



CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas Special Board of Directors Meeting

Date: February 14, 2025
Time: 2:00PM
Location: Zoom only

Zoom Information

Dial In Number: 1 305 224 1968
Meeting ID: 828 8101 2038
Passcode: 783977

[Zoom Link](#)

Agenda

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Welcome

II. Public Comments

III. Action/Discussion Items

A. Staff Severance Agreement.....2

B. CSHP Grievance Policy.....8

IV. Adjournment



Action Item

Staff Severance Agreement

Information

Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, Inc. d/b/a CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas (CSHP) and Steven Meier have tentatively entered into a Severance Agreement and General Release following Meier's voluntary resignation and retirement, effective February 14, 2025. Under the terms of this agreement, CSHP will provide Meier with severance pay equivalent to 20 weeks of his base salary (\$70,673.20) and compensation for accrued, unused PTO. His separation will be classified as a voluntary resignation or retirement.

The agreement is contingent upon Meier's signature, compliance with all terms, and approval by CSHP's Board of Directors. He must accept the agreement by March 10, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. EST; otherwise, the offer will expire, and his separation will be classified as a termination not for Cause. Both parties acknowledge that this agreement serves to resolve any potential disputes related to Meier's employment with CSHP.

Recommendation

Approve Steve Meier's resignation and severance agreement.

SEVERANCE AGREEMENT AND GENERAL RELEASE

This **SEVERANCE AGREEMENT AND GENERAL RELEASE** (sometimes referred to as the “Agreement”) is entered into by and between Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, Inc. d/b/a CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas, a Florida not-for-profit corporation, located at 4350 West Cypress Street, Suite 875, Tampa, Florida 33607 (“Employer” or “CSHP”), and Steven Meier (“Employee”).

WHEREAS, Meier has decided to voluntarily resign and retire from his employment with CSHP;

WHEREAS, Meier’s Employment Agreement with CSHP¹ provides him with severance pay in an amount equal to twenty (20) weeks of his current base salary should he be terminated by CSHP not for Cause and the applicable Employee Handbook provides for unused PTO to be paid to terminating employees;

WHEREAS, Meier and CSHP have determined that their respective interests would be best served resolving any and all complaints, disputes, and claims Meier has or may have against CSHP, including, but not limited to, all complaints, disputes, and claims arising out of Meier’s employment with CSHP as of, and including, the date he signs this Agreement; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants exchanged and other good and valuable consideration as set forth in this Agreement, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, Meier and CSHP, intending to be legally bound, hereby acknowledge and agree to the following:

I. Definitions

For purposes of this Agreement, the following Definitions shall apply:

A. Effective Date. The “Effective Date” of this Agreement is Meier’s last day of employment with CSHP.

B. Released Parties. The “Released Parties” are CSHP, its current and former directors, officials, attorneys, representatives, agents, officers, executives, and employees, whether acting in their official, individual, or personal capacity, and Worknet Pinellas, Inc. d/b/a CareerSource Pinellas (“CSPIN”), which merged into CSHP effective July 1, 2024, and CSPIN’s² directors, officials, attorneys, representatives, agents, officers, executives, and employees, whether acting in their official, individual, or personal capacity.

C. Releasing Parties. The “Releasing Parties” are Meier, his heirs, executors, administrators, representatives, attorneys, agents, and assigns.

D. Administrative Proceeding. An “Administrative Proceeding” includes any charge, complaint, grievance, or any other action instituted with a federal, state, or local governmental agency.

¹ Meier’s Employment Agreement identifies Worknet Pinellas, Inc. d/b/a CareerSource Pinellas as his employer. However, as of the July 1, 2024 merger of Worknet Pinellas, Inc. with Tampa Bay Workforce Alliance, Inc., CSHP assumed Meier’s employment and Employment Agreement.

² While CSPIN ceased to exist as of its July 1, 2024 merger with CSHP, CSPIN is included herein in an abundance of caution and for purposes of clarity in terms of the scope of the release in this Agreement.

E. Employment Agreement. The “Employment Agreement” was entered into between CSHP³ and Meier effective July 1, 2023.

II. Terms

A. Benefits. Upon the contingencies in Section II.B. being satisfied, CSHP shall:

- (1) Remit severance pay in an amount equal to twenty (20) weeks of his current base salary, which is \$70,673.20, and pay his accrued and unused PTO as of the Effective Date to Meier within forty-five (45) calendar days of the Effective Date by issuing a payment via direct deposit to Meier with a W-2 designation less regular deductions and withholdings. Meier assumes and retains any and all responsibility and obligation for the payment of any taxes attributable to, or owed on account of, the payment of these monies to him. Further, the severance pay provided herein shall be paid out of the Pinellas FY25 operating budget; and
- (2) Classify in its personnel records Meier’s separation of employment reason as “voluntary resignation” or “retirement” and separation of employment date as February 14, 2025.
- (3) Provide Meier a neutral employment reference to include his name, position, and dates of employment with CSHP and CSPIN and no other information should potential employers call CSHP’s Vice President of Human Resources; notwithstanding the foregoing, Meier understands and acknowledges that CSHP is subject to the Florida’s Public Records Law and should anyone request to copy or inspect his CSHP personnel records or any other CSHP records, CSHP will and is permitted to produce such records for inspection and copying according to law.

B. Contingency. The benefits described in Section II.A. are contingent upon the following:

- (1) Meier shall sign this Agreement and comply with all terms and conditions of this Agreement; however, Meier shall not sign this Agreement and this Agreement shall have no effect unless and until CSHP’s Board of Directors first reviews and approves this Agreement;
- (2) Meier shall voluntarily resign and retire from his employment with CSHP effective February 14, 2025; and
- (3) Meier accepting and signing this Agreement, which shall be deemed an offer open to acceptance by Meier until 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on March 10, 2025. If Meier has not signed and returned this Agreement to CSHP by then, the offer shall expire, this Agreement shall have no effect, and Meier’s employment will be deemed a termination not for Cause effective February 14, 2025.

C. Not Otherwise Entitled. The parties agree that, apart from this Agreement, Meier is entitled to no benefits or other consideration from CSHP or CSPIN. The Benefits described in Section II.A. are contingent upon Meier signing this Agreement, his compliance with all of the terms and conditions of this Agreement, Meier’s voluntary resignation and retirement from his employment with CSHP effective February 14, 2025, and satisfaction of all contingencies in Section II.B. Meier specifically represents that he has been paid all wages, salary, and other compensation which was due to him on account of any work performed for CSHP and CSPIN and under his Employment Agreement and specifically that he has been paid all monies which were owed to his by virtue of or required by the Fair Labor Standards Act or other minimum wage or overtime compensation law, including, but not limited to, any liquidated

³ See Footnote 1 above.

damages and attorney's fees.

D. Acknowledgements and Revocation Period. Meier acknowledges that he has read and understands this Agreement and moreover he specifically acknowledges the following: Meier represents that he is of sound mind and body to enter into this Agreement, and that he enters into this Agreement freely and voluntarily. Meier acknowledges that he is represented by counsel and has had an opportunity to consult with his counsel to review the legal significance and ramifications of this Agreement. Meier also acknowledges that he has been offered at least twenty-one (21) days to decide whether or not to sign this Agreement and that he was encouraged to review this document with his attorney and has in fact reviewed this document with his attorney. Meier also acknowledges that he understands that he has seven (7) days to revoke this Agreement after execution ("revocation period"). This Agreement shall be null and void, and Meier shall not be entitled any of the benefits described in Section II.A., should he revoke this Agreement during the revocation period, and Meier acknowledges such.

E. Release. In exchange for the Benefits described in Section II.A. above, the Releasing Parties fully release and discharge the Released Parties from any and all claims of any nature, whether known or unknown, which Meier may have arising from or in connection with Meier's employment with CSHP and CSPIN through the Effective Date of this Agreement. Meier represents that he has filed no suit, charge, claim, complaint, or action against the Released Parties with respect to his employment and has not authorized anyone else to do so on his behalf; and further agrees that he waives the right to recover any monetary award should either the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Florida Commission on Human Relations, the Department of Labor, or any other entity subsequently file a suit, charge, claim, or action against the Released Parties with respect to his employment with CSHP or CSPIN up to the Effective Date of this Agreement. Meier further agrees that he will not institute any legal or Administrative Proceeding (as defined in Section I.D. above) on or after the Effective Date of this Agreement against the Released Parties as to any matter arising from or in connection with Meier's employment with CSHP or CSPIN through the Effective Date of this Agreement.

This release includes, but is not limited to, the following claims: any tort claim, intentional or negligent; any claims under 42 U.S.C. §§ 1981, 1983, 1985 and 1986; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. § 621 *et seq.*; the American with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*, as amended; the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and 1871; the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. §§ 1001–1461, as amended by the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, 29 U.S.C. §§ 1161–68; the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, 42 U.S. Code § 2000ff *et seq.*; the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992, as amended, § 760.01 *et seq.*, Florida Statutes; the Florida Whistleblower's Act, Section 112.3187 *et seq.*, Florida Statutes; Florida's Whistleblower's Act, §§ 448.101 to 448.105, Florida Statutes; Florida's Workers' Compensation Act, § 440.01 *et seq.*, Florida Statutes; the Family and Medical Leave Act, 29 U.S.C. § 2601 *et seq.*, as amended; the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1681, *et seq.*; the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201, *et seq.*; Florida Statute § 448.08 relating to unpaid wages; the Florida and/or United States Constitutions, as amended; the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000gg to 2000gg-6; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.*, as amended; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, 38 U.S.C. § 4301, *et seq.*; any claims for wrongful discharge, unlawful discrimination based on race, color, age, sex, national origin, disability, or religion, retaliation, harassment, hostile work environment, whistleblower retaliation, breach of contract, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, invasion of privacy, assault and battery, negligence, negligent retention, negligent hiring, negligent supervision, false imprisonment, defamation, slander, interference with contract, or any other cause of action based on federal, state, or local law or the common law, whether in tort or in contract, and any other employment-related benefit or compensation.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, this release does not include any claim: (1) to enforce this Agreement; (2) that arises exclusively after the date Meier signs this Agreement; (3) to vested rights under any of CSHP's employee benefit plans governed by ERISA; (4) Meier may have for COBRA benefits; or (5) that cannot be released by law.

F. Non-Admission of Liability. Meier and CSHP agree that they have entered into this Agreement in compromise of disputed claims and that entry into this Agreement is not an admission of liability or wrongdoing on the part of the Released Parties or Meier. CSHP specifically disclaims any liability or wrongdoing whatsoever.

G. Entire Agreement; Modification. The parties agree that this is the entire agreement between the parties except the parties acknowledge that Sections 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the Employment Agreement remain in full force and effect. This Agreement overrides and replaces all prior negotiations and terms proposed or discussed, whether in writing or orally, about the subject matter of this Agreement except for Sections 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the Employment Agreement, which remain in full force and effect. No modification of this Agreement shall be valid unless it is in writing identified as an Amendment to the Agreement and is signed by Meier and an authorized representative CSHP.

H. Governing Law and Venue. This Agreement is governed by and shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida. Venue for any proceedings arising out of this Agreement shall be Hillsborough County, Florida.

I. Remedies for Breach.

(1) In the event that either Meier brings an action against CSHP or CSPIN based on any claims released in this Agreement, CSHP, may, at its option and as applicable (a) demand the return of any payments that have been made under this Agreement; (b) plead this Agreement in bar to any such action; and (c) seek any and all remedies available, including, but not limited to, injunctive relief, monetary damages, and any attorneys' fees and costs incurred by any of the Released Parties if they prevail in any such action.

(2) In the event that CSHP should breach this Agreement, Meier will be entitled to bring an action for breach of this Agreement. In the event that Meier shall prevail in such an action to enforce the terms of this Agreement he will be entitled to recover as appropriate and applicable, injunctive relief, monetary damages, and any attorneys' fees and costs incurred by any of the Releasing Parties if they prevail in any such action.

J. Severability. Each provision of this Agreement is intended to be fully severable. If any court of competent jurisdiction determines that any provision of this Agreement is illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any manner, the remainder of this Agreement will remain in force.

STEVEN MEIER ACKNOWLEDGES THAT HE HAS CAREFULLY READ THIS SEVERANCE AGREEMENT AND GENERAL RELEASE, KNOWS AND UNDERSTANDS ITS CONTENTS, VOLUNTARILY SIGNS IT OF HIS OWN FREE WILL, HAS BEEN ADVISED TO CONSULT WITH AN ATTORNEY BEFORE SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT, AND HAS IN FACT CONSULTING WITH AN ATTORNEY BEFORE SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties sign this Agreement on the date indicated below with the intent to be bound by its terms and conditions.

CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas

Steven Meier

By: _____

As its: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____



Action Item

Approval of CSHP Grievance Policy

Information

This policy establishes formal policy guidelines on handling grievance and/or complaint by a CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas (CSHP) customer. Grievances are defined as non-discrimination complaints alleging violation(s) of any administrative process, activity, service, or program funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

This policy also identifies the EEO Officer and contact information for CSHP, which must be made public included on all internal and external communications about our nondiscrimination and equal opportunity programs.

The following policy has been developed to provide clear guidance to CSHP staff, FloridaCommerce staff, contractors, consultants, temporary and other third-party workers, and customers regarding grievance resolution procedures to be utilized when filing, investigating, and resolving a grievance alleging unfair treatment or a violation(s) of a WIOA, TAA, TANF, and/or SNAP policy related to any administrative or programmatic action or inaction.

Policy No.	Title	Description
A-08-V3	Grievance Policy	This policy establishes formal policy guidelines on handling grievance and/or complaint by a CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas (CSHP) customer. Grievances are defined as non-discrimination complaints alleging violation(s) of any administrative process, activity, service, or program funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

Action

CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas staff recommend approval of the above Grievance Policy.



Policy No.:	A-08-V3
Policy Title:	Grievance Policy

Issue Date:	11/21/2019
Revision Date(s):	04/22/2024; TBD
Program:	Administration
Subject:	Customer Grievances
Purpose:	This policy establishes formal guidelines on handling a grievance and/or complaint by a CSHP customer. Grievances are defined as non-discrimination complaints alleging violation(s) of any administrative process, activity, service, or program funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).
Distribution:	CSHP staff, FloridaCommerce staff, contractors, consultants, temporary and other third-party workers, and customers.
Contact:	CSHP CEO or their designee

Purpose

This policy establishes formal policy guidelines on handling grievance and/or complaint by a CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas (CSHP) customer. Grievances are defined as non-discrimination complaints alleging violation(s) of any administrative process, activity, service, or program funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

Background

CSHP is committed to operating all programs and activities in accordance with federal, state, or local laws, rules, and policies. Grievances concerning violation of policy or complaints alleging discrimination involving Wagner-Peyser services are addressed in a separate Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) policy [Document Review \(floridajobs.org\)](https://www.floridajobs.org).

The WIOA, TAA, TANF, and SNAP programs require the state, local area workforce boards, and direct recipients of program funds to establish and maintain grievance procedures for handling program-related concerns. The grievance requirements may vary by program.

Policy

CSHP will maintain effective and timely grievance resolution procedures to be utilized when filing, investigating, and resolving a grievance alleging unfair treatment or a violation(s) of a WIOA, TAA, TANF, and/or SNAP policy related to any administrative or programmatic action or inaction.

Inclusivity Statement

CSHP is obligated to operate our programs and activities in a non-discriminatory manner. Specifically, Section 188 of WIOA and the accompanying regulations at 29 CFR Part 38 require equal opportunity in the workforce development system, and prohibit discrimination in WIOA-financially assisted programs based on:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Religion (actual or perceived)
- Age
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Sex or sex stereotyping
- Disability
- Citizenship
- Political affiliation or belief
- Shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics (actual or perceived)

Section 188 of WIOA applies to all programs and activities offered through the workforce development system and workforce development partners, even if the principal source of financial assistance for a program or activity is a federal department or agency other than USDOL.

In addition to Section 188 of WIOA, there are many other applicable regulations and statutes including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1999, Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992, that we must uphold the non-discrimination clause contained therein. These legal authorities protect individuals from discrimination, including on the basis of unlawful sex discrimination, which may include pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions or gender-based violence. Furthermore, Title IV prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, which includes discrimination (including harassment) based on actual or perceived: shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics; and citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity.

Applicability

This policy on grievance resolution procedures applies to all CSHP customers, CSHP staff, FloridaCommerce staff located in any CSHP office, volunteers, interns, program contractors, and training vendors.

Results of Failure to Comply with Policy

Failure of any individual listed under “Applicability” above, other than customers, to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with CSHP’s Personnel Handbook. Failure of a program contractor or training vendor to follow this policy may result in contract or agreement termination.

Definitions and Details

To simplify instructions and to have a unified format, this Local Workforce Development Board's (LWDB) grievance policy and procedures will be the same for WIOA, TAA, TANF, and SNAP workforce programs. Wagner-Peyser procedures, as mentioned above, will be addressed separately.

The designated Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer investigates all written program-related grievances filed that fall within CSHP scope of authority or jurisdiction. Authority is limited within this policy to WIOA, TAA, TANF and SNAP program-related grievances which are filed by:

- Applicants or individuals receiving services provided under WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP programs administered by the LWDB; or
- Any party who is adversely impacted by any WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP administrative or programmatic decision or indecision made by CSHP, including decisions made by subcontractors and service providers.

The CSHP EEO Officer does not have the authority or jurisdiction to accept and investigate grievances that do not meet the above criteria. For example: TANF cash assistance and/or Food Stamp eligibility and benefit entitlement concerns must be filed with the local Department of Children and Families (DCF) office, the cognizant agency responsible for administering this part of the TANF program.

Nothing included in this policy precludes a grievant from pursuing a remedy authorized under another federal, state, or local law.

Reporting Criminal Fraud and Abuse

Allegations of criminal fraud and abuse must be reported immediately to the following agency:

USDOL Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations, Room S5514
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Reports of criminal fraud and abuse can also be mailed to the following agency:

USDOL Southeast Regional Inspector General for Investigations
Office of Investigations, Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center 61
Forsythe Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Reports alleging criminal fraud and abuse may be reported through USDOL's Hotline at 1-800-347-3756.

Neutrality

When the CSHP EEO Officer investigates, he/she acts as a neutral, unbiased factfinder and is not an advocate for either the grievant or any external respondent.

A conflict of interest exists for the EEO Officer when any responsibility, expectation or interest exists that could interfere with the EEO Officer's ability, motivation, or authority to perform his or her responsibilities under this policy. CSHP has established procedures to ensure, to the extent practical, the neutrality and impartiality of the EEO Officer. This includes requiring the EEO Officer to report directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on equal opportunity matters and referring matters to the corporate attorney when an appearance of or a real conflict of interest exists.

How to File a Grievance

Who May File: The following individuals may file a formal written grievance:

- Applicants or individuals receiving services provided under WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP programs administered by CSHP; or
- Any party who is adversely impacted by any WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP administrative or programmatic decision or indecision made by CSHP, including decisions made by subcontractors and service providers.

Steps to File:

1. An individual, employer or agency will be encouraged to resolve any grievance informally prior to putting his/her concerns or allegations in writing. The grievant should be directed to discuss their concern with the case manager. If the case manager is unable to resolve the concern it should be escalated via the chain of command.
 - a. Program Lead
 - b. Program Coordinator
 - c. Program Director
2. **Where to File:** A grievance alleging unfair treatment or a violation(s) of a WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP policy or procedure related to any administrative or programmatic action or inaction may be filed with the CSHP EEO Officer. The EEO Officer will answer any questions a potential grievant has about grievance filing and investigation.

CSHP EEO Officer contact information:

Doug Tobin, EEO Officer

4350 W. Cypress Street, Suite 875

Tampa, FL 33607

tobind@careersourcehlp.com

813 397-2054

TDD/TTY: 800-955-8771

3. **How to File a Grievance with the Local Workforce Area's EEO Officer:** When informal resolution cannot be reached, an individual wishing to file a formal written grievance with the CSHP EEO Officer should do so using the CSHP Grievance Complaint Procedures Form, available by contacting a CSHP EEO Officer by telephone, in writing, or email.

Grievances filed with the CSHP EEO Officer that do not use the CSHP Grievance Complaint Procedures Form will be accepted if the information provided complies with the requirements in the Content of the Grievance section below. Apart from situations posing an immediate, recognizable threat to the grievant individual's safety and well-being, the CSHP EEO Officer will not begin investigating the grievance until all required information is received.

4. **When to File:** A grievance filed with the CSHP EEO Officer must be filed within 45 days of the alleged violation. "Filing" means the written grievance must be received by the CSHP EEO Officer before the expiration of the 45-day period for filing. Grievances received after the filing deadline will be returned to the individual.
5. **Content of the Grievance:** A grievance filed with the CSHP EEO Officer must be in writing and include the following (use of the CSHP Grievance Complaint Procedures Form covers these items).
 - a. The grievant individual's name.
 - b. The grievant individual's contact information, including mailing and residential addresses (if different), phone or cell phone number, email address or other means of contacting the grievant individual.
 - c. The identity of the agency or individual allegedly responsible for the violation, referred to as the respondent throughout these procedures.
 - d. A description of the alleged grievance.
 - e. A description of the alleged violation or unfair treatment.
 - f. A description of how the grievant was negatively impacted.
 - g. The names and contact information of any witnesses to the alleged violation or unfair treatment.
 - h. The program, activity or service that was involved in this alleged violation.
 - i. The date the violation occurred.
 - j. The status of the grievant (Is the individual an applicant or a participant?).
 - k. The grievant individual's desired resolution of the matter.
 - l. The signature of the grievant and the date signed.
6. **Incomplete Grievance:** If a grievance filed with the CSHP EEO Officer does not contain enough information to permit the EEO Officer to determine that the LWDB has jurisdiction, the EEO Officer will contact the grievant and request additional information. When the grievant is unreachable or does not provide the needed information within the time specified, the CSHP EEO Officer may close the grievant individual's file.

7. **Time Periods:** The date used by the CSHP EEO Officer to determine whether a grievance has been filed is the date the CSHP EEO Officer receives a written grievance alleging a violation of any activity, service or program financially assisted by the LWDB that contains all the required information mentioned above.

The period for determining jurisdiction, initial notification letter, etc. will not commence until the grievant has submitted all required information in a manner that complies with the Content of the Grievance section, above.

Wherever a deadline or period is mentioned throughout these procedures, it refers to calendar days. Where the last day of any period in these procedures falls on a weekend or official holiday of the LWDB, the next regularly scheduled workday will be the deadline for completing the action.

Determining Jurisdiction

When the CSHP EEO Officer receives a grievance, it shall be reviewed to determine whether the grievance contains the required information and whether the CSHP EEO Officer has the legal authority to investigate.

The EEO Officer will carefully investigate complaints of gender-based violence and complaints alleging discrimination against applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and employees because they are survivors of gender-based violence, to determine whether discrimination prohibited by Title IX or Section 188 of WIOA has occurred. When investigating such allegations, the EEO Officer will interact with complaints, witnesses and alleged victims in a trauma-informed, unbiased, and confidential manner that recognizes the stress perceived and actual gender-based violence and discrimination while pursuing neutral and objective investigative inquiries.

The CSHP EEO Officer has authority only for complaints that meet all the following requirements:

- The CSHP EEO Officer received the grievance by the deadline for filing, as discussed above under “When to File;”
- The grievance is filed against either the LWDB or an entity that receives federal financial assistance through the LWDB; and
- The grievant is an applicant or person receiving services provided under WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP programs administered by the Local Workforce Area; or
- Any party adversely impacted by any WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP administrative or programmatic decision or indecision made by the LWDB, including decisions made by subcontractors and service providers.

Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction: When the CSHP EEO Officer determines it does not have jurisdiction over a grievance, the CSHP EEO Officer will, within 10 days after receiving the grievance, notify the grievant in writing that the LWDB will not accept the grievance. The notice will give a statement of the reason(s) underlying that determination and inform the grievant of his or her options for filing a grievance with agencies other than CSHP.

When the respondent has been given notice of the grievance, the CSHP EEO Officer will also notify them in writing that the CSHP EEO Officer case file has been closed for administrative reasons unrelated to the merit of the allegations made in the grievance.

Issuing the Initial Notification Letter

CSHP EEO Officer will provide written notice to the grievant within 10 days after they receive the grievance.

This notice shall contain the following:

1. A statement as to whether the LWDB has jurisdiction over the grievance. If the LWDB does not have jurisdiction, the grievance must be rejected.
2. A statement as to whether the grievance was filed in a timely manner. If the grievance was received more than 45 days after the alleged violation occurred, the grievance will be returned to the grievant by the CSHP EEO Officer.
3. A statement as to whether the information provided in the grievance was complete. If incomplete, the CSHP EEO Officer will close the grievant individual's file.
4. A statement as to whether the CSHP EEO Officer, or a designee, will begin an investigation of the grievance and the date that investigation will begin.

At the same time the Initial Notification letter is sent to the grievant, the CSHP EEO Officer will send the respondent an initial notification letter if an investigation commences. This notice informs the respondent that the LWDB has received a grievance, the LWDB has determined it has jurisdiction, the grievance was received in the required time frame, the grievance was complete, and the CSHP EEO Officer or a designee will be investigating the grievance.

The letter to the respondent may also contain a request for a position statement and, where deemed necessary, a request for documents and/or response to written questions designed to elicit information needed to resolve the grievance.

Process for Handling the Grievance

The CSHP EEO Officer will first determine if informal resolution was attempted and failed or if it was not attempted. If an informal resolution was not attempted, the EEO Officer will work with the grievant to attempt to resolve his/her allegations informally.

If unable to resolve the grievance informally, the CSHP EEO Officer may begin to examine evidence from all available sources. Witnesses may be interviewed by telephone or in person where necessary. The CSHP EEO Officer will interview the respondent, and the persons named in the grievance. The CSHP EEO Officer shall strive to determine the respondent's account of the facts, additional people the respondent suggests should be interviewed, the matters on which each witness is knowledgeable of, and the documentation the respondent wishes reviewed.

Once the fact-finding stage of the investigation has been completed, the CSHP EEO Officer will review and analyze the information to determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe the respondent treated the grievant unfairly or violated a policy or procedure of any WIOA, TAA, TANF and/or SNAP activity, service, or program.

Frequently in a grievance investigation there are allegations raised by a grievant that cannot be supported by written documentation or corroborated by witnesses' testimony. If the respondent denies the allegation(s), in the absence of supporting written documentation or witnesses' testimony, the CSHP EEO Officer cannot draw a conclusion regarding the alleged unfair treatment or violation of policy: the evidence is inconclusive.

Report of Investigation

The CSHP EEO Officer issues a written report, called a Report of Investigation, upon completion of a grievance investigation. The report shall be in clear, simple, non-technical language and shall be furnished to the CEO of the LWDB, the respondent, if different from the LWDB, and to the grievant. The report must be issued within 30 calendar days of the date on which the grievance is filed.

Appeal – Hearing

If the grievant or respondent is not satisfied with the Report of Investigation, either party may submit a written appeal/request for a hearing to the CSHP EEO Officer. This appeal must be received by the CSHP EEO Officer within five days of the issuance of the Report of Investigation.

The CEO of the LWDB shall sit as the Board's Hearing Officer unless the grievance is against the CEO, then the Chair of the Board shall appoint a Board member to serve as the Hearing Officer.

Within five days after the written appeal/request for a hearing is delivered to the CSHP EEO Officer, a hearing date and time shall be scheduled at a time mutually agreed upon by the grievant, the respondent, if different from the LWDB, and the LWDB.

The Hearing Officer will ensure that the hearing proceeds in an equitable, orderly, and expeditious manner. The Hearing Officer may elicit testimony and information from the grievant, the respondent, or staff without acting as an advocate for any party. The Hearing Officer will ensure that the process, including the contents of the hearing dialogue, is transcribed or has the potential of being transcribed. The Hearing Officer may attempt to negotiate a settlement between the parties any time prior to the conclusion of the hearing.

Within 10 days after the hearing, the Hearing Officer shall issue a written decision. The decision shall be in clear, simple, non-technical language and will include the following information:

1. Date, time, and place of the hearing.
2. The names of those in attendance at the hearing.
3. A statement that the involved parties, their representatives, and witnesses were given an opportunity to present oral or written evidence in support of their position.
4. A clear and concise statement of the issues.
5. Findings of fact, based exclusively on the evidence of record.
6. The decision of the Hearing Officer is based on the findings of fact and evidence introduced at the hearing.

The Hearing Officer will furnish to all parties a copy of the decision by certified, return receipt requested mail. Failure to accept the certified mail will constitute a waiver of the right to notice by such means. The Hearing Officer shall thereafter deliver the copy by regular mail. Complete records of the hearing and findings shall be archived.

The Hearing Officer's decision in all grievance matters will be final.

Miscellaneous Provisions

- 1. Negotiated Settlement:** The parties may settle the grievance on mutually agreeable terms at any time during the CSHP EEO Officer's investigation or the appeal/hearing procedure, and the LWDB encourages parties to do so. If settlement is achieved, its terms shall be reduced to writing and signed by the grievant and the respondent. A copy of the settlement agreement shall be filed with the CSHP EEO Officer along with a letter from the grievant withdrawing the grievance.
- 2. Right to Representation:** Both the grievant and the respondent have the right to be represented at all stages of the grievance process by an attorney or other individual of their choice. Before a grievant or respondent's representative will be recognized by the CSHP EEO Officer, a written notice from the grievant or the respondent appointing such a representative should be received by the EEO Officer.
- 3. Retaliation:** No person or agency may discharge, or in any other manner discriminate or retaliate against any person or deny to any person a benefit to which that person is entitled because such person has filed any grievance, has testified or is about to testify in any such proceedings or investigation or has provided information or assisted in an investigation.
- 4. Respondent's Duty to Maintain Records:** Once the respondent becomes aware that a grievance has been filed with the CSHP EEO Officer or with another such agency (see list below), the respondent shall preserve all original personnel or participant records and other evidence relevant to the grievance until three years after the final Report of Investigation or Hearing decision is issued, whichever is later. Where the respondent fails to preserve such records, an inference of wrongdoing may arise where there is a lack of documentation to refute the grievant individual's allegations.
- 5. Respondent's Duty to Provide Information:** A respondent has a duty to provide the CSHP EEO Officer with relevant information necessary to the investigation. Where a respondent fails to provide requested information in the custody and control of the respondent in a timely manner, after notice and an opportunity to correct have been given, the failure may give rise to an inference of wrongdoing where there is a lack of information to refute the grievant individual's allegations.
- 6. Grievant Individual's Duty to Provide Information:** A grievant has a duty to provide the CSHP EEO Officer with relevant information necessary for the investigation. The CSHP EEO Officer may dismiss a grievance where a grievant, after notice and an opportunity to correct has been given, fails to provide requested information, refuses to submit to an interview or attend meetings, or otherwise refuses to cooperate to such an extent that the CSHP EEO Officer is unable to resolve the grievance. Under such circumstances, the grievance may be dismissed without a final determination.

7. **Grievant Individual's Right to Amend the Grievance:** The grievant has the right to amend the grievance at any time prior to the issuance of the initial notification letter. A grievant individual's amendment may not add additional issues (other than retaliation) not covered in the original grievance.
8. **Grievant Individual's Right to Withdraw the Grievance:** The grievant has the right to withdraw his or her grievance at any time prior to the issuance of the Report of Investigation, or, if appealed, prior to the issuance of the Hearing Officer's decision. The withdrawal must be submitted in writing.
9. **Confidentiality:** All records that relate to a grievance are not public record until the investigation is completed and a report or a hearing decision has been delivered. Once the CSHP EEO Officer issues a Report of Investigation or the Hearing Officer issues a decision, whichever is later, the grievance file becomes a public record and, unless exempted by another part of the public records law, the file is open for public inspection. To assure due process, confirmation of delivery by the United States Postal Service return receipt or by another recognized delivery company that provides documentation of delivery, will document that the report has been delivered.

Neither the grievant nor the respondent has a right to see information gathered as part of the investigation until the Report of Investigation has been issued, or, if appealed, the Hearing Officer's decision has been issued. Nonetheless, the investigator may disclose information submitted by the grievant and respondent where it is necessary to further the investigation.

Action Steps Required

The following steps must be taken by each CSHP staff, FloridaCommerce staff located in CSHP offices, volunteers, and interns.

1. Each staff member must review this policy directive. If the staff has a question about anything contained herein, it is his/her responsibility to immediately bring the question to the attention of his/her supervisor. If not resolved, the supervisor will contact the individual named under "Inquiries" below.
2. It is the responsibility of each individual to immediately report any breach of this policy to the attention of the person named below.
3. CSHP contract managers and appropriate Directors shall provide this policy to all partner agencies located in a CSHP facility, Program Contractors and Training vendors and require that each submit a letter stating that this policy was provided to all appropriate staff and that the partner or program contractor shall abide by this policy or submit their own to HR for review.
4. Each supervisor, manager, and director are responsible for informing employees of this policy.
5. Each individual must replace previous grievance policies with this policy reissuance.

Policy Amendments or Revocation

Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, CSHP reserves the right to revise or revoke this policy at any time. This policy is written to establish local policy and procedures and is not intended to supersede any applicable laws or regulations. Nothing in this policy should be construed as creating any legal rights for any individual beyond the rights such persons may have under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Failure of CSHP to adhere strictly to the steps outlined within this policy shall not be construed as a violation of rights or administrative procedures.

Inquiries

Anyone with a question about filing a grievance may contact the CSHP EEO Officer or any of the agencies listed below.

Doug Tobin, EEO Officer
4350 W. Cypress Street, Suite 875
Tampa, FL 33607
tobind@careersourcehp.com
(813) 397-2054
TDD/TTY: (800) 955-8771

Florida Department of Commerce Office for Civil Rights – Julisa A. Nnorom, State EO Officer

107 East Madison Street MSC 150
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4129
(850) 921-3205
TTY (via the Florida Relay Service): 711 in English, Spanish, French and Haitian Creole
FAX: (850) 921-3122

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office for Civil Rights

61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30323
404-562-7886
TTY: (404) 331-2867
FAX: (404) 562-7881

U.S. Department of Labor Civil Rights Center

200 Constitution Avenue, NW Room N-4123
Washington, DC 20210
(202) 693-6500
TTY: (202) 693-6515
FAX: (202) 693-6505

U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Civil Rights

300 7th Street, SW; Suite 400
Stop Code 9430
Washington, DC 20250-9410
(202) 401-1014
TTY: (202) 401-0216
FAX: (202) 690-5686

References

- [29 U.S.C. § 3248: Nondiscrimination](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 29, Subtitle A, Part 36: Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations, Title 29, Subtitle A, Part 38: Implementation of Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)
- [Florida Department of Economic Opportunity \(now FloridaCommerce\) Division of Workforce Services One Stop and Program Support: Employment Service Complaint- Resolution System Handbook](#)
- [Florida Department of Economic Opportunity \(now FloridaCommerce\): Florida's Nondiscrimination Plan](#)
- [TEGL 05-23 - Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Discrimination Based on Actual or Perceived Religion, Shared Ancestry, or Ethnic Characteristics are Prohibited Forms of Discrimination in the Workforce Development System](#)
- [TEGL 06-24 Complying with Nondiscrimination Requirements: Preventing and Addressing Gender-Based Violence in the Workforce Development System; Reducing Barriers Faced by Survivors of Gender-Based Violence in Seeking Jobs and Participating in Covered Programs and Activities](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor, Compliance Assistance for Programs of Federal Financial Assistance](#)
- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\), Section 188: Nondiscrimination](#)

History

Date	Action	Description
11/21/2019	Issuance	Approval by the CSTB Board of Directors.
04/22/2024	Revision 1	CSTB EEO Officer Updated Policy, State EEO Officer, Updated Attachments
TBD	Revision 2	Approval by the CSHP Board of Directors

Attachments

- [Grievance/Complaint and Whistleblower Process for WIOA, TAA, WT, SNAP, SUMMER HIRES](#)
- [USDOL Employment and Training Administration Complaint/Apparent Violation Form](#)

Other Resources

- N/A

NOTES:

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.



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