



## **Grievance Definition**

The City of New Haven defines a grievance as any complaint, problem, or concern of any individual or group regarding their workplace, working conditions, job, or coworker/supervisor relationships, or non-compliance with federal regulations. Grounds for a grievance can also include discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, age, ethnicity, mental or physical disability, religion, and familial status.

Examples of grievances may include discrimination within the City of New Haven's programs and activities. Additional examples include any health and safety concerns, harassment, co-worker disputes, or concerns regarding work conditions. Grievances may consist of real or perceived wrong or hardship suffered which are grounds for complaint.

### **Grievant**

Under the grievance procedure, grievant (or complainants) are defined as any person or group who believes they have experienced discrimination or harassment. This includes employees, residents of New Haven, students, volunteers, and any member of the public. Grievances can be filed by anyone including non-residents of New Haven, and they can be submitted regardless of immigration status. Grievances may be based on a variety of grounds, including but not limited to Race, Age, Ancestry, Income, Color, National origin, Familial status, Marital status, Creed, Citizenship status, Religious creed, Sex, including pregnancy, Sexual Harassment, Transgender status, gender identity or expression, Sexual Orientation or civil union status, Veteran status, Criminal record, Genetic Information.

Any individual may file a complaint if they believe they have been subjected to unfair treatment or a hostile environment based on any of these protected characteristics. The procedures are designed to ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

The City of New Haven is required to provide this notice, and any other relevant documents to grievants in their requested language. The City of New Haven is also required to provide audio or video versions of this notice to accommodate those with visual or hearing impairments. To view this document in an additional language, ASL, or if a grievant needs to access an audio recording or another accommodation please visit the website or reach out to the non-discrimination compliance coordinator Nichole Jefferson or via email at: [mcotton@newhavenct.gov](mailto:mcotton@newhavenct.gov)  
Bilingual Spanish Speaking

## Grievance Processes

### 1. Submit a Grievance Letter

Any complaint should be filed in writing (or verbally if the complainant is unable to prepare the complaint in writing) and should contain the name and address of the person filing it, and briefly describe the complaint and/or any alleged violations. The complaint should include a summary of the issues/relevant facts, and any documents available supporting relevant facts. The complainant should also fill out a grievance form which is available on the City of New Haven's website. Grievances must be filed within 180 days of the alleged act that will be investigated. The city may be willing to waive the 180-day requirement in cases of extenuating circumstances or in extreme cases of wrongdoing (good cause waiver).

### 2. Informal Grievance Process

For grievances, complainants are encouraged to informally discuss their concerns with the non-discrimination compliance coordinator who can often help resolve the issue. The City of New Haven is obligated to address all complaints seriously, and if the complainant remains unsatisfied, they can escalate their complaint to a formal grievance, especially for serious or recurring issues. The non-discrimination compliance coordinator has various options for resolving informal complaints, such as speaking with the involved party and implementing measures like verbal warnings. Informal complaints must be addressed within thirty (30) days of filing, and records detailing the complaint, actions taken, and outcomes should be maintained. After reaching a solution, the non-discrimination compliance coordinator must follow up within thirty (30) days to ensure compliance; if the resolution fails, further examination and escalation are required, with documentation for a potential formal grievance. If the complaint is escalated the non-discrimination compliance coordinator will send a letter via email acknowledging the request and then send a letter detailing the next steps for the formal investigation to the complainant and other involved parties.

### 3. Formal Grievance Investigation

- A) The non-discrimination compliance coordinator will promptly, and fairly investigate the grievance by conducting interviews, collecting relevant documents, and reviewing evidence such as video footage. Investigators must keep the complainant updated throughout the process. The coordinator will then review findings and communicate the findings and suggested resolution to all parties involved. The non-discrimination compliance coordinator has the authority to escalate the complaint which can include the completion of a formal grievance hearing.
- B) If the coordinator determines a grievance hearing necessary then a formal grievance hearing should be held within 30 days of the official request for a formal hearing. During the hearing, the complainant presents their case along with any of their supporting evidence, while the compliance officer and investigators submit their findings. An impartial panel will then review the information and may ask clarifying questions. After deliberation, the panel decides if the grievance is justified and what remedial actions to take. The outcome must be communicated to the complainant within 2-3 days after the hearing has concluded, along with formal documentation of the decision and any agreed-upon actions.

#### 4. Decision and Action

After the hearing, the non-discrimination compliance coordinator reviews all evidence and arguments to determine the grievance's validity and decide on the appropriate actions. This decision is then communicated to the complainant within 2 days of the decision's finalization. The decision must describe any steps necessary to address the issue, which may include corrective measures, disciplinary actions, and other remedies. The outcome is formally documented to ensure transparency. The non-discrimination compliance coordinator will make a final decision using the preponderance of evidence standard and is required to issue a final summary detailing any finding of violations, an overview of the investigation process, including the steps taken and what was deserved during that process, and then detail remediation action. The non-discrimination compliance coordinator will aim to provide a written response in the form of a letter of findings to the complainant within 180 days of the original complaint which will summarize all findings, detail the solution agreed upon and include copies of all reviewed materials.

#### 5. Right to Appeal

If the grievant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the letter of findings they have the right to appeal the decision by submitting a written explanation of their disagreement within 10 business days of receiving the letter of findings. Alternative appeal options, such as in-person interviews or audio recordings, are available for individuals with disabilities upon request to the non-discrimination compliance coordinator. The appeal allows for a review by a higher authority or independent body, where the grievant can present additional evidence, argue for a different interpretation, or point out procedural errors. A new panel typically reviews the case to ensure the initial decision was fair and compliant with organizational policies, safeguarding against unjust outcomes.

#### 6. Appeals Hearing

The appeals hearing allows a grievant dissatisfied with a decision to request a review by a higher authority, panel, or independent body. During the hearing, the complainant presents their case, focusing on why they believe the initial decision was incorrect, providing new evidence, and highlighting any procedural errors. The appeals panel will review the original case and new arguments, may ask clarifying questions, and deliberate on whether to uphold, modify, or overturn the original decision. The appeals hearing must be scheduled within 30 days of the appeal request and the outcome of the appeal process must be communicated to the complainant within 30 days, ensuring a fair and transparent resolution process.

### **Statement on Retaliation**

The City of New Haven assures that intimidation and retaliation are completely prohibited and that claims of intimidation and retaliation will be handled promptly and fairly pursuant to the recipient's grievance procedures in the same manner as other claims of discrimination.

---

## Grievance Process Timeline

- 1) Submit a Grievance Letter  
**Action:** Complainant files a written grievance (or verbal if unable), including name, address, complaint details, relevant facts, and supporting documents.  
**Timeline:** Within 180 days of the alleged grievance.
- 2) Informal Grievance Process  
**Action:** Complainant discusses concerns with the non-discrimination compliance coordinator for potential resolution.  
**Timeline:** Addressed within 30 days; follow-up within 30 days of resolution.
- 3) Formal Grievance Investigation  
**Action:** Coordinator investigates by interviewing parties, collecting documents, and reviewing evidence.  
**Timeline:** Findings communicated within 30 days after investigation starts.
- 4) Grievance Hearing (if necessary)  
**Action:** Hearing held if deemed necessary; complainant presents case.  
**Timeline:** Scheduled within 30 days of the hearing request; outcome communicated within 2-3 days post-hearing.
- 5) Decision and Action  
**Action:** The non-discrimination compliance coordinator reviews all evidence and arguments, then communicates the decision and necessary actions to the complainant.  
**Timeline:** Decision communicated within 2 days of finalization; letter of findings issued within 180 days of original complaint.
- 6) Right to Appeal  
**Action:** If dissatisfied, the grievant submits a written appeal within 10 business days of receiving the letter of findings; alternative appeal options are available if needed.  
**Timeline:** Grievant must submit appeal within 10 business days of receiving the letter of findings.
- 7) Appeals Hearing  
**Action:** During the appeals hearing, the complainant presents their case and new evidence; an appeals panel reviews and deliberates.  
**Timeline:** Scheduled within 30 days of appeal request; outcome communicated within 30 days post-hearing.
- 8) Final Decision  
**Action:** Non-discrimination compliance coordinator will aim to provide a final letter of findings  
**Timeline:** The City of New Haven aims to respond to all complaints within 180 of initial filing.