold our family home in Washington. I am a 4th or 5th generation Oregonian via both parents and knew I would return here eventually and so we did. My husband is employed full time and I am working to restore an old farmhouse we purchased. I miss the comradery of a working environment but now, aged 62, I am truly afraid of applying for employment of any kind.</p>
Brenda D.	Yamhill	<p>I was let go at my previous job due to changing responsibilities. I have been looking for another job. By the way - I'm 68 years old. Businesses call and they asked me when I graduated. I answer them and they hang up on me. Those that don't hang up right away tell me that I don't qualify for their programs. I have versatile experience. It's really because I know they are not interviewing me due to my age.</p>
Patrick B.	Eagle Creek	<p>Head hunters call me all the time. I am actively seeking employment. I cannot ask your age, but they can ask what year you graduated high school. When I tell them that year was 1971, they hang up on me. Keep in mind that they called me!</p>
Doris W.	Portland	<p>I HOPE SOMEONE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS. My story is not about the work place, but being hired for a good job. I am 77 years old and have</p>

		<p>been looking for a real job for almost 6 years. I have done credit and collections for almost 40 years. A company in California wanted to know if I had children and grandchildren. I told her I had great grandchildren and asked her if there was a problem there. Went to EOCC. I ultimately got paid a small amount for that happening. They did not contest it. I am very tired of being told that I am "too overqualified, too much experience, not a good fit, don't fit the culture, and not appropriate". Never did find out what that meant. In my profession companies have taken away separation of duties and have combined a lot of accounting procedures that I did not have the opportunity to learn. I have such a full background in credit and collections. I am an intern at SE Works and get minimum wage for 24 hours a week. I am so capable of working a 40 hour week. When people see my resume they sometimes ask me to come in right away. Then I think when they see me they decide to hire someone else. Unfortunately, I see the same job posted again in about 3 months. If you ever need a copy of my resume, I would be very willing to send you one. I can't afford to actually join AARP. Between Social Security and the small amount I get here and all the rents and prices rising, I just don't have enough to live on. Right now I am completely broke until the 25th. I have about 60 cents in my wallet. I am tired of borrowing money just to exist. If you need my help to try to get this thing solved let me know. Thank you for your time.</p>
Dianne W.	SALEM	<p>When I was 58 years old my husband was in extremely poor health. I had been working a 6 hour work day in order to help care for him for the previous 3 years. Working 80% ensured full medical insurance. We were hiring home health workers to provide care so that I could continue working, even though they cost nearly as much as I was taking home in pay. We were paying the home health workers ourselves because insurance would not cover, but they were unreliable. Medical Insurance only pays for medical help, not "companion" help. My husband could take his own pills and shots, he needed someone to get him a drink or lunch, to pick up what he had dropped. He was bed-ridden. After several incidences of home health worker not showing up and all three local home health agencies telling me they had no one to send out that day, I took a leave of absence to care for him myself. My workplace allowed 3 month medical leave of absence to care for a family member. My husband died 5 months later. I could not get my old job back. Over the next 5 years, I could only find temporary positions in my profession. After I turned 60, I rarely could get an interview. I had education, a professional degree with license, and experience, but it didn't help. After I was 62 I never got an interview. I know it was age discrimination. I applied for Social Security (reduced) benefits. Would I do anything differently? No, I believe I provided better care than home health workers did and my husband and I enjoyed our time together. Besides age discrimination, which I find disgusting and definitely hurt me, this is a plea for paid family-provided home care system and universal medical insurance.</p>
William S.	Portland	<p>I sought employment for ten years after a long career as an educator. Potential employers are too smart to document their discrimination against adults over 50 years of age. They often made disparaging and humiliating remarks against me during job interviews even though I was extremely</p>

		qualified for the positions that I applied for on the basis of experience and training. I also have excellent recommendations and an outstanding job record. Nevertheless, I was discriminated against in my job search so I decided to apply for Social Security and not put up with the age discrimination any longer.
Sharon J.	Beaverton	I went through 12 --yes 12 -- contacts/phone interviews/in-person interviews for a facility administrator position at age 57; the recruiter told me I just had to meet the VP Operations (owner's son, who was about 30 y.o.) at an airport restaurant as a formality. I could tell as I was approaching him and he did a visual appraisal that I did not fit his image. After the cursory and rude interaction with him, I would never work for that company -- and of course did not get the job offer. I feel lucky that generally my qualifications/experience have allowed me a great career in health/human services administration. I do think this field is usually more open and less image-driven (youthful, executive appearance) than others.
Susan P.	BEND	My experience is that I no longer get calls for interviews after submitting a resume or application for positions I'm readily qualified for. I'm 58 and this began about 4 years ago. I'm a nurse so I almost always used to get call backs for every application put in. The health care industry wants people with 1-2 years' experience because they work cheaper and are probably perceived as healthier, even though they have a high rate of quitting jobs. They sacrifice experience and the welfare of patients so they can save money.
Bridget S.	LAKE OSWEGO	I hold a MA in communications and have worked in higher education, non profits, and corporations. After losing my job as director of marketing for a bank due to acquisition, I tried for a year and a half to find a comparable position. I often interviewed and was told on more than one occasion that I offered the best interview the HR director had "ever seen". I was often brought back for a second round only to be told I was #2- after checking LinkedIn, I could see each incident where they hired someone at least 25-30 years younger than me with much less experience.
Carla E.	Redmond	When I came to Oregon from California, I was looking for a job in my profession of 33 years and found that even though I went to each potential employer in my town, I couldn't even get an interview. They would not get to see me, only my resume, and from that they could deduce my age---late 50's. They always say they want experienced people, but I see just the opposite. They hire young naive people who have not had time for any worldly knowledge to develop, and because they usually can offer them less money. And they are so green, that they are the ones who are most likely to be hired. To make it worse, I moved here from California and I've seen discrimination based on that too. How long do you have to live in OR to be considered an Oregonian?
John M.	Sweet Home	I was employed at a small NW consulting firm which is owned by a large mid-west firm, in their mid-Willamette Valley office. When the head of the company, whom had hired me, retired, he had to choose between me and another Principal to replace him. He selected the other person who was younger than me. Over the next few years, the new President and I got along, but I always felt there was some animosity on his part although it

		<p>never showed in my reviews, which were always good. In October 2009, 7 months short of turning 62, he called me in and said my position had been eliminated. I claimed it was age discrimination and an HR person from the mid-west said that I had no case and if I fought it, they would eliminate my severance. As I was not prepared financially to retire so soon, I had to accept the terms as I needed the money. A few years after my termination, they re-established the Director of Operations position, proving my belief that it was age discrimination and a way to get rid of a higher salaried person.</p>
<p>Lisa W.</p>	<p>Portland</p>	<p>My name is Lisa and I am a member of AARP now with my husband. He did not have a story for you but I did. I worked from age 18 into my 50s consistently and never had an issue at work. After losing my job at age 51, I started looking for a new job. I realize this is difficult for everyone today but it seemed to go on forever. 7-8 applications via the internet per day. A few first round interviews and a few less in person interviews. One hiring process stands out in my mind. This was for a company that supports non-profits with technical and accounting resources. I went through the first round phone interview and the HR contact liked me enough to set up an in person round two. I went to the interview with a business suit coming from the dress for success generation. I was sitting on the couch in the lobby when the hiring manager and another gentlemen came to greet me. He looked me up and down and said for me to wait a moment that the two of them needed to discuss something in the conference room and he would be right out to get me. As promised he came to get me and the moment I sat down he said..." I don't see X skill listed on your resume... I need that for this role". I glanced at the other gentlemen, looked back at the one speaking to me and said no I don't have X skill. The other gentlemen looked very uncomfortable in his chair when I responded. The one speaking just said I am sorry we need X skill. I got up and left. As I was walking to my car after the 1 minute interview, I called the HR contact. "That was fast, what happened". I said the hiring manager was looking for X skill. She said he has never required that before and had never told her about that need". I can't prove it of course but I believe that I must have looked too old for the job. If the missing skill was so important I would think the pre-screener would have been aware of it and screened me out of the in person interview. I am not computer illiterate. I am not sick all the time. I love technology. I am an overachiever at work and have awards to show for it My problem is I hit 50. We live in a disposable world. We are indispensable, not disposable.</p>