

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT SERVICES  
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY  
FOR APPLICANTS AND PARTICIPANTS**

**GENERAL POLICY**

Individuals applying for or receiving services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program paid for by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) and/or the Northeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board (NEGWIB) will be treated fairly and equally. 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/complaints should be filed in accordance with the written procedures established by the Workforce Development Division of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. **If you believe you have been harmed by a violation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or regulations of this program, you have the right to file a grievance/complaint as well as request information and assistance with filing a complaint.**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY**

NEGRC adheres to the following United States law: "No individual shall be excluded from participation, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with any such program because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, gender identify), national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. References include WIOA Title 1, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 or Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and 29 CFR 38.25.

**COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION**

The NEGRC 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. The complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process by an attorney or other representative.

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 Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer, Rhonda Keeter, Workforce Development Division, 305 Research Drive, Athens, Ga. 30605, (706) 369-5703, TDD: 1-800-255-0056.

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, 404-962-4140, TDD: 1-800-255-0056.

A complaint may be filed directly with the Director, Civil Rights Center (DCR) U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210. 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 this website: <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/exchange-enforc-complaints.htm>.

If the complainant chooses to file the discrimination complaint with Northeast Regional Commission or Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division, (GDEcD,WD) then GDEcD,WD, or the NEGRC has 90 days to resolve the complaint and issue a written Notice of Final Action. Options for resolving the complaint must include alternative dispute resolution, at the complainant's election.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of his/her complaint at NEGRC or the State level, the complainant may file a new complaint with the Civil Rights Center (CRC) within 30 days on which the complainant receives the Notice of Final Action.

If GDEcD,WD or NEGRC fails to issue the Notice within 90 days of the date on which the complaint was filed, the complainant may file a new complaint with CRC within 30 days of the expiration of the 90-day period (in other words, within 120 days of the date on which the original complaint was filed). NEGRC 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 both WIOA and OCGA 20-2-1160.

**ALL OTHER COMPLAINTS (VIOLATIONS OF THE ACT OR REGULATIONS):**

All other complaints must be filed within one-hundred eighty (180) days after the act in question by first submitting a **written** request for a resolution to:

WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer, Rhonda Keeter  
Workforce Division  
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission  
305 Research Drive  
Athens, GA 30606

Complaints filed with NEGRC must contain the following:

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

A complaint will be considered to have been filed when NEGRC 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, the NEGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will initiate efforts with the complainant and others involved to bring 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 NEGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will arrange appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing for settlement of the complaint to be held within 60 days of grievance filing. Every complaint shall have the opportunity to request a hearing in writing for any complaint that is filed.

In the event NEGRC arranges a hearing for settlement of the complaint, the complainant(s) will be given a written notice of the date, hour, place of the hearing, a statement of the authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held, a reference to the particular section of the Act, regulations, subgrant or other contract under the act involved, a notice to all parties of the specific charges involved, a statement of the right of both parties to be represented by legal counsel, an indication of the right of each party to present evidence both written and through witness and a statement of the right of each party to cross-examination. NEGRC will select an impartial hearing officer.

Hearings on any grievance/complaint filed shall be conducted within thirty (30) days of failed informal resolution or within 60 days of the date the complaint was filed. Written decisions shall be rendered not later than sixty (60) days after the filing.

If the complainant(s) does not receive a written decision from the Hearing Officer within sixty (60) days of the filing of the grievance/complaint, 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-advantage/workforce-division/technical-assistant/>.

David Dietrichs, Deputy Counsel  
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 Counselor shall act as the Governor's authorized representative. 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. If the state does not respond within 60 days, or either party wants to appeal the decision, WIOA allows for a formal appeal by certified mail, return receipt requested to Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210. Attention: ASET – (202) 693-3015. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the appropriate ETA Regional Administrator and the opposing party. For complaints made against WFD, complainant may request a hearing in writing within 60 days of the date complaint was filed.

Federal appeals must be made within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the local or State decision. DOL will make a final decision no later than 120 days after receiving a formal appeal. DOL will only investigate grievances and complaints arising through the established procedures. WIOA does not allow for federal intervention until and unless the proper, formal procedure has been followed. 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.

I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF THE NEGRC WIOA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES.

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NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE