

Youth Participant Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Finger Lakes Youth Employment Program. This program is just one part of a variety of programs available to young adults between the ages of fourteen and twenty-four. These programs are made available to you as a result of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and other Workforce Grants. By participating in these youth programs you will have many opportunities and some responsibilities as well. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information on

what possibilities are available to you, as well as to identify what the regulations are for participating in this program. We have also included some tips on how to make this program successful.

We want to thank you in advance for your willingness to work with us. We hope you find this program meets all of your expectations.

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Investment Act has many requirements that direct what services we can make available to young people. The Act also sets goals for the services we provide in order to make sure that quality and well rounded services are made available. Specifically, the Workforce Investment Act challenges us to make sure that:

1. Work experiences are linked to academic and occupational learning
2. You have access to leadership development
3. Support services are available
4. Guidance and counseling services are available
5. Follow up services will be available after completion of your program

Most importantly, the Workforce Investment Act states that these services are made available from a number of community resources. It is important to remember that no one agency can do all of this alone. In order to make this a successful program for you, our goal is to see that your needs are met by the agency, service provider or school that can best provide the service to meet those needs.

Other funding sources used by Workforce Development (such as resources available through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) may have guidelines specific to that grant, but generally follow the same set of goals. These programs are designed to increase the skills necessary for you to becoming a productive adult.

ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

To participate in the Youth Employment Programs, all participants must meet certain eligibility guidelines. At the time you first applied to participate, you and /or your parents provided us with certain information. If at a later date it is determined that the information you provided us was not accurate, *and* if that information affects your eligibility, it is possible that you could be terminated from the Finger Lakes Youth Employment Programs.

There are special federal and local rules for participation that you need to be aware of. We have tried to make the following rules simple to understand. If there is anything in this section or anywhere in the handbook that you do not understand, you should ask your assigned Workforce Development staff person.

1. **Residency:** The Workforce Investment Act regulations require that a participant must be a resident of the Workforce Investment Area to participate in the Youth Employment Programs. The policy states you must be a resident of Wayne, Ontario, Seneca or Yates County while enrolled in the programs. Should you change your residence to outside one of these four counties, you will no longer be eligible to participate in the WIA programs. The Workforce Development Staff can assist you in locating the agencies that provide youth programs in your new location. Individuals who are living in group homes, foster care or residential care facilities within the Workforce Investment Area may also be considered for eligibility. Moving from one county to another may affect eligibility for additional (non-WIA) programs. Please report any change of address to Workforce Development staff immediately.
2. **Political Activities:** While participating in a work experience program you can not do any work for any political party or organization. Examples include writing up lists, making banners, asking other persons for their votes or support, etc. (Hatch Act)

3. **Political Contributions:** As a participant in a work experience, other worksite employees or any other person can not ask you to make any money contributions, buy tickets, etc. For any event that is sponsored by a political party. (Hatch Act)
4. **Sectarian Activities:** The regulations state that while participating in Youth Employment Programs, you may not be involved in religious or anti-religious activities.

Again, it is important that if you have any questions regarding the above regulations, you speak to your assigned Workforce Development staff person.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Our programs are designed to provide equal opportunity to all persons without discrimination because of one's race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin or disability. If you think that you are not being treated fairly because of any of the above reasons, you should immediately contact your Workforce Development Staff, so that we can try to resolve the problem.

If after meeting with the staff person, you still believe there is a problem, you may then contact the Affirmative Action Officer identified at the end of this handbook. It is the responsibility of this person to help resolve your concerns. If you still do not feel comfortable with the results, the Affirmative Action Officer will tell you what procedures are available to you to help resolve your complaint or problem.

COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES

We understand that for many participants, this might be the first introduction into a work experience, balancing employment with school or other obligations, and learning many new responsibilities. It can all seem very difficult. It is important to remember that if you have a complaint or concern regarding your work experience or program activities you should first speak to your supervisor. Many problems can be resolved on the spot. If this does not work, speak to your Workforce Development Staff. The Complaint/Grievance policy can be found at the end of this handbook.

STAFF ASSISTANCE

Each participant will be assigned a staff person who is trained to assist you while you are involved with the Youth Employment Program. The Workforce Development staff is available to help you determine what your goals are, and what activities you will be participating in. They will help you develop your career goals, assist in job search activities, and help you to overcome personal, educational and job related barriers. It is important to remember that each participant's goals and objectives are different. You and the Workforce Development staff will come up with your own individual service plan.

Your assigned Workforce Development Staff will meet with you regularly. It is hoped that you and the Workforce Development Staff will develop a mutual respect and will work cooperatively together. It is critical that you keep in touch with your Youth Counselor in order to participate in Workforce Development Programs and activities. By enrolling in these programs, you are agreeing to keep your counselor updated on your progress or concerns.

GOAL PLANNING (ISS)

You and your assigned staff person will meet to develop your own Individual Service Strategy. This is a plan of action which will outline your goals and career objectives while in this program. The service strategy outlines any obstacles, strengths and weaknesses, and it lists approaches and activities that will help you reach your educational and employment goals.

As this service strategy is your plan, it is assumed you will make every effort to work toward the goals and objectives identified in it. The Workforce Development Staff will meet periodically with you to review the progress being made and to adjust the strategy as necessary. If it is determined that you willfully are not attempting to cooperate in achieving the goals in the strategy, you may be terminated from the program.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Under the Workforce Investment Act and the Summer TANF programs, Workforce Development may provide or mandate participation in any of the following services:

- Work Experience and Work Readiness Training
- Referrals to Alternative Educational Programs such as GED classes
- Summer Employment Opportunities
- Tutoring
- Occupational Skills Training and Certification programs
- Leadership Development or Career Exploration activities
- Adult Mentoring
- Support Services
- Guidance and Counseling

- Follow up services for up to one year after program completion
- Other services as appropriate including referrals to other agencies

PARTICIPANT FILES

The Workforce Investment Act requires that a participant file be maintained on all youth who participate in our programs. This file will contain information provided by you, i.e. income, family size, applications, etc. The file will also contain copies of time and attendance records, information on financial assistance provided, and evaluations from activities you have been involved in. The file will also contain counseling notes and your individual goal plan.

The information contained in this file is confidential. There is, however, one exception. Certain governmental agencies, such as funding sources, may review your file. You may request to review your file at any time.

CAREER AND LEADERSHIP EXPLORATION

In addition to a work experience, you will be encouraged to participate in career exploration activities as identified by your Goal Plan (ISS). The activities are as important as reporting to your work experience. The purpose of these activities is to provide you with information regarding employment and training opportunities, increase your academic and job related skills, and help you become better equipped to find work in a field in which you are interested.

This part of the program may contain a variety of activities including:

1. Personal, vocational and educational assessment and evaluation

2. Workshops emphasizing job seeking and job keeping skills
3. Visits to local businesses or industries
4. Individual and group activities to apply academic skills to work related problem-solving
5. Activities to increase knowledge of and participation in the local community
6. Creation of a Career Portfolio

As indicated in your Service Strategy, these activities require your full attention as much as the work experience. You may be expected to document for your portfolio what you learned from each of the activities that you participate in. Some of these activities may be a requirement for placement in a Work Experience.

In some instances you will be paid for your participation in the above referenced activities. The Workforce Development Staff will let you know which activities are paid. Additionally, the staff will work with your worksite supervisor to arrange your attendance in the event the activity conflicts with your work experience.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Every participant that is not enrolled in high school or GED classes will be required to take reading and math proficiency testing. These tests will be administered twice each year and will continue for the duration of your enrollment in Workforce Development programs or until you attain proficiency. If your skills are deficient in reading or math, or you have not obtained a High School Diploma or GED, you will be required to attend educational activities until you reach levels of proficiency. These activities will be coordinated with your work activities, and failure to attend could jeopardize continuation in the program.

WORK EXPERIENCE

If your individual goal plan includes a work experience, you will be assigned to work at one of many different locations throughout the county. You may need to interview for these positions and will be provided with opportunities to gain interviewing and other pre-employment skills. The worksites have provided the local Workforce Development Office with a description of the duties that you will be required to perform. Your descriptive title will denote what type of work you do. Your Civil Service job title is the official County title for all Workforce Development Work Experience participants. Depending upon the worksite, you may be working with other participants. You must complete all necessary Tax and Employment forms before you may begin working.

WORKSITE SUPERVISOR

Each worksite has a supervisor responsible for supervising your work, maintaining your payroll and other records. This person is your “boss”, but he or she is also there to provide you with advice, give you training and let you learn more about your job. It is important to know the name of your supervisor. It is also important to remember that in addition to the policies for participating in this program, you must follow any rules specific to the worksite. If you break the rules that the supervisor has given you, they have the right to suspend/dismiss you, or upon the approval of the Workforce Development Staff, you may be terminated.

Your supervisor has the responsibility of explaining your job duties, showing you the work that has to be done, and how to do it in a safe way. In addition, your supervisor will provide information on the business or agency you are assigned to. If machinery or special equipment is necessary to do the job, your supervisor will show you how to use and care for it.

Your supervisor may also assign other staff to oversee you. It is possible to have 2 or more “bosses” in a worksite. It is important to be courteous and respectful to all staff members that are directing your work.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Personal cell phones and electronic devices are detrimental to the effective performance of your job and will not be tolerated at the worksite or other program activities. All phone and “texting” activities are prohibited during work hours. Phones should be turned off and remain off except during lunch and breaks unless prior approval is obtained by your supervisor and Workforce Development Staff. The violation of this regulation will result in your immediate suspension and possible termination from the program.

Any personal items lost, stolen, or broken during the participation of Workforce Development activities are not the responsibility of Workforce Development or the Worksite.

Weapons are strictly prohibited from all Worksites and Workforce Development activities. Participants found to be in possession of a weapon will be immediately terminated from the Work Experience or activity.

TIME AND ATTENDANCE

Youth under 18 years of age - Since there are very specific guidelines for working minors, please refer to your work permit or the following chart when scheduling work hours. If further clarification is needed, please contact your Workforce Development Staff.

Permitted Working hours for Minors under 18 Years of Age: the following chart is a summary of the permitted working hours provisions of the New York State Labor Law relating to minors under 18 years of age, for all occupations except farm work, newspaper carrier and street trade.

Age of Minor	Maximum Daily Hours	Maximum Weekly Hours	Maximum Days Per Week	Permitted Hours
Minors attending school When school is in session 14 and 15	3 hours on School days 8 hours on other days	18	6	7am to 7pm
16 and 17	4 hours on days preceding school days (i.e., Mon., Tue, Wed, Thurs) 8 hours on Fri, Sat., Sun. and Holidays.	28	6	6am to 10pm
When school is not in session (vacation) 14 and 15	8 hours	40	6	7am to 9pm June 21 to Labor Day
16 and 17	8 hours	48	6	6am to Midnight
Minors not in School 16 and 17	8 hours	48	6	6am to Midnight

Hours of Work - Each Worksite has different hours of work. It is your responsibility to report to work on time on the days that you are scheduled to work, and to work all the hours for which you are scheduled. The total number of hours you work each week will depend upon your worksite and the

laws governing the employment of minors if you are under 18. Your worksite supervisor will inform you of the starting and ending time for the days you are scheduled to work. If you are having difficulty completing the number of hours assigned by your supervisor, you should speak with the Workforce Development Staff immediately. A work schedule should be posted at your worksite.

Lateness - If you cannot report to your scheduled worksite on time, you should contact your supervisor immediately. You will only be paid for actual time worked. You should discuss attendance policies with your Worksite Supervisor prior to your first day of work. Constant lateness may lead to your termination from the work experience. Get all relevant work phone numbers and names of staff to contact prior to starting your first day of work. Keep these numbers in a safe place where you can refer to them if you will be late or unable to work.

Absences - Something may come up which requires you to miss work, such as medical or legal appointments. It is your responsibility to let your supervisor know as soon as possible that you will be absent. If you know in advance that you will be absent, you are responsible to inform your worksite supervisor *and your assigned Workforce Development Staff person* in advance. If you do not have advance notice that you will be out of work, you must contact your supervisor as soon as you know, and in all cases, *before* your scheduled start time for the day. When you contact your supervisor, you must identify why you will not be in that day. You should be aware that supervisors might request documentation confirming why you were absent. Lying about your reason for late arrival or absence is grounds for immediate dismissal.

The following are examples of excused absences:

- a) A visit to the doctor or going to the hospital
- b) Going to appear in court
- c) Death in the immediate family (parent, grandparent, brother sister)

Pre-scheduled appointments such as doctor or legal appointments generally do not take all day. It is expected that you will take off the least amount of time necessary for these appointments. Please schedule appointments around work hours or during hours that would allow you to work a partial day whenever possible.

Any absence from work that has not been approved and is not considered an excused absence will be considered an unexcused absence. The following are examples:

- a) Missing a bus, not catching a ride, or not having transportation
- b) Oversleeping
- c) No money to get to work
- d) Forgetting your scheduled work hours
- e) Missing work for your birthday or activities with friends and family.

You will not be paid for any absences, whether excused or unexcused. Excess absence from work may lead to suspension or termination from your work experience.

EVALUATIONS

Your Work Experience supervisor will be evaluating your work on a regular basis. The evaluations will provide an opportunity for you to be aware of what skills you have learned and areas that you are doing well in. This will serve to evaluate your attitude toward your job, co-workers and supervisors, as well as your ability to follow directions and learn new skills. The evaluation form is a tool that is completed with input from you and your supervisor.

You will receive feedback on tasks that could be improved as well as those areas where you are doing well. You are encouraged to ask questions if you are uncertain about information in your evaluation. Please use this evaluation as a positive tool to help you become the best possible employee. The evaluations will become a part of your participant file and may be used by Workforce Development staff to assist in future Worksite placements.

PAYROLL AND PAYCHECKS

During your work experience or paid activity, you will be required to sign a timesheet that serves as your payroll record. Your signature means that you agree that you actually worked certain hours on certain days. Your worksite supervisor will also sign your timesheet, and will send it to the Workforce Development Office. You must sign your payroll record in order to be paid. A copy will be kept in your file at the worksite and a copy will also be kept in your participant file.

All work experience participants are paid \$7.25 per hour for actual hours worked, based on quarter hour segments. You will not be paid for working overtime or during lunch periods. Any individual that works more than 6 hours is required to take a ½ hour unpaid break. This should be marked accordingly on your timesheet.

Your check amount may be less than the \$7.25 per hour multiplied by the number of hours worked. The reason for this is there are deductions or an amount of money taken out of your check for Social Security (FICA) and Federal and State withholding taxes.

The Workforce Development Staff will provide to you, in writing, a copy of the payroll periods for your work experience. This will help remind you when to sign your payroll record. You will also be notified, in writing, of the procedure for receiving your pay.

INJURIES ON THE JOB

As an employee, you are expected to be careful while completing your work experience. If you are working with other participants, do not become involved in 'kid play', or activities that could cause someone to be injured. Also, you must take special care around any work equipment. It is your responsibility to use any safety or special protective equipment that is given to you. It is also important to dress appropriately for your job duties. Loose or baggy clothing, jewelry, sandals and open toed or open healed footwear may be hazardous in a work setting and should be avoided for safety purposes.

If you are injured on the job, notify your supervisor immediately. Also notify your supervisor if you get a reaction to the work you are doing such as poison ivy, sunburn, etc. As an employee of the county you are covered by compensation benefits, but you must notify your supervisor first.

It is important to remember that based upon your age, you may be limited to the type of power equipment you can use or types of work you can do. Your supervisor is aware of these limitations.

INJURIES OR ILLNESS OFF THE JOB

If you are injured or become ill while you are *not at work*, you may qualify for disability payments only if the following conditions are met:

- A. You must be at least 18 years of age or not enrolled in school over the age of 16 and regularly employed in the WIA programs for at least 25 working days.
- B. At any time after the 25th day you must be out of work due to an illness, accident, etc. for more than 7 consecutive days.
- C. Your doctor must certify that you have a disability including when the disability started and when it is expected to end.

D. You must notify your Workforce Development Office staff and worksite supervisor as soon as possible when you believe you have a disability.

EXPECTED PARTICIPANT CONDUCT

Youth are expected to display proper conduct and work ethics on the job and while participating in group activities. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Arriving to work and activities on time. This may mean arriving ten minutes early and being ready to start work at the designated time.
- Having good attendance and demonstrating dependability on the job.
- Follow all supervisor's guidance and instructions.
- Complete all tasks as assigned and without complaining.
- Complete payroll records accurately and completely.
- Treating supervisor, co-workers, and Workforce Development Staff with respect.
- Respect the property of the worksites and others.
- Follow all safety regulations and procedures ensuring the safety of yourself and others.
- Following through with all scheduled appointments and activities as informed by your Workforce Development Staff.
- Show up to all activities ready, willing and able to work.

Any Youth who fails to meet the above standards as well as other regulations included in this handbook may be subject to disciplinary actions, including suspension, and/or termination from the Work Activity. In the event that you are suspended by your worksite supervisor, you are not to return without having talked with a Workforce Development Staff person. Individuals who have already been suspended for any reason and receive a second suspension may be terminated.

When businesses in the Finger Lakes Region were surveyed regarding what they look for in an employee, their number one response was Honesty and Integrity. Most of us know the definition of honesty, but integrity is more complex and based on your personal beliefs or ethics. Integrity means always doing the right thing even when no one is looking. Ethics are the beliefs that individuals act upon with respect to the rightness or wrongness of such actions. In order to be successful in the world of work, individuals must have Work Ethics (including Integrity). The most common reasons that young people lose their jobs are due to lack of integrity, or work ethics.

Some of these reasons include:

- Stealing from a worksite (money, product, supplies, or time).
- Frequently arriving late or not showing up at all.
- Not calling in when late or ill.
- Not being cooperative with supervisors or coworkers.
- Sexual Harassment of coworkers (see below).

These actions are considered unethical and will not be tolerated in any worksite or group activity.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any unwanted verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. Sexual Harassment can affect someone's employment, job performance and/or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Sexual Harassment is *illegal* and can occur in many different circumstances, including but not limited to:

- The victim, as well as the harasser, may be a man or a woman. The victim does not have to be of the opposite sex.
- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, co-worker, or a non-employee.

- The victim doesn't have to be the person being harassed, but can be anyone who feels offended by the conduct.
- The harasser's conduct *must* be unwelcome.

Examples of Sexual Harassment:

- Unwanted jokes, gestures, comments or even offensive language on clothing.
- Being told you'll lose your job if you don't comply with sexual
- Repeated touching and any other bodily contact (such as touching oneself sexually in front of others) or even interfering with an employee's ability to move.
- Unwanted flirting and/or repeated requests for dates that are turned down.
- Sending, showing or posting emails or pictures of a sexual (or other harassment-related) nature.
- Displaying sexually suggestive pictures, posters, cartoons or objects.
- Playing sexually suggestive music, showing sexually suggestive videos/DVDs, distributing sexually suggestive or offensive material (example: distributing sexually explicit magazines).

If you're a Victim:

As a victim of Sexual Harassment, you have the right to inform your harasser to stop. If they don't, you also have the right to use your employer's complaint mechanism (such as telling a supervisor, calling corporate, etc.). In extreme cases, you may even file a complaint with The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (www.eeoc.gov) or with New York State Department of Labor, Division of Equal Opportunity Development at (518) 457-1984. You *cannot* be fired, demoted or punished economically (example: a pay cut) for reporting an instance of sexual harassment. All complaints will be kept confidential to protect your privacy and rights.

RESIGNATION

Youth who wish to resign from their Work Experience should inform their supervisor and your Workforce Development Staff person as soon as possible. If you are quitting due to problems on the job or scheduling conflicts, there is a good possibility that things can be worked out but only if you

talk to your supervisor and Workforce Development Staff first. If you are planning on leaving employment, a one or two week written notice should be given to the worksite and Workforce Development Staff.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Finger Lakes Area Service Providers

Ontario County Workforce Development / Finger Lakes Works-Ontario
3010 County Complex Drive
Canandaigua, NY 14424
585-396-4020
www.ontario.ny.us/workforce/

Seneca County Workforce Development / Finger Lakes Works-Seneca
1 Dipronio Drive
Waterloo, NY 13165
315-539-1905
www.co.seneca.ny.us/workforce.php

Wayne County Workforce Development / Finger Lakes Works-Wayne
1519 Nye Road
Lyons, NY 14489
315-946-7270
www.co.wayne.ny.us/departments/workdev/workdev.htm

Yates County Workforce Development / Finger Lakes Work-Yates
417 Liberty Street, Suite 2021
Penn Yan, NY 14527
315-536-5140
www.yatescounty.org/display_page.asp

Finger Lakes Works - Geneva
70 Elizabeth Blackwell Street
Geneva, NY 14456
315-789-1771
www.co.ontario.ny.us/workforce/

Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
41 Lewis Street, Suite 104
Geneva, NY 14456
315-789-3131
www.fingerlakesworks.com

WIA 105.6
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FINGER LAKES WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA
STEPS IN RESOLVING WIA-RELATED COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Workforce Investment Act participants are entitled to the right of issuing and having resolved complaints relating to their participation in the programs offered under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). All complaints/grievances must be filed within 180 days of the alleged Workforce Investment Act related occurrence.

If you have a Workforce Investment Act-related COMPLAINT, here are the steps available:

I. Informal Conference

Immediately discuss any problems, complaints, etc., with your Workforce Development Specialist, Worksite Supervisor, Employer or Instructor. Typically most complaints are resolved through open discussions. If the type of complaint/grievance is of a nature that cannot be resolved in this stage, or if it was not informally resolved, then an Informal Resolution will be used.

II. Informal Resolution

At this stage, it is necessary that you obtain a form entitled "Notice of Complaint" (WIA 105.1) from your County Workforce Development Office or One Stop Center. Complete this form and return it to the County's Workforce Development or One Stop Center Program Complaints Resolution Officer.

The Equal Opportunity Officer will schedule an Informal Resolution Conference within five (5) days after receiving the Notice with you and other persons who the Equal Opportunity Officer believes should be present.

Within fifteen (15) days after the Informal Resolution Conference, the Equal Opportunity Officer will issue an Informal Resolution Conference Report (WIA 105.2) to all parties, which will include a section on the recommended disposition of the complaint/grievance.

III. Formal Hearing or Mediation

If any of the parties involved in an Informal Resolution Conference believe that the disposition of the complaint/grievance is not appropriate, they may request the complaint to be resolved through mediation or they may continue with the Formal Investigation. This request must be made in writing, and must be received within ten (10) days after receipt of the Informal Resolution Conference Report.

Within the ten (10) days after receipt of the request for mediation or formal investigation, the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board Equal Opportunity Officer will schedule mediation or a formal hearing. Within sixty (60) days after the Equal Opportunity Officer schedules mediation or a formal hearing, the Equal Opportunity Officer will issue his/her findings and recommendations for the complaint/grievance.

IV. Appeal

If you do not receive a decision within sixty (60) days of filing a complaint, or if any party believes that the findings and recommendations are unsatisfactory, they may appeal to the Governor and to the United States Department of Labor. Information relating to the procedures will be provided by the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board Office.

To identify your local Workforce Investment Act Equal Opportunity Officer, contact the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board, 41 Lewis Street, Suite 104, Geneva, NY 14456. The telephone number is (315) 789-3131.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Workforce Investment Act participants are entitled to the right of issuing and having resolved complaints relating to matters involving equal opportunity/affirmative action. If you believe you have been discriminated against due to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, political affiliation or belief, citizenship or participation in Workforce Investment Act, you can file a complaint directly to the Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NY, Room H-4123, Washington D.C. 20210.

Complaints based upon disabilities will be addressed through the Workforce Investment Act Related Complaints/Grievance Procedure described above.

Affirmative Action Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged occurrence

