

# Fired co-leader of #AppleToo worker activist group to file federal complaints

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One of two recognized leaders of an employee activist group within Apple has been fired.

Janneke Parrish, a program manager for Apple Maps working in Austin, Texas, said she was fired Thursday. She is one of the co-founders of an [employee](#) group that this summer opened an #AppleToo website and began publishing former and current Apple employees' stories about harassment and discrimination on Medium.

"I believe that it is retaliation. One does not casually speak out publicly against Apple and expect that to go ignored," Parrish told U.S. TODAY. Her firing was first reported in an interview with The Verge.

More than 500 people have come forward about workplace issues, Parrish and Cher Scarlett, another Apple employee who helped start the group, told *The New York Times*, which also confirmed Parrish's firing.

Parrish said an internal investigation at Apple began last month after audio of an all-staff meeting with CEO Tim Cook was leaked to The Verge and The New York Times. She was told the company suspected her of leaking the feed, Parrish told The Verge. She was suspended on Oct. 8, she said. Then on Oct. 14, Parrish said she was told she was fired for deleting files on the company devices she had turned in.

"I think when I came under investigation that was a pretext to find something that they could use to fire me," Parrish said. "Prior to turning in my devices, though, I did remove some of my personal data from these devices, because well, my private conversations ... those are not Apple's business. And similarly, my financial information on apps like Robinhood is not Apple's business. Because I deleted files from my devices before turning them in, that is the reason that was given for why I was terminated."

In response to a query about Parrish's firing, Apple sent a statement to U.S. TODAY: "We are and have always been deeply committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive workplace. We take all

concerns seriously and we thoroughly investigate whenever a concern is raised and, out of respect for the privacy of any individuals involved, we do not discuss specific employee matters."

This is just the latest incident involving Apple and employee concerns. Just prior to Parrish's firing, her comments appeared in a story by The Washington Post about Scarlett, who is on medical leave from the company. Parrish's firing was also confirmed by The Washington Post.

In that story, Scarlett said she had attempted to look into whether there was a pay gap for Apple employees across the country, which angered some other employees. She said some used the company's internal Slack channel to accuse her of leaking confidential information to reporters—something Scarlett told the Post she hadn't done.

She has since hired a lawyer and sought to go on paid medical leave because of the accusations' effect on her health.

Apple also recently fired Ashley Gjøvik, who had been suspended in early August after sharing her concerns about workplace safety due to workplace pollution. After her suspension, she says she filed workplace complaints with state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, as well as the National Labor Relations Board.

In documents Gjøvik shared with Bloomberg, Apple claimed the senior engineering program manager was terminated for violating policies including not cooperating with the investigation and disclosure of confidential product information. Gjøvik said she was fired in retaliation for reporting concerns about [work conditions](#) to the government and press, and for organizing with employees.

The #AppleToo movement arose from employee outcry over Apple's May 2021 hiring of Antonio García Martínez, a former Facebook product manager and author of the book "Chaos Monkeys."

A letter signed by more than 2,000 employees and forwarded to Apple management, expressed concerns about "misogynistic statements in his autobiography—such as 'Most women in the Bay Area are soft and weak, cosseted and naïve despite their claims of worldliness, and generally full of shit,'" The Verge reported at the time.

"That was a moment where we realized that employee activism could make a difference, that our voices in solidarity with each other could have a [positive impact](#) on our work at Apple," Parrish said. But issues of remote work advocacy—including employees' ability to advance if not at Apple's Cupertino, California headquarters—and pay equity "did not get a positive response from leadership," she said.

Vincent White, an attorney at White, Hilferty and Albanese in New York City, said Parrish plans to file complaints in federal court and possibly with federal agencies. "It is clear that Apple has forgotten, no matter how wealthy your company is, the government can still slap you around when you openly defy its laws," he said.

Parrish posted on Twitter Friday that "There are consequences for speaking out. There are consequences for doing the right thing. But we do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. #AppleToo is about asking Apple to do better, to end systemic discrimination, abuse and pay inequity."

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