

Grievance Policy

Disability Rights Montana (DRM) strives to provide quality services to people who contact the agency for assistance. The following grievance policy is an opportunity for people to express their dissatisfaction and have their complaints investigated.

A. Who can file a grievance:

- 1) Persons who are eligible for DRM services but were denied advocacy or legal services,
- 2) Persons who received services but were not satisfied with the services provided by the DRM, and
- 3) Individuals who have received or are receiving mental health services in the state, family members of such individuals, or representatives of such individuals, to assure that DRM is operating in compliance with its statutes.

B. Procedures

1. Grievance must be filed within 60 days of the date upon which the person discovered the incident being grieved. Grievances may be sent or delivered by the individual or by their representative (parent, guardian, or advocate involved with the individual).
2. Grievances must be directed to the Executive Director and can be submitted in writing, recorded on tape, received orally, or submitted via e-mail to advocate@disabilityrightsmt.org.
3. The individual with a grievance (grievant) may be represented during the grievance process by an advocate, attorney, or another person not employed by DRM. The grievant will notify DRM of the representation in advance of the grievance proceedings.
4. The Executive Director will investigate the grievance and make a determination of the validity within 30 days upon receipt of the grievance at the DRM office.

5. If the grievance is found to be valid, remedial action will be taken by the Executive Director, and the action taken will be communicated, in writing, to the grievant.
6. If the grievance is found not to be valid, this determination will be communicated, in writing, to the grievant, along with notice of the right to appeal (see 8 below).
7. If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, the grievant may appeal the Executive Director's decision to the Board of Directors within 30 days of receiving the decision.
8. Appeals to the Board shall be sent to DRM to the attention of the Board President. Within 30 days of receiving the appeal, the President or designee (another board member) will investigate the findings of the Executive Director and obtain additional information if necessary. The President, or designee, will review his or her findings with the executive committee of the Board and render a decision within 30 days. The Board has a maximum of 60 days from the date it receives an appeal to render a decision.
9. If the grievance is regarding the Executive Director, the grievance must be in writing, recorded on tape, or can be given orally to the President of the Board of Directors. The same procedure outlined above in 3, 4, and 5 will be followed by the Board of Directors in investigating and acting on the grievance. DRM will provide the grievant with the contact information of the President of the Board of Directors.
10. All decisions of the Board of Directors are final. If the grievant wishes additional action they may do so at their own expense.

C. Expectations of Employees

1. Employees will be notified of a grievance received and will cooperate by providing information requested during the investigation.
2. The employee shall receive copies of any written or recorded materials relating to the grievance against him or her. The employee will have an opportunity to respond to all allegations.

D. Notice of Grievance Policy

The Grievance Policy will be posted in all DRM offices and will be published periodically in the agency newsletter. A copy of the policy will be provided to all clients receiving direct case services from DRM and to all individuals who are denied requested services.