



GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Women of Valor, Inc. In Partnership with TheeSeeds, LLC (WOV/TheeSeeds) an Eligible Training Provider, will receive and address any complaints received by Women of Valor, Inc. and TheeSeeds, LLC as outlined in the procedures below.

1. **Grievance Alleging Discrimination.** As defined in 29 CFR Part 37, Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), Women of Valor, Inc has established the following procedures for resolving complaints alleging a violation of the Act and ancillary regulations, or any agreement of which the WOV/TheeSeeds is a party under the Act, including complaints arising out of programs operated by its Sub-Contractor's. The Training Provider and Workforce Development Center Division and its partners will not discriminate against any employees, program participants, or applicants for training and/or program participation based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

Any person, including but not limited to program applicants, registrants, participants, service providers, contractors, labor unions, community-based organizations, employees, and applicants for employment, who believes that he or she has been, or is being, subjected to discrimination prohibited under the WIOA may file a complaint, either individually or through an authorized representative.

All complaints must be made in writing and may be directed to WOV's Equal Opportunity Officer, at 715 Ingleside Avenue, Catonsville, MD 21228.

Complaints must be filed within one hundred and eighty (180) days of the alleged discrimination and must contain the following information:

- 1.1. The complainant's name and address;**
- 1.2. The identity of the individual or entity that the complainant alleges is responsible for the discrimination;**
- 1.3. A description of the allegations, containing sufficient detail to determine jurisdiction over the complaint, timeliness of the complaint, and merit of the complaint; and**
- 1.4. The complainant's signature or the signature of the complainant's representative.**

If the complainant elects to file the complaint with WOV/TheeSeeds's Equal Opportunity Officer, the complainant must wait until the Officer issues a decision or until ninety (90) days have passed, whichever is sooner, before filing with CRC. Copies of the complaint and related papers shall remain strictly confidential. There will be no reprisals against any person or persons instituting a complaint or pursuing a resolution of a complaint. All persons and their authorized representatives electing to initiate a complaint will remain entirely free from interference, discrimination, retaliation, intimidation, or coercion.



An acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will be sent to the complainant, including a re-statement of the issues raised, a statement of whether the issues will be accepted for investigation or rejected, and the reasons for rejection.

The Equal Opportunity Officer will investigate the circumstances underlying the complaint and attempt to resolve it through an alternative dispute resolution.

Within ninety (90) days of receipt of the complaint, the Equal Opportunity Officer will issue a Notice of Final Action providing:

1.5. The decision on the issue;

1.6. An explanation of the reasons underlying the decision; or

1.7. A description of the way in which the parties resolved the issue; and

1.8. Notice that the claimant has a right to file a complaint with the CRC within thirty (30) days of the date on which the Notice of Final Action was issued if he/she is dissatisfied with the Equal Opportunity Officer's action on the complaint.

If a Notice of Final Action has not been issued within ninety (90) days from the date on which the complaint was filed, the complainant may file a complaint with the Director of CRC within thirty (30) days of the expiration of the ninety-day response period (i.e., the complaint must be filed within one hundred and twenty (120) days of the date on which the original complaint was filed).

2. Grievances Alleging Non-Discrimination Issues. All nondiscrimination complaints (complaints not based on claims of discrimination) must be made in writing to the Equal Opportunity Officer, within sixty (60) days of the date of the alleged incident. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Equal Opportunity Office will:

2.1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint;

2.2. Initiate an investigation into the merits of the complaint; and

2.3. Attempt to resolve the complaint through alternative dispute resolution.

Within sixty (60) days of the date the complaint was filed, the Equal Opportunity Officer will issue a decision on appropriate resolution of the complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Action, he/she may request that an impartial hearing officer be appointed to review the allegation and issue a decision. Written notice shall be given to the complainant of the date, time, and location of the hearing. Additionally, complainants will receive information pertaining to the manner in which the hearing will be conducted and the issues surrounding the complaint.



The complainant may bring witnesses and/or documentary evidence to the hearing; may request to have records or documents relevant to the issues produced and may be represented by an attorney or representative of his/her choosing. Complainants have the right to question any witness. The hearing will take place within thirty (30) days of the date the complaint is received in writing by the Equal Opportunity Officer.

The entire hearing shall be recorded, and the recording will become a part of the permanent record of proceedings. The complainant may request a copy of the transcription of this recording at his/her expense.

Prior to the hearing date, the complainant may withdraw the hearing request, request rescheduling of the hearing for good cause, or request to amend the complaint.

Within five (5) days after the hearing, written notice of the decision of the Hearing Officer will be provided to the complainant, his/her representatives and all other interested parties. The written decision will include the Hearing Officer's decision, an explanation of the underlying reasons for the decision, or a description of remedies agreed to by the affected parties.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Hearing Officer's decision, he/she will have ten (10) days to appeal the decision to the General Counsel for the State of Maryland. The General Counsel or his/her designers shall review all materials introduced and review the recording of the hearing. Within seven (7) days, a written notice of the decision will be provided to the complainant, his/her representative and all other interested parties