



## **Discrimination and Program Complaint & Grievance Procedures**

Saint Louis County Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Missouri TTY users can call (800) 735-2966 or dial 7-1-1 for Relay Missouri

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## **I. WIOA Discrimination Complaint Procedures**

The St. Louis County Workforce Development Board will fully comply with the non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States 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, or political affiliation or belief, or against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

The St. Louis County Workforce Development Board will follow the Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development discrimination complaint policies and procedures found within the [Missouri Nondiscrimination Plan](#)(NDP). The NDP outline the dissemination of notices and complaint resolution practices for discrimination complaints. The Missouri Nondiscrimination Plan and complaint forms are located at: <https://jobs.mo.gov/community/equal-opportunity>.

## **II. PROGRAM COMPLAINT & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Every recipient of funds under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) must maintain a written procedure for grievances and complaints in accordance with 20 CFR 683.600, et seq. As such, this policy will govern the Office of Workforce Development's (OWD) processing of WIOA complaints and grievances.

General Program Complaints may be made up to one (1) year from the date of the event or condition alleged to be a violation of WIOA. The appropriate resolution process to be followed depends on the nature of the complaint. General WIOA complaints fall into the following two categories:

1. Complaints involving local WIOA programs, agreements, or local Workforce Development Board policies and activities; or
2. Complaints involving State WIOA policies, programs, activities, or agreements.

If St. Louis County Workforce Development (STL-WFD) does not have the jurisdiction of a program complaint then the complainant will be referred to the appropriate entity (e.g. Family Services Division (Food Stamps), Division of Workforce Development (Unemployment Insurance) etc.

A complaint may be amended or withdrawn at any time prior to a scheduled hearing.

The Local WIOA Equal Opportunity (EO) Manager who processes a WIOA Program Complaint will keep information that could lead to the identification of the person filing the complaint confidential, to the extent practical. The identity of any person who furnishes information related to, or assisting in, and investigation will also be kept confidential to the extent possible.

STL-WFD and its One-Stop partners will not discharge, intimidate, retaliate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any person because such person files a complaint, opposes a prohibited practice, furnishes information, assists, or participates in any manner in an investigation or hearing.

## **A. General Program Complaints**

Included in the body of this Issuance is the Program Complaint Form that will be used as a complaint intake tool. Any complaint received in writing will be accepted and handled in the same manner as if it were made on the General WIOA Complaint Form. The log shall include: the name and address of the complainant; the basis for the complaint; a description of the complaint; the disposition and date of disposition of the complaint; and any other pertinent information.

The procedures are as follows:

### *Who may file a complaint concerning programming with WIOA Title I?*

Any applicant, employee, participant, service provider, program recipient, or other interested party may file a complaint alleging a violation of local WIOA programs, agreements or Workforce Development Board policies and activities.

## **B. Complainants with Disabilities**

Complainants by persons with disabilities will be accommodated as needed so that they may file complaints. Alternate formats will be used on request to notify the complainant of hearings, results, and any other written communication. Auxiliary aides and services, such as deaf interpreters or assistive listening devices, on request for negotiations, hearings and any other meetings where aural communication occurs. An accessible location will be used for hearings and other meetings on request.

### *Time and Place for Filing?*

Complaints may be filed with the local administrative entity or the service provider within one (1) year from the date of the event or condition alleged to be a violation of WIOA (365 days).

## **C. Resolution Process**

Initial Review: Step One - If the complaint alleges a violation of any statute, regulation, policy, or program that is not governed by WIOA, the WIOA EO Manager or service provider may refer the complaint to the appropriate organization for resolution. In such

cases, the local administrative entity or service provider will notify the complainant of the referral.

Once the local WIOA EO Manager or the service provider receives the complaint from the complainant or the complainant's designated representative, STL-WFD will log the complaint. The local WIOA EO Manager or service provider will then establish a complaint file containing the following:

1. Application and enrollment forms;
2. Completed General WIOA Complaint Form (or complainant's written statement);
3. Chronological log of events or conditions alleged to be a violation of WIOA;
4. Any relevant correspondence; and
5. Record of the attempted informal resolution

Informal Resolution: Step Two - The local WIOA EO Manager or service provider will attempt to informally resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of all parties. The informal resolution process must be completed within ten (10) business days from the date the complaint is filed. If all parties are satisfied, the complaint is considered resolved, and the terms and conditions of the resolution must be documented in the complainant's file. The local administrative entity will review the complaint file and investigate it further if necessary.

Formal Resolution: Step Three - When an informal resolution is not possible, the local WIOA EO Manager will issue a determination within twenty (20) calendar days from the date the complaint was filed. If the complainant does not request an appeal of the determination, the complaint is considered resolved, and the local administrative entity or service provider will document this in the complaint file. Any party dissatisfied with the determination may request a hearing within seven (7) calendar days of the date of the determination.

Hearing: Step Four- A complainant may amend or withdraw his or her complaint at any time period prior to a scheduled hearing. If the complaint is not withdrawn, the local

WIOA EO Manager will designate a hearing officer to ensure the complaint receives fair and impartial treatment. The hearing must be conducted within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date the complaint was filed. The hearing officer will schedule a formal hearing and mail a written notice to the complainant, the respondent, and any other interested party at least seven (7) business days prior to the hearing.

The notice will include the date, time, and place of the hearing. Parties may present witnesses and documentary evidence, and question others who present evidence and witnesses. The complainant may request that records and documents be produced. Attorneys or any other designated representative(s) may represent each party. All testimony will be taken under oath or affirmation. The hearing will be recorded either in writing or by audiotape.

The hearing officer's recommended resolution will include a summary of factual evidence presented during the hearing and the conclusions upon which the recommendation is based. The hearing officer will also concur with the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) toward reaching consensus on the recommended resolution to the complaint. If consensus cannot be reached, the hearing office will initiate a request to the state for resolution.

Final Decision: Step Five - The local administrative entity will review the recommendation of the hearing officer and issue a final decision within sixty (60) calendar days from the date the complaint was filed.

Appeal: Step Six - Any party dissatisfied with the local administrative entity's final decision, or any party who has not received either a final decision or a resolution within sixty (60) calendar days from the date the complaint was filed, may request an appeal. The appeal must be received by the OWD within ninety (90) calendar days from the date the complaint was filed at the following address:

Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development  
Office of Workforce Development  
Danielle Smith, State WIOA Complaint and Grievance Officer  
PO Box 1087, Jefferson City, MO 65102

OWD will review the complaint file, the hearing record, and all applicable documents and issue a final decision on the appeal within thirty (30) calendar days from the date the appeal was received.