

Heritage Policies and Procedures

Administration 1.6 Grievance

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Heritage Area Agency on Aging will attempt to resolve any complaints by any aggrieved party directly affected by an action or omission. An Aggrieved Party may be of employees, program participants, applicants to provide services, service providers, subcontractors or any other agency/organization or individual. Our Grievance Policy and procedure on how to file a grievance, timelines, hearing process, outcome and appeal will be provided in writing when possible, posted and on the main page of the Heritage website for view and direction.

Procedures:

1. Informal complaints. Complaints may start as informal. This situation may be resolved with a phone call or a simple conversation with a member of management or the Heritage Executive Director. In the event that an individual is unsatisfied with making an informal complaint, they may make a formal complaint that follows procedure to file, timeline, hearing if necessary, outcome and appeal.
2. Complaints involving employment discrimination, sexual harassment or employee complaints will use the procedures please refer to section 1.6 Complaint and Compliance Procedures within the Heritage Employee Handbook.
3. All subcontractors of Heritage will be required to comply with the complaint resolution requirements by provision in its contract with Heritage. Aggrieved parties served by a subcontractor will be referred to that subcontractor and its grievance procedure. A grievance procedure cannot be to just refer to Heritage as the agency needs to conduct due diligence to resolve the situation before referring the aggrieved party to Heritage.
4. Other parties aggrieved by action of Heritage may include program participants or applicants to services provided directly by agency staff, applicants to provide services, service providers, subcontractors or any other agency, organization or individual directly aggrieved by action of Heritage.
5. The following procedure will apply to other parties aggrieved by action of Heritage who do not apply above, such as Heritage program participants who wish to proceed with a formal grievance:

a. Filing: The complainant shall report in writing to Heritage an alleged violation of law or perceived unfair treatment within fifteen (15) days of its occurrence.

b. Timeline: Heritage will acknowledge the complaint in writing within three (3) business days of the official filing. The final decision of Heritage to attempt to resolve the complaint within thirty (30) business days of the official filing. Resolution may be achieved at any time in the process described below and it may not take the full thirty (30) business days.

1. A member of the Management Team or other designee of the Executive Director who is familiar with the program/project/activity in which the grievance occurred, if not named directly or indirectly in the complaint, will contact the complainant within 3 (three) business days of the official filing to arrange a meeting within seven (7) business days following the official filing to listen and attempt to resolve the matter. If the grievance is resolved, Heritage will ask the complainant to sign confirmation that he/she agrees the matter is resolved.

c. Hearing: If the matter is not resolved, the complainant may request a hearing by the Executive Director to be held within ten (10) business days following the informal meeting.

2. Notice of the hearing time/date/place will be sent to the complainant by return receipt mail or return receipt email within three (3) business days after the request for hearing. It is not required for the complainant to be present, but it is encouraged. Hearings may take place face to face, conference call or virtual meeting.

3. The Executive Director will hold the hearing. The complainant may bring witnesses and the Director will hear the issue and have opportunity to ask questions.

4. The Executive Director will consider the issue/event in accordance with prevailing laws and regulations.

5. The Executive Director will send written/electronic notification of their decision and related outcomes of the hearing to the complainant by return receipt mail/email within five (5) business days of the hearing.

d. Appeal: The complainant may elect to appeal the decision of the Heritage Board of Directors Executive Committee. In this case the timeline above would repeat but instead of with the Executive Director, the action would be the with Executive Committee.

e. At any time, an aggrieved individual may elect to report their concern to the State of Iowa's Health and Human Services Aging and Disability Division (ADS) as pursuant to rule and regulations.

f. Heritage Director or designee will forward notification to ADS within fifteen (15) days of the original filing in the event of any formal allegations of discrimination.

g. Some other grants or funders may have additional requirements to be notified in the event of allegations made. Heritage will follow those requirements as appropriate.