GRIEVANCE POLICY

The following explains your right to file a grievance with Disability Rights Maryland (DRM). You have the right to file a grievance if you believe that we have not provided effective assistance or have wrongly denied assistance in dealing with a disability-related legal matter. If you are unable to provide a written grievance, you may instead request our assistance to complete the grievance form while you explain the issue in person or over the telephone. We encourage you to discuss issues or problems directly with staff or managers before filing a grievance.

Your Right to Services

DRM is a private organization authorized by Federal law to provide certain types of advocacy services and legal help for eligible persons with disabilities in Maryland.

We can help eligible individuals with disabilities in many ways, including: (1) pursuing legal, administrative and other appropriate remedies in order to protect the rights of eligible individuals with disabilities in the State; (2) providing information about and making referrals to other programs that can help individuals with disabilities; and (3) coordinating our programs with other programs that serve individuals with disabilities.

However, because of limited funding for our program, we cannot handle every case that comes to us. To effectively serve Maryland residents with disabilities, we have developed an Advocacy Services Plan that guides us in deciding which cases we can accept. Unfortunately, if your problem or concern is not covered by our current Plan, or if our limited resources will not allow us to take on your issues, we may not be able to help you. If we cannot provide direct help, we will try to let you know about other agencies or persons who can.

Grievance Rights

You have the right to file a grievance if you are unhappy with our services. For example, you might want to file a grievance if you believe that: (1) we did not provide effective services; (2) we wrongly denied help; or (3) we violated our legal obligations. We can give you more detailed information about what the law requires of any one of our programs.

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How to File a Grievance

You (or your representative) must file a grievance within 30 work days after the occurrence of the decision or incident with which you disagree. You may either mail to us a completed DRM grievance form (this is attached) or mail a letter that explains why you believe our decision was wrong. You should sign and date the form or letter. If you cannot give us a written grievance, you may give us your grievance orally (e.g., by telephone, in person, or by audio tape) or ask us to help you write your grievance.

Grievances should be mailed to the Executive Director of DRM:

> Executive Director
> Disability Rights Maryland
> 1500 Union Avenue; Suite 2000
> Baltimore, MD 21211

Within 15 work days of receiving the grievance, the Executive Director will give you a written decision about your complaint. If needed, we will write a plan to correct the problem and make sure that we provide the proper services as soon as possible.

If you are unhappy with the written decision of the Executive Director, you may send a letter to our Board of Directors asking that the Board review that decision. The letter should be sent to the President of the DRM Board of Directors:

> President, DRM Board of Directors
> c/o Disability Rights Maryland
> 1500 Union Avenue; Suite 2000
> Baltimore, MD 21211

You must make this request within 30 work days of the date you receive the Executive Director's decision. The decision of the Board will be given to you within 30 work days. This will be our final decision.

> 30 work days to file a grievance
> 15 work days for Executive Director to respond
> 30 work days to appeal to the Board of Directors
> 30 work days for the Board to respond

If you need more information about your rights under this policy, please let us know.