

**EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**  
**Department of Human Services**  
**Client Grievance and Resolution Process**

**GRIEVANCE PHILOSOPHY**

The Eau Claire County Department of Human Services is committed to ensuring that your rights are protected as it relates to the provision of services. The department is further committed to providing you with the opportunity to express your complaints, difficulties, and disagreements. It is the goal of the Department of Human Services to resolve disputes at the lowest level possible. The grievance and resolution process is designed to promote problem solving by the client and the client's worker whenever possible.

**YOUR RIGHTS**

You are not limited in the number of complaints you can file.

You have the right to pursue court action at any point. If you choose to do so, you must notify the client rights specialist immediately. The department may choose to stop the internal grievance process.

***Retribution***

You will be free from retribution by the department or its contracted agencies if you file a complaint.

***Confidentiality***

Your complaints will be confidential. Clients and others will have access to department decisions made on individual cases. The identity of the client who is the subject of the complaint will be kept confidential. Requests should be made pursuant to the procedure established in the Department Open Record Notice.

***Legal Representation***

You have the right to be represented by any combination of the following during any step of the process: family members, guardians, friends, advocates, or an attorney. The department will not pay for your attorney. If you choose to be represented by an attorney, you must notify the client rights specialist at the appropriate step at least 24 hours prior to any meeting. The department reserves the right to have its own attorney present. If you do not inform the department and show up with an attorney, the department may delay the meeting or hearing for up to five (5) working days.

***Corrective Action***

The department will take corrective action, if warranted, and provide you with an opportunity for input.

**WHEN TO FILE**

It is preferable that your complaint be filed as soon as possible after the incident and ideally within 30 days of the incident. The prompt filing of your complaint will result in a more accurate and effective investigation and resolution.

## **HOW TO FILE**

All clients are asked to initially fill out a “Complaint Screening” Form, which is included in the Client Complaint Packet.

## **ASSISTANCE**

The client rights specialist will assist you throughout the grievance process and is available to assist you with completing the grievance forms, if needed. The phone number for the client rights specialist is 715-839-2300.

## **GRIEVANCE SCREENING PROCESS**

### **Step One – Complaint Packet Obtained**

Complaint packets can be obtained at any Department of Human Services reception desk by asking the receptionist.

### **Step Two - Completion of Complaint Screening Form**

Please complete the Complaint Screening Form and return it to the receptionist or mail it directly to the department. A sealed envelope is provided for confidentiality. The receptionist will stamp the current date on the outside of the envelope. This sealed envelope will be forwarded unopened to the client rights specialist on the day it is received.

### **Step Three - Setting Up An Appointment**

The client rights specialist will contact you within three (3) working days to set up an appointment. This appointment will be held at the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services. At your request, the appointment could be conducted by phone.

The role of the client rights specialist is to assist you in using the grievance process. At your appointment, the client rights specialist will:

- ❖ Help you select the appropriate grievance process
- ❖ Explain the system and process
- ❖ Provide you with the appropriate forms
- ❖ Assist you with filling out the appropriate paperwork, if needed

### **Step Four - Use Of Appropriate Grievance Process**

Services provided by the department are funded through various sources. Therefore, based on the nature of your complaint, the grievance process available to you may vary. The client rights specialist will assist you with selecting the appropriate process and explain the timelines associated with the process.