

### Subject

# Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure

ARIZONA@WORK-Yuma County Approved by the Workforce Development Board 09/27/2023

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### I. PURPOSE

As required by the Arizona Department of Economic Security's (AZDES) <u>Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy Section 700</u>, this policy outlines 1. the policy and procedure to be followed by individuals submitting discrimination complaints within the ARIZONA@WORK **delivery system** in Yuma County **and** 2. the procedures and timelines for the Local Equal Opportunity Officer (Local EO Officer) to follow when investigating complaints.

### II. GENERAL PROHIBITION ON DISCRIMINATION

The non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions found in the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) <u>Section 188</u> and <u>29CFR Part 38</u> prohibit discrimination:

Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, child birth or related medical condition, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including Limited English Proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief; and

Against any beneficiary of programs financially assisted under Title I of WIOA, on the basis of the beneficiary's citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or his or her participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communication with others. This means that, upon request and at no cost to the individual, **recipients** are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities.

Please see the complete definition of "recipient" in section XVI of this policy.

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Recipients must not discriminate in any of the following areas:

- A. Deciding who will be enrolled in, or have access to, any WIOA Title I programs, services, or activities including programs, services, and activities provided by an ARIZONA@WORK partner as part of the one-stop delivery system;
- B. **Providing opportunities** in, or treating any person with regard to, WIOA Title I programs, services, or activities; including programs, services, and activities provided by an **ARIZONA@WORK partner** as part of the one-stop delivery system; and
- C. **Making employment decisions** in the administration of, or in connection with, WIOA Title I programs, services, or activities; including programs, services, and activities provided by an **ARIZONA@WORK** partner as part of the one-stop delivery system.

#### III. WHO MAY FILE A DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT?

Any person who believes that either they or any specific individual, group or class of individuals has been, or is being, subjected to discrimination prohibited by the nondiscrimination and EO provisions of WIOA, may file a complaint either directly or through an authorized representative. **The discrimination may be on the basis of:** 

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex (including pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sex stereotyping, transgender status and gender identity)
- National origin (including Limited English Proficiency (LEP))
- Age
- Disability

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Political affiliation or belief

### Or, for beneficiaries (applicants/participants):

- Citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States
- Participation in programs funded under WIOA Title I, or in connection with any WIOA Title I funded program or activity.

#### IV. WHEN TO FILE A COMPLAINT

A discrimination complaint must be filed at the Federal, State, or Local level within **180** days from the date of the alleged occurrence of discrimination.

#### V. WHERE/HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

The State of Arizona uses a three-level system that allows a complainant to file a discrimination complaint at the local level via the Local EO officer; at the state-level via the State WIOA EO officer; or at the federal level via the Director of the Civil Rights Center (CRC).

The complaint(s) must be in writing and must contain the following information:

- Date complaint is filed;
- Complainant's Name;
- Complainant's address or other means of contact;
- Basis of the complaint;
- Date of the alleged violation;
- A detailed description of the allegations;
- Name of the individual the complainant alleges is responsible for the discrimination; and

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 Electronic or handwritten signature of the complainant or the complainant's authorized representative.

### a) LOCAL EO OFFICER

When the complainant chooses to submit a complaint to the **Local EO Officer**, the following applies:

All entities, employees, partners, etc. within the ARIZONA@WORK-Yuma County One-Stop Delivery System will forward any complaints received to the Local EO Officer within 24 hours or ASAP.

- i. A Local Discrimination Complaint form may be completed; or
- ii. **A letter** may be submitted that contains the information outlined above (section V); or
- iii. **Verbally:** The Local EO Officer or receiving person will assist the complainant write the complaint; a witness should be present to ensure all information is captured accurately. If a witness is not available, the Local EO Officer will use a recording device. The witness and complainant will sign the written complaint.

The written complaint may be submitted via E-mail, regular mail, in person, or by fax.

#### **Local EO Officer**

Adriana McBride ARIZONA@WORK-Yuma County 3834 W 16<sup>th</sup> St. Yuma, AZ 85364 Phone: (928) 329-0990 Ext. 1711 Fax: (928) 782-9905

TTY: (928) 329-6466
E-mail: <a href="mailto:amcbride@ypic.com">amcbride@ypic.com</a> or <a href="mailto:humanresources@ypic.com">humanresources@ypic.com</a>

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### b) STATE EO OFFICER

The complainant may file a discrimination complaint with the State WIOA EO officer by contacting:

#### **State Of Arizona**

Monica Sheble, Administrator State WIOA EO Officer Office of Equal Opportunity Department of Economic Security 1717 W. Jefferson Ave. MD 1119 Fax: (602) 364-3982

TTY/TDD: 7-1-1
Email: WIOAStateEOOfficer@azdes.gov

### c). FEDERAL LEVEL COMPLAINTS

A complainant may file a discrimination complaint with the Director of the CRC by contacting:

#### **Civil Rights Center**

Naomi M. Barry-Perez, Director Civil Rights Center (CRC) U.S. Department of Labor 200 Constitution Avenue NW Room N-4123 Washington, DC 20210

Phone: (202) 693-6500 Fax: (202) 693-6505 TTY: (202) 693-6516

Email: <a href="mailto:CRCExternalComplaints@dol.gov">CRCExternalComplaints@dol.gov</a>

The U.S. Department of Labor Complaint Information Forms (English or Spanish) may be located at: <a href="https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/external/how-to-file-complaint#complaint.">https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/external/how-to-file-complaint#complaint.</a>

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When the complainant chooses to file a discrimination complaint directly with the CRC Director, the Local EO Officer will assist the complainant and/or the complainant's authorized representative, if requested, by completing the necessary forms and information. The Local EO Officer will likewise provide the necessary forms, addresses, and/or other information needed to file a discrimination complaint to those individuals who do not request assistance.

### VI. LOCAL DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Local EO Officer shall track complaints, which must be forwarded to the State WIOA EO Officer for review no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the month following the end of each quarter. The tracking report must contain the name and address of the complainant, the basis of the complaint, a description of the complaint, the date the complaint was filed, the disposition of the complaint, the date of the disposition, and any other pertinent information relating to the complaint. The local EO officer must inform the State EO Officer about complaint investigations and submit the Discrimination Complaint Log on a quarterly basis. Upon request from the CRC, the State EO Officer will provide the tracking report to the CRC.

When the complainant chooses to submit the complaint **at the local level** the following procedures will be followed:

- a) All complaints will be date stamped upon receipt and forwarded to the Local EO Officer for processing;
- **b)** Upon receipt of the complaint or information alleging discrimination, the Local EO Officer must determine if the following applies:
  - The basis for the complaint is covered by the prohibitions of <u>29 CFR §38</u>;
     and



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- The complaint is against an agency, employer, organization, program, or individual within an entity that is a WIOA Title I recipient, as defined in 29 CFR § 38.4 (zz).
- c) The Local EO Officer will provide written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the complainant within five (5) calendar days indicating if the Local EO Officer has jurisdiction over the complaint. If the Local EO Officer determines there is jurisdiction, the Local EO Officer will provide the written notice to all parties with the specific issues raised in the complaint and as described below.

If the Local EO Officer has no jurisdiction a **Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction** will be provided to the complainant **immediately** after discovery of such lack. The Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction must also inform the complainant of the reason for the lack of jurisdiction and their right to file a complaint with the CRC within **30 days** of receiving the notice.

### The written notice will also include:

- A statement on each issue, either accepting the issue for investigation, or rejecting the issue, and the reasons for each rejection;
- ii. Inform all parties of their right to representation by an attorney or other individual of their choice, each person will bear their own cost of representation;
- iii. Inform all parties of their right to present evidence;
- iv. Inform all parties of their right to dispute evidence presented by others; and
- v. Inform all parties that the complainant has a right to request and receive at no cost, auxiliary aids and services, and language assistance services. The

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notice will be translated into non-English language(s), as required in 29 CFR 38.4(h) and (i).

- vi. Inform all parties that the decision will be based strictly on the documented evidence.
- d. The Local EO Officer must contact the complainant and/or their authorized representative in writing within 14 calendar days of the complaint receipt, to ensure they are aware of the choice to continue the process using the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)/mediation described in the Section VII of this policy, or if they prefer to continue the process using the customary process (complete investigation and find resolution as fast as possible at the local level). Response from the complainant must be received within 10 calendar days from the date of receipt (read receipt feature/confirmation of receipt, or signature will be required depending on the method used to deliver the letter). The choice whether to use ADR, or the customary process, rests with the complainant and/or the complainant's authorized representative.
- e. The EO officer will provide a final written notice to the complainant within 90 calendar days of the date on which the complaint was filed. The written notice must contain the following information for each issue raised in the complaint:
  - i. The determination and an explanation of the underlying reasons for the decision;
  - ii. A description of how the parties ultimately resolved the issue;
  - iii. Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with the CRC Director within **30 calendar days** of the date in which the **Notice of Final Action** was issued if the complainant is dissatisfied with the final action on the complaint.



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### VII. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)/MEDIATION PROCESS

When the complainant and/or complainant's authorized representative elect mediation instead of the customary process, the Local EO Officer will coordinate with a pre-approved mediator. The individual conducting the mediation must be a neutral and impartial third party who will act as the facilitator. The mediator must be a person who is acceptable to all parties including the Local EO Officer, and who will assist the parties in resolving their disputes.

- 1. If the complainant elects to participate in mediation (upon initial inquiry from the Local EO officer), the complainant and/or their authorized representative must respond to the EO Officer in writing within 10 calendar days of the date request. However, complainant and/or the complainant's authorized representative may elect to participate in mediation the during the 90-day calendar period.
- 2. A **written confirmation** identifying the **date**, **time**, **and location** of the initial mediation conference must be sent to all appropriate parties.
- 4. A consent form will be signed by all parties at the initial mediation conference, affirming that the contents of the mediation will be kept confidential.
- 5. **If resolution is reached** under mediation, the **agreement must be in writing**. The EO Officer will maintain a copy of the signed agreement to the file.
- 6. If an agreement is reached under mediation but a party to the agreement believes that their agreement has been breached, the non-breaching party may file a complaint with the CRC Director.
- 7. If the parties do not reach resolution under ADR/mediation, the complainant and/or their authorized representative will be advised of the complainant's right to file a complaint with the CRC/USDOL as described in 29 CFR §38.69 through 29 CFR §38.71. However, the EO Officer must continue the investigation. The mediation process must be completed within 45 calendar days of the receipt of the

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complaint. This will assist in keeping within the 90-calendar day timeframe of the Notice of Final Action if mediation process is not successful.

#### VIII. DISSATISFACTION WITH NOTICE OF FINAL ACTION

If during the 90-calendar day period, the EO Officer issues a Notice of Final Action, but the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision on the complaint, the complainant and/or the complainant's authorized representative may file a complaint with the CRC Director within **30 calendar days** after the date on which the complainant receives the Notice of Final Action.

#### IX. FAILURE TO PROVIDE NOTICE OF FINAL ACTION

If by the end of the **90 calendar days** from the date on which the complaint was filed, the Local EO Officer has failed to issue a Notice of Final Action, the complainant and/or the complainant's authorized representative may file a complaint with the CRC Director within **120 calendar days** of the date in which the complaint was filed with the EO Officer.

### X. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Local EO Officer is required to keep the following information confidential, to the maximum amount possible, consistent with applicable law and fair determination of the complaint:

- ✓ The fact that the complaint has been filed;
- ✓ The identity of the complainant;
- ✓ The identity of the individual respondents to the allegations;
- ✓ The identity of any person(s) who furnished information, relating to or assisting in the investigation of the complaint. Specifics of a complaint investigation or a

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compliance review will only be released to the extent necessary to investigate and fairly determine the issues raised in the complaint or as otherwise required by law.

#### XI. CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE COMPLAINT

All parties against whom the complaint is filed will receive a copy of the complaint during the course of the investigation or ADR/mediation, in order to allow the individual or entity the opportunity to respond to the allegations. The name of the complainant will only be released to the extent necessary to investigate and fairly determine the issues in the complaint.

#### XII. INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION PROHIBITION

It is prohibited to discharge, intimidate, retaliate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against a person who has:

- 1. Filed a complaint alleging violation of WIOA Section 188 or 29 CFR §38;
- 2. Opposed a practice prohibited by the nondiscrimination and EO provisions of WIOA Section 188 and 29 CFR §38;
- 3. Furnished information to, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, review, hearing, or any other activity related to any of the following:
  - a) Administration of the nondiscrimination and EO provisions of <u>WIOA Section 188</u> and <u>29 CFR §38</u>.
  - b) Exercise of authority of the provisions in WIOA Section 188 and 29 CFR §38.
  - c) Exercise of privilege secured by WIOA Section 188 and 29 CFR §38.
- 4. Otherwise exercise any rights and privileges under WIOA Section 188 and 29 CFR §38.

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The sanctions and penalties in <u>Section 188 of WIOA</u> and <u>29 CFR §38</u> may be imposed against any recipient who engages in such retaliation or intimidation, or who fails to take appropriate steps to prevent such activity.

#### XIII. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND SANCTIONS

If it is determined that Corrective Action or Sanctions are warranted when instances of noncompliance with <u>WIOA Section 188</u> or <u>29 CFR §38</u> and this policy are found, the violation will need to be resolved promptly. Disciplinary action may be taken as deemed appropriate by the Local Board including and up to termination of employment, termination of contract, termination of agreement, etc. as provided by law.

#### 1. Technical and Discrimination Violations

Corrective and remedial action must be sought when any deficiency is identified as a result of a monitoring review or an EO complaint. Deficiencies may include both technical violations and/or discrimination violations.

Technical violations include, but are not limited to, **failure to**:

- a) Post the required "EO is the Law" notice;
- b) Include an "EO is the Law" notice/poster in the WIOA Title I participant's program file and/or electronic file; and
- c) Include a statement signed by the participant that acknowledges the Complaint and Grievance Procedures in the participant's program file or electronic file.

### 2. Discrimination violations include, but are not limited to:

**Disparate Treatment:** Intentionally treating members of protected groups differently based on their protected status;

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**Disparate Impact:** Use of policies or practices that are neutral, which may be neutral or may appear to be neutral, but have a disproportionate impact on members of protected groups, and/or are not job related and are not consistent with business necessity; and

### Failure to provide reasonable accommodations.

3. Discrimination violations may require a conciliation agreement or assurance statement, provisions of which must include: making whole relief to include where appropriate; retroactive relief (e.g. back pay, front pay, retroactive benefits, training, any service discriminatorily denied, etc.) or prospective relief (e.g. change of policy, training, development of new policy, or training on policy communication).

#### XIV. CORRECTIVE ACTION PROCESS

For each corrective action identified in the Local EO Officer's report the responsible party, **absent** termination of contract, employment, or agreement, **must**:

- a) Submit a corrective action plan by the date specified by the Local EO Officer;
- b) Implement corrections to discrepancies indicated in by the Local EO Officer designed to completely correct the violation an bring the recipient into compliance;
- c) Submit written assurance that all of the discrepancies have been corrected and will not recur. The assurance must list the deficiency and the corrective action as specified in the written notification, describe the actions taken and the dates of those actions, state that the responsible party is taking steps and will continue to take steps to ensure that the deficiency does not recur, and certify that the assurance is signed by the highest-level official of the recipient/partner; and

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- d) If the discrepancies involve discrimination, a conciliation agreement is required. Remedial actions are designed to make an individual(s) who have suffered injury or loss because of discrimination whole. A person or persons who are wronged must be restored to the status they would have expected if the discrimination had not occurred. In a finding of discrimination, the procedures must provide, where appropriate, for retroactive relief (including but not limited to, back pay) and prospective relief (including, but not limited to, training, policy development, and communication) to ensure the discrimination does not recur;
- e) When a recipient is placed on a corrective or remedial action plan, the Local EO Officer overseeing the action plan will follow up appropriately to ensure that the commitments to correct deficiencies described in the plan are satisfied and violations will not recur;
- f) When the Local EO Officer has determined that the commitments in the corrective or remedial action plan are satisfied, the Local EO Officer will close the review.

#### XV. SANCTION PROCEDURE

Sanctions penalize or censure a recipient when failed to resolve violations and failed to comply with the Equal Opportunity and nondiscrimination requirements of <u>WIOA Section</u> 188 of 29 CFR §38.

After consultation with the Workforce Development Board, the Local EO Officer will issue a final determination in writing, and take such actions as allowable by law, to initiate the sanction process. The final determination will include:

- a) A statement of efforts made to achieve voluntary compliance and a statement that those efforts have been unsuccessful;
- b) A statement of those matters upon which the recipient and the Local EO officer continue to disagree;

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- c) A list of any modifications to the finding of fact or conclusions that were set forth in the initial determination;
- d) A statement of the recipient's liability and, if appropriate, the extent of that liability;
- e) A description of the corrective or remedial actions that the recipient must take to come into compliance; and
- f) A notice that failure to come into compliance within 10 calendar days may result in the following consequences: Termination of contract, termination of employment, termination of partnership, withholding of funds in whole or part, referrals to appropriate agencies, or any other action deemed appropriate by the Workforce Development Board.

### XVI. KEY DEFINITIONS Under 29 CFR §38.4

**Aide, benefit, service, or training** means WIOA Title I financially assisted services, financial or other aid, training, or benefits provided by or through a recipient or its employees, or by others through contract or other arrangements with the recipient. "Aid, benefit, service, or training" includes, but is not limited to: career services; education or training; health, welfare, housing, social service, rehabilitation, or other supportive services; work opportunities; cash, loans, or other financial assistance to individuals; and any aid, benefits, services, or training provided in or through a facility that has been constructed, expanded, altered, rented or otherwise obtained, in whole or in part, with Federal financial assistance under Title I of WIOA.

**Applicant** means and individual who is interested in being considered for any WIOA Title I-financially assisted aid, benefits, service, or training by a recipient, and who has signified that interest by submitting personal information in response to a request by the recipient.

Auxiliary aids or services include:



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- (1) Qualified interpreters on-site or through video remote interpreting (VRI) services; notetakers; real-time computer-aided transcription services; written materials; exchange of written notes; telephone handset amplifiers; assistive listening devices; assistive listening systems; telephones compatible with hearing aids; closed caption decoders; open and closed captioning, including real-time captioning; voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs), videophones, and captioned telephones, or equally effective telecommunications devices; videotext displays; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective means of making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments;
- (2) Qualified readers; taped texts; audio recordings; Brailed materials and displays; screen reader software; magnification software; optical readers; secondary auditory programs (SAP); large print materials; accessible electronic and information technology; or other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals who are blind or have low vision;
- (3) Acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and
- (4) Other similar services, devices, and actions.

**Beneficiary** means the individual or individuals intended by Congress to receive aid, benefits, services, or training from a recipient.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** means an individual whose primary language for communication is not English and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, and/or understand English. LEP individuals may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g. speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g. reading or writing).

**Nondiscrimination Plan** means the written document and supporting documentation developed under <a href="mailto:29CFR \§38.54">29CFR \§38.54</a>

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**Participant** means an individual who has been determined to be eligible to participate in, and who is receiving any aid benefit, service, or training under, a program or activity financially assisted in whole or in part under Title I of WIOA. "Participant" includes, but is not limited to, individuals receiving any service(s) under State Employment Service programs, and claimants receiving any service(s) or benefits under State Unemployment Insurance programs.

**Recipient** means entity to which financial assistance under Title I of WIOA is extended, directly from the Department or to the Governor or another recipient (including any successor, assignee, or transferee of a recipient). The term excludes any ultimate beneficiary of WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. In instances in which a Governor operates a program or activity, either directly or through a State agency, using discretionary funds, apportioned to the Governor under WIOA Title I (rather than disbursing the funds to another recipient), the Governor is also a recipient. In addition, for purposes of this part, **one-stop partners**, as defined in <u>Section 121 (b) of WIOA</u>, are treated as "recipients", and are subject to the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements of this part, to the extent that they participate in the one-stop delivery system. "Recipient" includes, but is not limited to:

- State-level agencies that administer, or are financed in whole or in part with, WIOA Title I funds;
- b) State Workforce Agencies;
- c) State and Local Workforce Development Boards;
- d) LWDA (Local Workforce Development Area) grant recipients;
- e) One-stop operators;
- f) Service providers, including eligible training providers;
- g) On-the-Job Training (OJT) employers;
- h) Job Corps contractors and center operators
- i) Job Corps national training contractors;
- j) Outreach and admissions agencies, including Job Corps contractor that perform these functions;
- k) Placement agencies, including Job Corps contractors that perform these functions;
- I) Other National Program recipients.

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