



GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCESS SUMMARY¹

ABOUT DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON

Disability Rights Oregon provides advocacy services and legal help for people with disabilities. Our services include investigating and resolving complaints of: abuse and neglect; discrimination based on disability status; and other violations of the rights of individuals with disabilities. We can help eligible individuals in many ways, including:

- Pursuing legal, administrative and other remedies
- Providing information about rights and making referrals to other programs that can help individuals with disabilities
- Conducting seminars and outreach to the disability community

DRO'S PRIORITIES

Our statement of goals and priorities guides our decisions about the types of cases we can take. Because of limited funds, we cannot take every case that comes to us. If your problem is not covered by our priorities we may not be able to directly help you. If we cannot provide direct help, we will do our best to identify and let you know about other agencies or persons who may be able to help you.

We make a new statement of priorities each year. During our priority setting process, you have the right to share your opinion with us about the types of disability-related cases you think are most important.

GRIEVANCE POLICY SUMMARY

You have the right to file a written grievance (complaint) with Disability Rights Oregon (DRO). You can file a grievance if you believe we have not treated you fairly or respectfully.

At your request, we will give you a more detailed written explanation of the DRO Grievance policy and answer any questions you have about it. We will explain your rights under this policy, if you have any questions. If you wish to file a grievance but cannot put it in writing,

¹ This is a summary of the Disability Rights Oregon Grievance Policy.

you may explain your complaint in person or over the phone, or we will help you prepare a written grievance. All grievances are kept confidential.

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

If you are a client of Disability Rights Oregon or are asking for our help, you have the right to file a written grievance if you are unhappy with our services. For example, you may file a grievance if you believe that we:

- Did not provide you with effective services
- Wrongly denied you help
- Violated our legal obligations

HOW TO FILE A GRIEVANCE

If you disagree with a DRO action or decision, you have 30 workdays after the decision to file a written grievance that explains why you believe our action or decision was wrong. If you believe that DRO has broken a legal duty, you may file a grievance no matter how much time has passed.

You may compose and file a written grievance in one of four ways:

- 1) by filling out a DRO Grievance Form (a blank form can be found at the end of this document)
- 2) by writing a letter
- 3) by writing an e-mail, or
- 4) by asking a DRO staff member or someone else whom you trust to help you write your grievance.

Grievances composed by filling out a form or writing a letter should be mailed to:

Legal Director
Disability Rights Oregon
511 SW 10th Ave, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97205

Grievances in the form of an e-mail should be sent to: welcome@droregon.org.

If you cannot give us a written grievance, you may ask a DRO staff member or someone whom you trust to help you write your grievance, or file your grievance verbally (by telephone, in person, or by audio recording).

REVIEW AND DECISION

Within 15 workdays of receiving your grievance, the Legal Director will give you a written decision about your complaint. If needed, DRO will create a plan to correct the problem(s) and provide proper services to you as soon as possible.

YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL

If you are unhappy with the written decision of the Legal Director, you may send a written appeal to our Board of Directors. The appeal should ask the Board Grievance Committee to review the director's decision. We will help you put the appeal in writing if needed. The appeal should be sent to:

Disability Rights Oregon
Grievance Committee
511 SW 10th Ave, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97205

Or, you can e-mail your appeal to welcome@droregon.org.

An appeal of the Legal Director's decision must be received by the Grievance Committee within 30 work days of the date you receive the director's decision. The decision of the Board Grievance Committee will be given to you within 30 work days from the receipt of your request for appeal. This decision will be final.

CONCLUSION

Tell us if you need more information about DRO's grievance policy, or if you need help with any part of preparing a grievance or appeal. We will do our best to provide you any help you need.

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GRIEVANCE FORM

NOTE: Detailed instructions for composing and submitting a grievance regarding Disability Rights Oregon can be found in the “Grievance Policy & Process Summary” and the full “Grievance Policy.” Please consult one of these documents or a DRO staff member if you have questions.

NOTE: IF YOU NEED HELP FILLING OUT THIS FORM, PLEASE CONTACT DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON AT 503-243-2081 OR 1-800-452-1694

Please put an X in the box next to the sections that apply to your concerns and complete those sections. You must sign and date the last page of this form, and include your address, telephone number and e-mail address (if you have them).

You may attach other information that you would like us to consider. All information you provide is considered confidential in accordance with Disability Rights Oregon Grievance Policy.

Please describe the type of help that you requested from Disability Rights Oregon:

I was told that Disability Rights Oregon would not provide me services. I was told on



this date: _____. I disagree with this decision because: _____

__ I am unhappy with the services that I am receiving because: _____

__ I disagree with the decision of Disability Rights Oregon to limit services to me or to close my case. I was told about the decision on this date: _____. I disagree because: _____

__ I believe that Disability Rights Oregon has treated me unfairly or has not carried out its legal obligations, because: _____



PRINTED NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

PLEASE ATTACH ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION AND/OR SUPPORTING MATERIALS IF NECESSARY.

When completed, send this form to: Disability Rights Oregon
Attn: Legal Director
511 SW 10th Ave, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97205
FAX: 503-243-1738

Grievances in the form of an e-mail should be sent to: welcome@droregon.org.

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DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON GRIEVANCE POLICY

The following are key terms used in this document:

- **Protection and Advocacy agency (P&A):** Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is the P&A system for Oregon. We operate several different federally-funded programs, including: Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PADD), Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI), Protection and Advocacy of Individual Rights (PAIR), Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS), Protection and Advocacy Services Related to Assistive Technology (PAAT), Protection and Advocacy for Traumatic Brain Injury (PATBI), Protection and Advocacy for Voting Access (PAVA), Client Assistance Program (CAP), and Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA)
- **Alleged:** Reported but not proven.
- **Grievance:** A formal complaint filed against Disability Rights Oregon.
- **Grievant:** The individual who files the grievance, or on whose behalf the grievance is filed.

ABOUT DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON

As a P&A agency, DRO is federally mandated to provide legal and other advocacy services, including investigation of alleged abuse or neglect, on behalf of eligible people with disabilities.

We operate several different federally-funded advocacy programs that help individuals who face problems in obtaining needed services or in being free from abuse, neglect or rights violations. We provide:

- Direct representation
- Individual advice and referral
- Public education about the rights of persons with disabilities
- Investigation of abuse or neglect
- Monitoring of care facilities



DRO's PRIORITIES

We cannot take every case that we are asked to handle because our ability to provide services is restricted by limited funding and guided by our annual goals and priorities. For our federally-funded work, we are required by law to:

1. Develop a yearly statement of goals and priorities (a copy of the current year's statement is attached), and
2. Give the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on our goals, priorities, and activities.

Our goals and priorities determine the kinds of cases DRO will accept each year. We only directly represent individuals whose problems are covered by our priorities. If we cannot help directly, we make an effort to inform individuals about other agencies or individuals who can assist with the problem.

GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

Any person, including a person's legal or designated representative, may file a written grievance to contest a decision or action of DRO. For example, an individual or her representative may file a grievance if she believes that we:

1. Did not provide her with respectful, fair or effective services;
2. Wrongly denied her help; or
3. Violated our legal obligations.

Our legal obligations include that we:

1. Have the capacity to protect and advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities, in keeping with our current goals and priorities;
2. Have access to records for the purpose of investigating allegations made by persons with disabilities;
3. Maintain confidentiality of client records;
4. Provide the public with an opportunity to comment on our statement of goals and priorities; and
5. Do not discriminate against a person on the basis of any protected characteristic including race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, sexual identity and age.

Upon request, we will provide more detailed information about the legal requirements for any of our programs. All information included in a grievance, and the fact that a grievance has been filed, is confidential and will not be disclosed to others by DRO. We encourage the use

of our grievance process and will never treat a person poorly because they have filed a grievance.

Anyone who is dissatisfied with an agency decision or action is encouraged (but not required) to discuss the matter first with the DRO employee directly responsible for the decision and/or with his or her supervisor. A listing of our employees is available upon request.

HOW TO FILE A GRIEVANCE

A grievance related to a decision or action of DRO must be filed within 30 workdays after the date the decision or action became known to the aggrieved person. A grievance related to a failure to comply with our legal obligations may be filed at any time.

The attached grievance form may be used by anyone who wants to file a grievance. A grievance may also be filed in the form of a letter or e-mail that provides key information about the complaint, including the following:

1. The name of the person who is not satisfied with agency services and the person's address, telephone number and email;
2. The type of services requested and when they were requested;
3. What Disability Rights Oregon decided or did that was wrong;
4. The nature of the person's disability and if it is related to the service requested;
5. The legal obligation, if any, that Disability Rights Oregon has violated.

Upon request, we will provide assistance in filing and submitting a grievance and/or in helping the individual understand his/her rights under this policy. If the individual cannot provide a written grievance, we will help her write it or accept an oral grievance by telephone, in person, or recording. Additional time to file the grievance may be permitted in some instances as an accommodation.

The grievant should include copies of any documents relating to the grievance (such as correspondence from our agency) with the grievance form. The grievance form or letter should be signed, dated, and mailed to:

Legal Director
Disability Rights Oregon
511 SW 10th Ave, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97205



REVIEW & DECISION

To determine if a grievance has merit, the Legal Director or designee will carefully review:

1. The grievance,
2. Any other materials or evidence submitted by the grievant,
3. Any applicable law, and,
4. DRO's policies and procedures (including our statement of goals and priorities.)

If necessary for a full review, the Legal Director or designee will contact the individual who filed the grievance and other individuals, including other DRO staff, with knowledge of the dispute. Within 15 work days of receiving the grievance, the Legal Director will issue a written determination.

If the Legal Director or designee finds that the agency's denial of services or other action was inappropriate, the written determination will include this determination. As appropriate, the Legal Director or designee will develop a plan to correct the problems identified and ensure that adequate services are provided promptly. The determination will not include any confidential information regarding a DRO employee.

YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL

The confidentiality of the grievance will be strictly protected. Access to the grievance and related materials will be permitted only for DRO staff with a need to review the complaint.

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the written determination of the Legal Director, the grievant or representative may appeal the determination to the Grievance Committee of DRO's Board of Directors. The individual must submit the appeal, in writing, within 30 work days of receiving the Legal Director's determination. The appeal letter should be sent to:

Disability Rights Oregon
ATTN: Grievance Committee
511 SW 10th Ave, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97205

The appeal must specify the reasons for disagreement with the Legal Director's determination, and must be signed by the grievant or representative. The Grievance Committee will issue a decision within 30 workdays of receipt of the appeal. The Grievance Committee's decision is the final determination of the agency.

ANNUAL GRIEVANCE EVALUATION AND REPORT

At the close of each year, DRO reviews and evaluates all grievances received during the year and how they were resolved. A summary of this information, which does not contain grievant names, is reported to our Board of Directors and advisory councils.