

WorkSource Three Rivers Grievance and Complaints Procedure

GENERAL POLICY

If any individual, group, or organization has a complaint, the problem should first be discussed informally between those involved before a grievance is filed. Applicants and Participants for services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I (WIOA) paid for by the TRRC Workforce Development and/or the Three Rivers Regional Commission Board will be treated fairly. Grievance/complaints should be filed in accordance with the written procedures established by Three Rivers Regional Commission Workforce Development. Signed and dated grievance forms with accurate contact information are included in all participant case files. **If you believe you have been harmed by the violation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or regulations of this program, you have the right to file a grievance/complaint.**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

TRRCWD adheres to the following United States law: It is against the law for this recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases: Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, on the basis of the individual's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. References include: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 P. L. 113-128 USDOL Regulations Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 29 C.F.R. § 38.36 effective July 22, 2015.

Equal Opportunity Is the Law (29 C.F.R. § 38.35)

It is against the law for this recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases:

- Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, on the basis of the individual's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

The recipient must not discriminate in any of the following areas:

- Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity;

- providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or
- making employment decisions in the administration of, or in connection with, such a program or activity.

Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This means that, upon request and at no cost to the individual, recipients are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities.

What to Do If You Believe You Have Experienced Discrimination

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with either:

The recipient's Equal Opportunity Officer (or the person whom the recipient has designated for this purpose); or

The Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW. Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210 or electronically as directed on the CRC Web site at www.dol.gov/crc.

If you file your complaint with the recipient, you must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action, or until 90 days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the Civil Rights Center (see address above).

If the recipient does not give you a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, you may file a complaint with CRC before receiving that Notice. However, you must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the 90-day deadline (in other words, within 120 days after the day on which you filed your complaint with the recipient).

If the recipient does give you a written Notice of Final Action on your complaint, but you are dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, you may file a complaint with CRC. You must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the date on which you received the Notice of Final Action.

A **complaint** is an allegation of discrimination on the grounds a person, or any specific class of individuals, has been or is being discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, citizenship status, or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity as prohibited by WIOA or part 29CFR38.69. An allegation of retaliation, intimidation or reprisal for taking action or participating in any action to secure rights protected under WIOA will be processed as a **complaint**.

COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION

TRRCWD is prohibited from, and does not engage in, discriminating against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

Both the complainant and the respondent have the right to be represented by an attorney or other individual of their choice. (29 C.F.R. § 38.71)

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA-funded program or activity, you may file a complaint within **180 days** from the date of the alleged violation with the Workforce Development TRRC, WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer, Hope Blakely, Three Rivers Regional Commission, P.O. Box 818, 120 North Hill Street, Griffin, GA, 30224, (678) 692-0510, hking@threeriversrc.com

OR

Complaints may also be filed with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division, David Dietrichs, WIOA Title I Equal Opportunity Officer, 75 Fifth Street, NW, Suite 845, Atlanta, GA 30308, 404-962-4136; DDietrichs@georgia.org; FAX: 404-486-1181; TTY/TDD 1-800-255-0056.

OR

A complainant may be filed directly with the Director, Civil Rights Center, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210. Or at the website below:

<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/external-enforc-complaints.htm>

Furthermore, the USDOL Civil Rights Center provides a complaint form which should be utilized, if sending a discrimination-based complaint, and can be found at the website detailed above.

Upon receipt of the complaint, if the TRRCWD WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer determines that it does not have jurisdiction over a complaint, it must notify the complainant, in writing within five business days of making such determination.

This Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction must include:

- (a) A statement of the reasons for that determination; and
- (b) Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the Notice.

The Workforce Development TRRC or Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division, (GDEcD,WD) then GDEcD,WD or the TRRCWD under this part and WIOA Section 188 will process complaints and it will contain the following elements:

- (1) Initial, written notice to the complainant that contains the following information:
 - (i) An acknowledgment that the recipient has received the complaint; and
 - (ii) Notice that the complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process
 - (iii) Notice of rights contained in [§ 38.35](#); and
 - (iv) Notice that the complainant has the right to request and receive, at no cost, auxiliary aids and services, language assistance services, and that this notice will be translated into the non-English languages as required in [§§ 38.4\(h\) and \(i\)](#), [38.34](#), and [38.36](#).

- (2) A written statement of the issue(s), provided to the complainant, that includes the following information:

- (i) A list of the issues raised in the complaint; and
 - (ii) For each such issue, a statement whether the recipient will accept the issue for investigation or reject the issue, and the reasons for each rejection.
- (3) A period for fact-finding or investigation of the circumstances underlying the complaint.
- (4) A period during which the recipient attempts to resolve the complaint. The methods available to resolve the complaint must include alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
- (5) A written Notice of Final Action, provided to the complainant within 90 days of the date on which the complaint was filed, that contains the following information:
- (i) For each issue raised in the complaint, a statement of either:
 - (A) The recipient's decision on the issue and an explanation of the reasons underlying the decision; or
 - (B) A description of the way the parties resolved the issue; and
 - (ii) Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the Notice of Final Action is received if the complainant is dissatisfied with the recipient's final action on the complaint.

The complainant has the option to resolve the complaint using alternative dispute resolution of their choice. The ADR procedures must provide:

- (1) The complainant may attempt ADR at any time after the complainant has filed a written complaint with the recipient, but before a Notice of Final Action has been issued.
- (2) The choice whether to use ADR or the customary process rests with the complainant.
- (3) A party to any agreement reached under ADR may notify the Director in the event the agreement is breached. In such circumstances, the following rules will apply:
 - (i) The non-breaching party may notify with the Director within 30 days of the date on which the non-breaching party learns of the alleged breach; and
 - (ii) The Director must evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement has been breached. If the Director determines that the agreement has been breached, the complaint will be reinstated and processed in accordance with the recipient's procedures.
- (4) If the parties do not reach an agreement under ADR, the complainant may file a complaint with the Director as described in §§ 38.69 through 38.71.

Each complaint must be filed in writing, either electronically or in hard copy, and must contain the following information:

- (a) The complainant's name, mailing address, and, if available, email address (or another means of contacting the complainant).
- (b) The identity of the [respondent](#) (the individual or [entity](#) that the complainant alleges is responsible for the discrimination).
- (c) A description of the complainant's allegations. This description must include enough detail to allow the Director or the [recipient](#), as applicable, to decide whether:
 - (1) CRC or the [recipient](#), as applicable, has jurisdiction over the complaint
 - (2) The complaint was filed in time; and

(3) The complaint has apparent merit; in other words, whether the complainant's allegations, if true, would indicate noncompliance with any of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA or this part.

(d) The written or electronic signature of the complainant or the written or electronic signature of the complainant's representative.

(e) A complainant may file a complaint by completing and submitting CRC's Complaint Information and Privacy Act Consent Forms, which may be obtained either from the recipient's EO Officer or from CRC. The forms are available electronically on CRC's Web site, and in hard copy via postal mail upon request. The latter requests may be sent to CRC at the address listed in the notice contained in § 38.35.

If the recipient issues its Notice of Final Action before the 90-day period ends, but the complainant is dissatisfied with the recipient's decision on the complaint, the complainant or the complainant's representative may file a complaint with the Director within 30 days after the date on which the complainant receives the Notice. (§38.75)

If the recipient, has failed to issue a Notice of Final Action by the end of 90 days from the date on which the complainant filed the complaint, the recipient, the complainant or the complainant's representative may file a complaint with the Director within 30 days of the expiration of the 90-day period. In other words, the complaint must be filed with the Director within 120 days of the date on which the complaint was filed with the recipient. (§38.76)

Upon receipt of the complaint, if the TRRCWD WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer determines that it does not have jurisdiction over a complaint, it must notify the complainant, in writing within five business days of making such determination.

This Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction must include:

- (a) A statement of the reasons for that determination; and
- (b) Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the Notice.

TRRCWD will offer full cooperation with any local, state, or federal investigation in accordance with the aforementioned proceedings, or with any criminal investigation.

COMPLAINTS OF FRAUD, ABUSE OR OTHER ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

In cases of suspected fraud, abuse or other alleged criminal activity, you should direct your concerns to the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor, at 1-866-435-7644. There is no charge for this call.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

If the complaint is not resolved informally and it involves public schools of the State of Georgia, the grievance procedure will comply with WIOA and OCGA 20-2-1160.

ALL OTHER COMPLAINTS (VIOLATIONS OF THE ACT OR REGULATIONS)

GENERAL GRIEVANCE POLICY

Individuals applying for or receiving services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I (WIOA) paid for by Three Rivers Regional Commission Workforce Development (TRRCWD) and/or the Three Rivers Regional Commission Board will be

treated fairly. If any individual, group or organization has a complaint, the problem should first be discussed informally between those involved before a grievance is filed. Grievances should be filed in accordance with the written procedures established by TRRCWD. **If you believe you have been harmed by the violation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or regulations of the program, you have the right to file a grievance.**

A **grievance** is a complaint about customer service, working conditions, wages, work assignment, etc., arising in connection with WIOA Title I funded programs operated by WIOA recipients including service providers, eligible training providers, one- stop partners and other contractors.

FILING A GENERAL GRIEVANCE (violations of the act or regulations not alleging discrimination)

Who May File: Any person, including WIOA program participants, applicants, staff, employers, board members or any other interested parties who believes they have received unfair treatment in a WIOA Title I funded program.

Any person may attempt to resolve all issues of unfair treatment by working with the appropriate manager and/or supervisor and staff member, service provider, or one- stop partner involved informally prior to a written grievance being filed.

All complaints as described in the previous definition may be filed within one hundred twenty (120) days after the act in question by first completing and submitting a **written** statement or completing the General Grievance Form to:

**WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer, Hope Blakely
Three Rivers Regional Commission
P.O. Box 818
120 North Hill Street
Griffin, GA. 30224**

The written statement must include

Complaints filed with TRRCWD must contain the following:

- A. The full name, telephone number, email (if any), and address of the person making the complaint.
- B. The full name, address and email of the person or organization against whom the complaint is made.
- C. A clear but brief statement of the facts including the date(s) that the alleged violation occurred, including the identification of all relevant parties.
- D. Relief requested.
- E. Complainant's signature and date.

For the grievance submission form, see website: <http://www.threeriversrc.org>

A complaint will be considered to have been filed when TRRCWD receives from the complainant a written statement, including information specified above which contains sufficient facts and arguments to evaluate the complaint.

Upon receipt of the complaint, if the TRRCWD WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer determines that it does not have jurisdiction over a complaint, it must notify the complainant, in writing within five business days of making such determination.

This Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction must include:

- (a) A statement of the reasons for that determination; and
- (b) Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the Notice.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the TRRCWD WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will initiate efforts with the complainant and others involved to bring about a resolution as soon as possible. This will include a meeting of all parties with the hope of reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant within thirty (30) days, the TRRCWD WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will arrange appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing for settlement of the complaint to be held within sixty (60) days of grievance filing.

Hearing Process

A hearing on any complaint filed shall be conducted as soon as reasonably possible, but within sixty (60) days of the complaint's filing. Within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the request for a hearing, TRRCWD shall: (1) respond in writing acknowledging the request to the grievant; and (2) notify the grievant and respondent of a hearing date. The notice shall include, but not limited to: (1) date of issuance; (2) name of grievant; (3) name of respondent against whom the complaint has been filed; (4) a statement reiterating that both parties may be represented by legal counsel at the hearing; (5) the date, time, place of the hearing, and the name of the hearing officer; (6) a statement of the alleged violation(s) of WIOA ; (7) copy of any policies and procedures for the hearing or identification of where such policies may be found; and (8) name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

The hearing shall be conducted in compliance with federal regulations. The hearing shall have, at a minimum, the following components: (1) an impartial hearing officer selected by TRRCWD; (2) an opportunity for both the grievant and respondent to present an opening statement, witnesses, and evidence; (3) an opportunity for each party to cross-examine the other party's witnesses; and (4) a record of the hearing which TRRCWD shall create and maintain.

The hearing officer, considering the evidence presented by the grievant and respondent, shall issue a written decision, which shall serve as TRRCWD's official resolution of the complaint. The decision shall include the following information: (1) the date, time, and place of hearing; (2) a recitation of the issues alleged in the complaint; (3) a summary of any evidence and witnesses presented by the grievant and respondent; (4) an analysis of the issues as related to the facts; and (5) a decision addressing each issue alleged in the complaint.

No applicant, participant, employee, service provider or training provider will be intimidated, threatened, coerced or discriminated against because they have made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing.

If the complainant(s) does not receive a written decision from the Hearing Officer within sixty (60) days of grievance/complaint filing, or receives a decision unsatisfactory to the complainant(s), the complainant(s) then has/have a right to request a review by the State using the WIOA Complaint Information Form found at:

<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/technical-assistance/>.

Ben Hames, Deputy Commissioner
Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division
75 Fifth Street, NW Suite 845
Atlanta, GA 30308
Phone: 404-962-4005
FAX: 404-876-1181

The Deputy Commissioner shall act as the Governor's authorized representative. Either an informal resolution or a hearing will take place within 60 calendar days of the filing.

Appeal Process

An appeal to WFD of a LWDA's resolution must be filed within sixty (60) days of the date the LWDA issued its written resolution. However, a LWDA that fails to issue a written resolution of a locally filed Complaint within sixty (60) days shall give the Complainant the automatic right to file a Complaint with WFD. Once WFD has received the Complaint form and the local resolution, WFD shall issue its own resolution on the issue being appealed within sixty (60) days of receipt. Any resolution reached by WFD may be appealed to the United States Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES AND UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION PROVIDED WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT.

PARTICIPANT NAME

DATE