

**SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
P. O. BOX 6806
PINE BLUFF, AR 71611**

Phone (870) 536-1971

Fax (870) 536-7718

southeastarkansas.org/services/workforce/

Grievance & Complaint Procedure Title I-B Provider & One-Stop Operator

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe and to detail the procedures required to address stakeholder grievances or complaints alleging a violation, in accordance with the rules and regulations of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), the WIOA Final Rule, Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) published by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor (ETA), and policies of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board (AWDB) and the Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (SEAWDB).

Reference: (WIOA Law)

<https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>

Policy:

Definitions/Stakeholders

The following terms, when used in this policy, have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Complainant – an individual, group or agency that files a formal complaint alleging violation of the WIOA and/or provisions of a related agreement.

Direct Recipient – any person or governmental department, agency or establishment that receives WIOA funds through SEAWDB in order to carry out WIOA programs, but does not include an individual who is the beneficiary of such a program.

Grievant – an individual, group or agency that files a formal grievance alleging violation of the WIOA and/or provision of a related agreement.

Participant - an individual who has been determined to be eligible to participate in and who is receiving services (except follow-up services authorized under the WIOA) under a program authorized by the WIOA. Participation commences on the first day, following determination of eligibility on which the individual begins receiving subsidized employment, training or other services provided under WIOA.

GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS PROCESSING

The grievance and complaint review procedures for the local level apply to alleged violations of the requirements of WIOA and/or provisions of a related agreement. These grievances or complaints may be submitted by participants and other interested parties affected by SEAWDB system, including one-stop partners and service providers. Note: program/service grievances and complaints are not, necessarily, the same in nature as EO and discrimination. EO and discrimination complaints should be filed using procedures described in the WIOA Customer Handbook.

Filing a Grievance or Complaint

The One-Stop Center, Service or Training Provider shall provide grievant with the name, address and telephone number of the agency's official designee to whom grievances and complaints can be directed.

WIOA Regional Manager
Southeast Arkansas Workforce Centers
Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, Inc.
1001 Tennessee Street
Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71611
870-619-4803

Stakeholders/Examples of who may file a grievance or complaint include the following:

1. Applicants and/or registrants for aid, benefits, services or training,
2. Eligible applicants/registrants,
3. Participants,
4. Employers,
5. Applicants for employment under WIOA,
6. Service providers or
7. Eligible service providers

Each grievance or complaint must be filed, in writing, within 30 calendar days of the alleged situation and must contain the following information:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person filing the grievance or complaint;
2. The date of the alleged situation and the date the grievance or complaint was filed;

3. The identity of the respondent (i.e. the individual or entity against whom the grievance or complaint is alleged);
4. A description of the allegation(s). This description must include enough detail to allow the reviewer to decide whether the allegation(s), if true, would violate any of the provisions of WIOA; and
5. The signature of the person filing the grievance or complaint.

Methods of Resolution/Disposition of Complaints

Upon receipt of the grievance or complaint, the reviewer will provide written notice to the grievant or complainant. This correspondence will be sent within five (5) business days and must include the following:

1. A summary of the allegation(s) submitted;
2. The date, time and place of the meeting or hearing with the reviewer;
3. A notice that the reviewer may arrange for an informal resolution to the complaint prior to the official meeting or hearing;
4. A notice that the grievant or complainant may be represented by an attorney; and
5. A notice that the grievant or complainant may present witnesses and documentary evidence.

Each One-Stop Center, Service or Training provider must notify the EEO Officer in writing, of the complaint within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. The reviewer has a maximum of 30 calendar days to conduct an investigation of the allegations and offer a resolution. Contingent upon the nature of the grievance/complaint and/or any apparent conflicts of interest, the reviewer or EEO officer may conduct the investigation.

Notice of Final Action

Once the investigation is complete and a decision has been reached, a Notice of Final Action must be sent to the grievant or complainant with a copy to the agency. If an informal resolution was provided, the Notice of Final Action must summarize the resolution agreed upon. If no informal resolution was provided, the Notice of Final Action must contain the following information:

1. The reviewer's decision and the reasons supporting the decision;
2. A brief description of the investigation process implored to reach the decision;
3. A notice that if dissatisfied with the decision, the grievant or complainant may appeal to the local workforce development board level within 10 business days of receipt of the Notice of Final Action; and
4. A notice that the grievant or complainant may seek a remedy authorized under another Federal, State or local law.

Record Keeping Requirements

Records regarding grievances and complaints must be maintained for at least three years from the date of resolution of the grievance or complaint. All records must include the following:

1. The name and address of the grievant or complainant;
2. A description of the grievance or complaint;
3. The date the grievance or complaint was filed;
4. The disposition (final action);
5. The date of disposition of the grievance or complaint; and
6. Any other pertinent information

To the maximum extent possible, the identity of any person who has furnished information relating to, or assisting in, an investigation of a possible violation of the WIOA shall be kept confidential. The information may only be used for purposes of:

1. Record keeping and reporting;
2. Determining the extent to which an entity is operating its WIOA funded programs or activities in a nondiscriminatory manner; or
3. Other use authorized by the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA.

PROCESSING APPEALS OF LOCAL LEVEL GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINT DECISIONS

The grievance and complaint review procedures for the local level apply to alleged violations of their requirements of WIOA and/or provisions of a related agreement. These grievances or complaints may be submitted by participants and other interested parties affected by the SEAWDB system, including One-Stop Centers, Center Partners, Service and Training Providers.

The SEAWDB will review:

1. Appeals of decisions made at the local level during the grievance and complaint process;
2. Grievances or complaints alleging a violation of the requirements of the WIOA and/or provisions of a related agreement, filed by interested parties who have no recourse to the grievance and complaint procedure of a local agency, but who are affected by the WIOA programs offered through the SEAWDB Network;
3. Grievances or complaints from eligible providers of training services who are denied equitable opportunities to provide training programs to WIOA participants, by a one-stop center or program operator, or otherwise adversely affected by the one-stop center or program operator.

*Grievances or complaints from providers of training services who are denied eligibility by the SEAWDB, or who's eligibility is terminated or otherwise adversely affected by the SEAWDB must file their complaints with the Arkansas Workforce Development Board.

Arkansas Workforce Development Board, Director
#2 Capitol Mall/P.O. Box 2981
Little Rock, AR 72203

Filing an Appeal

The One-Stop Center, Service or Training Provider shall provide grievant with the name, address and telephone number of the agency's official designee to whom grievances and complaints can be directed.

SEAWDB Chairman
Southeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board, Director
P.O. Box 9806
Pine Bluff, AR 71601
870-536-1971

Each appeal must be filed, in writing, within 10 business days of the date of which the Notice of Final Action is received and must contain the following information:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person filing the appeal;
2. The identity of the respondent (i.e. the individual or entity against whom the grievance or complaint is alleged);
3. A description of the allegation(s). This description must include enough detail to allow the reviewer to decide whether the allegation(s), if true, would violate any of the provision of WIOA;
4. Pertinent dates, including the date on which the grievance or complaint was filed at the local agency level, the date of the alleged occurrence for which the grievance or complaint was filed and the date a written decision was issued (or should have been issued);
5. If applicable, copies of the provisions of the WIOA, the regulations, etc. which are believed to have been violated;
6. A statement disclosing other steps pursued at any level regarding the grievance or complaint in question;
7. A copy of the agency's Notice of Final Action, if such was rendered; and
8. The signature of the person filing the appeal.

NOTE: The appeal must be accompanied by all documentation submitted to the agency when filing the original complaint. Only information received by the local level agency during the initial investigation will be allowed as evidence in the appeal process.

Methods of Resolution/Disposition of Complaints

Upon receipt of the written request for appeal and all of the pertinent information outlined above, the reviewer for the SEAWDB will provide the grievant, or complainant, and the respondent with written acknowledgement of the appeal. This correspondence will be sent within five (5) business days and include both, a summary of the allegations submitted and an offer to resolve the issue informally prior to rendering a decision based on the written records. Finally, the acknowledgment will include a notice that upon review of the documentary evidence presented, the reviewer will make his/her decision.

The reviewer may offer the opportunity to resolve the issue informally prior to rendering a decision based on the written records. If the parties decline this opportunity, the reviewer will accept, reject or modify the decision for the local agency based on a review of the evidence. The reviewer may also remand the grievance or complaint to the local agency for further investigation. In any case, the reviewer has a maximum of 30 calendar days to review the allegation(s) and offer a resolution.

Notice of Final Action

Once a decision is reached, a Notice of Final Action must be sent to the grievant or complainant and respondent. If an informal resolution was provided, the Notice of Final Action will summarize the resolution agreed upon. If no informal resolution was provided, the Notice of Final Action will contain the following information:

1. The reviewer's decision and the reason supporting the decision;
2. A notice that, if dissatisfied with the decision, the grievant or complainant may appeal to the Arkansas Workforce Development Board, within 10 days of the Notice of Final Action from the SEAWDB;
3. Notice that copies of appeals submitted to the Arkansas Workforce Development Board, #2 Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201, must be sent to the reviewer at SEAWDB, P.O. Box 6806, Pine Bluff, AR 71611; and
4. A notice that the grievant or complainant may seek a remedy authorized under another Federal, State or local law.

Record Keeping Requirements

Records regarding grievances and complaints must be maintained for at least three years from the dated of final resolution. All records must include the following:

1. The name and address of the grievant or complainant;
2. A description of the grievance or complaint;
3. The date the grievance or complaint was filed;
4. The disposition (final action);
5. The date of disposition of the grievance or complaint; and
6. Any other pertinent information


To the maximum extent possible, the identity of any person who has furnished information relating to, or assisting in, an investigation of a possible violation of the WIOA shall be kept confidential. The information may only be used for purposes of:

1. Record keeping and reporting;
 2. Determining the extent to which an entity is operating its WIOA funded programs or activities in a nondiscriminatory manner; or
 3. Other use authorized by the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA.
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Approved:

SEAWDB Chairperson Date

Amended:

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SEAWDB Chairperson Date 4-20-22