



Grievance Policy

Purpose:

To ensure the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) maintains and implements due process policies and procedures to review and resolve grievances and inform people of their rights.

This policy describes the customer's right to file a grievance, and the process for resolving customer's grievances related to the work of the Aging and Disability Resource Center. The goal of the grievance procedure is to allow customers of the ADRC to exercise their due process rights with a simple and easily understood process.

The ADRC will cooperate with any review of grievances conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), an external quality review organization, or advocacy organization.

Definitions:

1. **Grievance:** An expression of dissatisfaction about a situation that the person making the grievance wants to see rectified.
2. **Grievance System:** The overall system the ADRC implements to handle grievances, as well as the processes to collect and track information about them

Procedure for Informing and Assisting Customers in Exercising Their Rights

Any ADRC customer, or person acting on a customer's behalf, may express or file a grievance regarding the ADRC. All ADRC staff will support customers in the grievance process and will refrain from any reprisal or threat of reprisal against any individual registering a grievance.

The ADRC will give all of its customers the grievance information on their rights, the procedures, and contact information for external advocacy agencies.

Procedure for Grievance Regarding the ADRC

There are two different processes for ADRC customers to share a grievance regarding the ADRC. Regardless of which process a customer chooses, all grievance regarding ADRC services will be taken seriously and prioritized for review. Customers may choose to share their grievance by:

- Internal Process: Sharing the grievance with the ADRC. This can be done in a variety of ways, as described in more detail below.
- External Process:
 - Formally sharing the grievance with the Office for Resource Center Development (ORCD) at the Department of Health Services (DHS). ORCD is the state agency responsible for contractual oversight of ADRCs.
 - Sharing the grievance with the external quality review organization.
 - Sharing the grievance with an external advocacy agency.

All agency staff must be knowledgeable about the grievance processes available to customers. All agency staff will be able to explain the process to the customer and assist them, if necessary, with their grievance. Customers may select whichever process they prefer for submitting their grievance. Customers may also decide to utilize a different process for their grievance at any time or simultaneously use both process if they so choose.

Internal Grievance Process and Procedure

A customer may make an internal grievance, verbally or in writing. Internal grievances may also be identified through suggestion boxes, surveys, phone calls, e-mail, or any other form of communication. Any ADRC customer, or person acting on a customer's behalf, may use the internal grievance procedure.

The ADRC will complete the grievance process within 10 business days of receipt of the grievance. ADRC staff will document the grievance, the steps taken toward resolution, and the conclusions of their internal review in the client tracking database.

Management will investigate and record a written summary of findings of all grievances.

If a specific customer or other people are identified within a grievance, the ADRC director will arrange to meet with them, along with any staff person(s) named in the grievance. When a grievance is related to disability benefit specialist services or elder benefit specialist services, the agency director will share a copy of the grievance with the benefit specialist supervising attorney who is responsible for handling the individual cases.

The ADRC Director will:

- ✓ Seek to identify and clarify the matter or issues and explain the process for resolving the grievance.
- ✓ Offer to assist the customer in putting the complaint or grievance in writing if this has not already occurred.
- ✓ Provide a copy of the written grievance to the customer.

- ✓ Schedule a meeting at a mutually agreed-upon time.
- ✓ Attempt to resolve the grievance at the scheduled meeting.
- ✓ If resolution in this initial meeting is not possible, conduct a further inquiry into the incident or conditions that led to the grievance. This inquiry is to gather additional information with the intent of resolving the grievance.

Further inquiry or investigation that may be necessary could include interviews with relevant people, records reviews, or other efforts to form an accurate and factual basis for the resolution of the grievance. The director will prepare a written report that summarizes the grievance and the steps taken to resolve the grievance, including:

- The name of the contact person for the grievance.
- A summary of the steps taken on behalf of the customer to resolve the issue
- Information on how the customer may request an external review by DHS if they disagree with the decision.

The ADRC Director will complete their inquiry and the report within 10 days of the date the formal grievance was first presented and will send copies of the report to the customer or the person acting on the customer's behalf. If the agency director, the customer, and/or the person acting on the customer's behalf agree to the facts, conclusions, and recommendations of the report, then the grievance may be considered resolved. If there is disagreement with the facts, conclusions, or recommendations, then the agency director may continue the attempt to seek an agreeable resolution. If an agreement resolution cannot be achieved, then the agency director will inform the individual about the option for requesting a formal external review by DHS.

External Review Process and Procedure

An external review occurs when an ADRC customer submits a grievance to DHS. ADRC customers have the right to submit grievances to DHS at any time. Upon receipt of an ADRC grievance, DHS will complete a timely review, investigation, and analysis of the facts in an attempt to resolve concerns and problems expressed by a customer. The agency will routinely inform customers of their right to submit grievances to DHS. Customers may seek external review at any time during or after the grievance resolution process if the customer is unsatisfied with the resolution.

Grievances related to services provided by an ADRC should be made directly to DHS by writing, calling or emailing:

Aging and Disability Resource Center Grievances
Office for Resource Center Development
Division of Public Health

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
1 W. Wilson St
P.O. Box 2659
Madison WI 53701-2659

Phone: 608.266.2536

Fax 608.267.3203

[E-mail: DHSRCteam@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSRCteam@wisconsin.gov)

(Please indicate “ADRC of _____ Complaint” in the subject line)

Training

The ADRC will train staff to support customers in this process and be courteous and professional. All staff will encourage customers to express their concerns as a way to address ongoing quality improvement within the ADRC. The ADRC will train staff on steps necessary to investigate grievances. ADRC staff will be familiar with all advocacy organizations available to customers and when customers should be referred. Staff will be familiar with policies and procedures for filing a grievance to fully and adequately assist customers with their complaints.

Continuous Quality Improvement

The ADRC will track all grievances related to the work of the agency in such a way to allow systematic review. The ADRC will analyze data for trends and use it to improve customer service. The ADRC will share grievance data with staff. In accordance with Wis. Stat. § 46.283(6), the ADRC will include governing board members in the summary review of grievances to help them identify unmet needs within the service area of the agency, and to assist in identifying areas in need of quality improvement.