



Grant County, Washington Policies & Procedures

POLICY NUMBER 1400

Grievances of Alleged Policy Violations

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APPROVED:

Handwritten signature of Richard Stevens in blue ink.

Richard Stevens, Chair, Board of County Commissioners

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Date Signed

LAST REVISED: __/__/__

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POLICY NUMBER 1400, Grievances of Alleged Policy Violations

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1401 – The Difference Between a Grievance and Reporting Concerns

- 1401.1 A grievance is an allegation that policy language has not been followed or has been misapplied. The following grievance procedure applied only to Grant County policies and procedures. Process for grievances regarding labor contracts will be outlined in the specific collective bargaining agreement.
- 1401.2 Unlike a grievance, reporting alleged violations of Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment, Improper Governmental Action (aka, Whistleblower Protection Act), and/or Retaliatory Acts involve matters of legality. Should an employee's concerns involve any of these areas, his/her concerns should be reported immediately and pursuant to the applicable sections of Policy 200, *Employer/Employee General Standards*:

- (a) For concerns relating to Equal Opportunity: Please see Policy 200, Section 203;

- (b) For concerns relating to Disability and Reasonable Accommodation: Please see Policy 200, Section 204;
- (c) For concerns relating to Non-Discrimination: Please see Policy 200, Section 205;
- (d) For concerns relating to Anti-Harassment: Please see Policy 200, Section 206;
- (e) For concerns relating to Improper Governmental Action and the Whistleblower Protection Act: Please see Policy 200, Section 208; and/or
- (f) For concerns relating to Retaliation Prohibited/Whistleblower Act: Please see Policy 200, Section 207.6.

1402 – Grievance Procedure

1402.1 Employees shall use the following procedure in handling grievances regarding alleged violations of Grant County Policies & Procedures as set forth in this compilation and as updated from time to time with notice to all Elected Officials, Department Heads, and employees. The time limitations provided are essential to the prompt and orderly resolution of any grievance. These time limitations may be waived or extended upon written, mutual agreement.

(a) Step 1

- (1) The first step in the grievance procedure is at the office/ department level. The employee must submit a signed and dated written grievance to his/her immediate supervisor within thirty (30) calendar days of the occurrence. The grievance shall include:
 - i. A description of the events in question and the date(s) of occurrence;
 - ii. The name(s) of the individual(s) involved;
 - iii. A specific statement of which policy the employee believes was violated; and
 - iv. The desired remedy.
- (2) The immediate supervisor will respond in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the grievance. If the immediate supervisor cannot resolve the grievance or does not respond to the employee's grievance, the employee may present the grievance in writing to the Elected Official/

Department Head within thirty (30) calendar days of the response or when the response was due.

- (b) Step 2: If the action(s) in paragraph 1401.1(a), Step 1, do not resolve the grievance, the employee shall submit the signed and dated written grievance, along with a statement regarding why he/she does not agree with the answer(s), to the Elected Official/ Department Head within thirty (30) calendar days of the response in Step 1 or when the response was due. The Elected Official/ Department Head will respond in writing within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the grievance. If the employee disagrees with the Elected Official/Department Head's decision, the employee may present the grievance in writing to the Board of County Commissioners within thirty (30) calendar days of the Elected Official/Department Head's response.
- (c) Step 3: If the action(s) in paragraph 1401.1(a), Step 1, and 1401.1(b), Step 2, do not resolve the grievance, the employee shall sign, date and submit the grievance, all answers and the recommendation, along with a statement regarding why he/she disagrees, to the Board of County Commissioners within thirty (30) calendar days after the Elected Official/Department Head's response to the grievance. The Board has the right to hold a meeting regarding the grievance or review the information and make a final decision within thirty (30) calendar days of the meeting or submission of the grievance to the Board. The Board shall provide its decision in writing. The Board's decision shall be final and binding on the parties.

- 1402.2 Employees shall be free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal in seeking resolution of their grievance. Further, employees acting as witnesses to a grievance shall be free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.
- 1402.3 Failure by an employee to comply with any time limitation of the Grievance Procedure shall constitute withdrawal and dismissal of the grievance. Failure by Grant County to comply with any time limitation of the Grievance Procedure shall allow the employee to proceed to the next step subject to the applicable time limitations.
- 1402.4 When possible, resolution meetings/hearing shall be scheduled during normal County working hours, subject to the public interest and the efficiency and non-interruption of County services.
- 1402.5 Any time during a grievance procedure, either party may request assistance from the Human Resources department. Questions about grievance procedures should be direct to Human Resources.