

# EASTERN WASHINGTON PARTNERSHIP

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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<http://www.ewpartnership.org> or 7-1-1

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WDC Policy #: 211  
Effective Date: 5/1/2015  
Revision Date: March 5, 2021

SUBJECT CUSTOMER CONCERN AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

1. **PURPOSE**

To encourage prompt resolution of all customer concerns and complaints, outline minimum expectation for coordination among partners and clarify the Eastern Washington Partnership's oversight role in the complaint.

2. **BACKGROUND**

Federal law and regulations require procedures for handling program complaints alleging violation of WIOA Title I, Wagner-Peyser and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) laws. Policy and procedure specific to discrimination complaints is found in WSS Policy 1017, Discrimination Complaint Processing Policy and Handbook.

This policy establishes delineation between program and discrimination complaints, provides standard expectations for processing customer concerns and formal complaints, minimum requirements for referring program complaints to partners located in the WorkSource system for additional processing and resolution, and provides distinct definitions of a customer "concern" and a customer "complaint".

The oversight responsibility of the Eastern Washington Partnership (EWP) is also clarified when dealing with complaint from "other interested parties affected by the local workforce development system, including On-Stop partners and service providers" as described in 20 CFR 683.600 (c) (1).

3. **Eastern Washington Partnership Oversight of the Concern and Complaint System**

- A. In its oversight capacity, EWP must maintain a local policy or procedure that:
- i. Establishes at least one complaint coordinator who is delegated the responsibility of logging and tracking local complaints,
  - ii. Establishes that the local Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer is delegated the responsibility of tracking and processing local discrimination complaints (see WSS Policy 1017, Discrimination Complaint Processing Policy and Handbook),
  - iii. Establishes an expectation that local program complaint contacts will collaborate when complaints present allegations involving multiple partners,
  - iv. Requires an effort to informally resolve customer concerns,
  - v. Requires that all WorkSource system partners provide an assurance that the complaint coordinator will be informed of all local complaints, from point of entry to resolution,

- vi. Includes the minimum program complaint processing requirements contained in the attached WorkSource Program Complaint Handbook for WIOA Title I, Wanger-Peyser and TAA complaints, and
  - vii. Establishes a system to log and track complaints to support resolution.
- B. Local Customer Concern Resolution
- Concerns must be processed at the local level prior to any state level intervention. The intent is to enable partners to assist customers at the lowest level possible which will encourage the prompt and informal resolution of concerns.
- C. Complaint Jurisdiction
- All partners located in the WorkSource system are responsible for the outcomes of program complaints that fall within their jurisdiction. Determinations of jurisdiction will be made based on the specific funding stream that support the function tied to the complaint allegations, not based on associations other than funding sources. However, collaboration is essential when a complaint presents allegations that cross jurisdictional boundaries. All partners are expected to collaborate and be responsive to the needs of all WorkSource customers.
- D. Confidentiality
- The identity of complainants and any persons who furnish information relating to, or assisting in, and investigation of a complaint must be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible, consistent with applicable law and a fair determination of the complaint.

#### 4. **Definitions**

**Complaint Contact** – Staff designated EWP or program management as responsible for processing complaints. The EWP EO officer(s) or the State-Level EO Officer(s) serve as complaint contacts for discrimination complaints (see WSS Policy 1017, Discrimination Complaint Processing Policy, and handbook). A contact may also be designated by the One-Stop Operator that initially assists all customers interested in filing a complaint at local WorkSource office and determines partner(s) program’s complaint jurisdiction if a complaint is subsequently filed.

**Complaint Coordinator** – The EWP designated single point(s) of contact for the EWP or each WorkSource Center, or affiliate or connection site. The site’s Complaint Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the initial process, promoting coordination to resolve all program complaints, and for forwarding discrimination complaints to EWP’s or the State Level EO Officer for processing (per WSS Policy, Discrimination Complaint Processing Policy and Handbook).

**Concern** – Any verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction other than alleged violations of program or nondiscrimination rules or laws. Concerns must be referred, but do not require the same formal process as a complaint (i.e., logging, tracking, etc.) Local processes may include additional requirements. Concerns should be resolved at the lowest level possible.

**Discrimination Complaints** – alleged violations of law(s) that prohibit discriminating against any individual 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, political affiliation or belief, or for any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of WIOA, on the basis of the individual’s citizenship or immigration status, families with children,

marital status, sexual orientation, honorably discharged veteran of military status, and the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability.

Discrimination complaints are processed in accordance with WSS Policy 1017, Discrimination Complaint Processing Policy and Handbook.

**Program Complaint** – the submission of a written and signed allegation that falls under the jurisdiction of WIOA Title I, Wagner-Peyser and TAA requirements as noted in the WorkSource Program Complaint Handbook. Program complaints allege a violation of a law, regulations or policy connected to a Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, or TAA programs, but do not allege discrimination. All program complaints must be filed within one year of the alleged date of the incident (except Wagner-Peyser, which requires the complaint be filed within two years of an incident).

5. **Supersedes**

WDC Policy #211 and the WorkSource – Eastern Washington Partnership Complaint Handbook

6. **Website**

Ewpartnership.org

7. **Action**

At a minimum, EWP must maintain procedures that comply with the requirement of the this and its program complaint handbook and protect the confidentiality of customers.

8. **Attachments**

Attachment A – WorkSource / Eastern Washington Partnership Complaint Handbook (PDF)