



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ATTORNEY GENERAL  
BRENNA BIRD

## Chapter 24 Civil Rights/Complaint Process

This chapter contains information regarding how someone may file a complaint with the Crime Victim Assistance Division (CVAD), the types of complaints appropriate to report to CVAD and the process for which CVAD will handle a complaint.

A complaint may involve:

- a. Discrimination
- b. Violation of Service Standards
- c. Civil Rights violations
- d. Violations of contract terms, or certified assurances

**The Office for Civil Rights** also requires grantees to submit **EEOP certification forms** to the Office for Civil Rights. Grantees might also be required to create and submit a utilization report. For more information on EEOP requirements specific to your organization and to access the reporting tool, go to the [Civil Rights EEOP website](#).

# Service Standards Online Complaint Form

# Discrimination Online Complaint Form

# Civil Rights Complaint Process

## Complaint Process

All clients, customers, program participants, employees, job applicants, or consumers of CVAD, or of CVAD's subrecipients have the right to participate in programs and activities operated by CVAD or its subrecipients regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability. In addition, subrecipients of Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grants are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Anyone who thinks they have been discriminated against by an employee of CVAD or a subrecipient of CVAD on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or thinks they have been retaliated against by a CVAD employee or CVAD subrecipient, may file a written complaint alleging such discrimination by completing the [Discrimination Complaint form](#). In addition, recipients or subrecipients of Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

The completed form must be mailed to:

Office of the Attorney General of Iowa  
Crime Victim Assistance Division  
Lucas State Office Building  
321 East 12th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319

## Complaint Process

Any CVAD employee that receives a discrimination complaint from an employee, a job applicant, client, customer, program participant or consumer of CVAD or of a CVAD subrecipient, must forward the completed complaint form to the CVAD Director.

The CVAD Director shall promptly provide the complainant with written notice acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the date their complaint was referred and the agency to which their complaint was referred.

Complainants will also be informed that they may file complaints directly with:

### U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs  
Office for Civil Rights (OCR)  
810 7th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20531

In the event that a Federal or State court or Federal or State administrative agency makes a finding of discrimination after a due process hearing on the ground of race, religion, national origin, sex, or disability against a recipient of victim assistance formula funds CVAD will forward a copy of the findings to the Office for Civil Rights of OJP.

## Online Reporting Tool to Report Civil Rights Violations

The new Civil Rights Reporting Portal – located at [civilrights.justice.gov](http://civilrights.justice.gov) – will consolidate over 30 unique reporting pathways. The portal will dramatically ease the burden on victims of civil rights violations to identify the proper reporting channel. The form is fully accessible to people with disabilities. It is also available in both English and Spanish, with more languages to be added over the next year.

Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of civil rights violations can learn how to report

violations by visiting [civilrights.justice.gov](https://civilrights.justice.gov).

If you believe that you are a victim of criminal civil rights violations, such as misconduct by law enforcement officers, hate crimes, or human trafficking, please [contact your local FBI office](#).

# Violation of Victim Service Standards, Contractual Stipulations and/or Certified Assurances

## [Complaint Process](#)

All clients, employees, or consumers of a CVAD subrecipient may file a complaint regarding a potential violation of a victim service program's service standards, contractual stipulation and/or certified assurances by completing the [Service Standards Complaint form](#) and sending it to:

Office of the Attorney General of Iowa  
Crime Victim Assistance Division  
Lucas State Office Building  
321 East 12th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319

## Complaint Process

Within one week of receiving a written complaint, the grant manager assigned to the victim service program with whom the complaint is about, will notify the complainant and individual or organizations noted in the complaint, and provide them with:

1. A copy of the complaint
2. A copy of the process that will be followed
3. A VSS contact person's name (each party will have one contact person assigned to them)

The Review Committee, consisting of the VSS grant manager, VSS Administrator and the CVAD Director will determine if the complaint is a violation of the victim service program service standards, contractual agreement and/or certified assurance. If a complaint does not concern a violation of victim service program standards, contractual agreement and/or certified assurance, the review committee will refer the complaint back to the victim service program or complainant to resolve.

If the CVAD Review Committee determines the complaint is alleging a violation of service standards, contractual agreement and/or certified assurance, it will gather additional information. The CVAD Review Committee may request information from any party to the complaint including the complainant; the person(s) or organization being complained about; the board of the victim service program involved; or any other person or organization with knowledge about the circumstances of the complaint. All attempts will be made to gather this information within 60 days of receipt of the complaint.

If, during the information-gathering phase, one party requests the opportunity to address the CVAD Review Committee in person and it is granted, all parties will be offered the chance to talk with the committee individually.

After the information is gathered, the CVAD Review Committee will formulate the results of their review, including suggested recommendations to the victim service program if it was determined there was a violation of the program service standards, contractual agreement and/or certified assurance.

If there was no finding, this will be communicated to both the complainant and the individual or organization the complaint was about.

If there was a finding, both the complainant and the individual, and/or organization the complaint was about will be notified. In addition, the individual/organization will receive a corrective action plan which will include what the organization needs to do to remedy the violation (e.g. changes to policy/practice, training, etc.) and the time frame to complete the corrective action.

The CVAD grant manager will gather information to determine whether or not the individual/organization has

complied with the corrective action plan. The grant manager will report their findings to the VSS Administrator and CVAD Director. If the individual/organization has not complied, sanctions may be issued by the CVAD Director and/or CVAD Board.

All information gathered in the complaint process will be kept confidential within CVAD (with the exception of notifying the complainant of the outcome of the CVAD Review Committee's determination of a finding/no finding). However, if a sanction is imposed, the content of the sanction will be made available to the public.

\*If a complaint is tied to the direct harm of survivors, the CVAD Review Committee may take immediate corrective action. Examples of direct harm include (but are not limited to):

- Violation of client confidentiality
- Denial of services based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability or religion. (Refer to [Discrimination Complaint Process](#))
- Denial of services based on mental illness or substance abuse that does not present immediate risk of harm to a survivor or staff or volunteer member

# Appeal

If a victim service program wishes to appeal CVAD's findings, it must submit an appeal request form no later than 30 days following notice of the corrective action plan and/or sanctions. The [appeal request form](#) should be mailed to:

CVAD Director  
Office of the Attorney General of Iowa  
Crime Victim Assistance Division  
Lucas State Office Building  
321 East 12th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50319

The appeal form can also be uploaded into Iowa GVS, using the appeal component.

The appeal will then be heard at the next scheduled CVAD Board meeting. The appellant will be provided notice of the meeting, the meeting agenda as well as the date, time and location of the meeting. The decision of the CVAD board shall be considered final.



