

§ 1614.105 Pre-complaint processing.

(a) Aggrieved persons who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or handicap must consult a Counselor prior to filing a complaint in order to try to informally resolve the matter.

(1) An aggrieved person must initiate contact with a Counselor within 45 days of the date of the matter alleged to be discriminatory or, in the case of personnel action, within 45 days of the effective date of the action.

(2) The agency or the Commission shall extend the 45-day time limit in paragraph (a)(1) of this section when the individual shows that he or she was not notified of the time limits and was not otherwise aware of them, that he or she did not know and reasonably should not have been known that the discriminatory matter or personnel action occurred, that despite due diligence he or she was prevented by circumstances beyond his or her control from contacting the counselor within the time limits, or for other reasons considered sufficient by the agency or the Commission.

(b)(1) At the initial counseling session, Counselors must advise individuals in writing of their rights and responsibilities, including the right to request a hearing or an immediate final decision after an investigation by the agency in accordance with § 1614.108(f), election rights pursuant to §§ 1614.301 and 1614.302, the right to file a notice of intent to sue pursuant to § 1614.201(a) and a lawsuit under the ADEA instead of an administrative complaint of age discrimination under this part, the duty to mitigate damages, administrative and court time frames, and that only the claims raised in precomplaint counseling (or issues or claims like or related to issues or claims raised in pre-complaint counseling) may be alleged in a subsequent complaint filed with the agency. Counselors must advise individuals of their duty to keep the agency and Commission informed of their current address and to serve copies of appeal papers on the agency. The notice required by paragraphs (d) or (e) of this section shall include a notice of the right to file a class complaint. If the aggrieved person informs

the Counselor that he or she wishes to file a class complaint, the Counselor shall explain the class complaint procedures and the responsibilities of a class agent.

(2) Counselors shall advise aggrieved persons that, where the agency agrees to offer ADR in the particular case, they may choose between participation in the alternative dispute resolution program and the counseling activities provided for in paragraph (c) of this section.

(c) Counselors shall conduct counseling activities in accordance with instructions contained in Commission Management Directives. When advised that a complaint has been filed by an aggrieved person, the Counselor shall submit a written report within 15 days to the agency office that has been designated to accept complaints and the aggrieved person concerning the issues discussed and actions taken during counseling.

(d) Unless the aggrieved person agrees to a longer counseling period under paragraph (e) of this section, or the aggrieved person chooses an alternative dispute resolution procedure in accordance with paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the Counselor shall conduct the final interview with the aggrieved person within 30 days of the date the aggrieved person contacted the agency's EEO office to request counseling. If the matter has not been resolved, the aggrieved person shall be informed in writing by the Counselor, not later than the thirtieth day after contacting the Counselor, of the right to file a discrimination complaint. The notice shall inform the complainant of the right to file a discrimination complaint within 15 days of receipt of the notice, of the appropriate official with whom to file a complaint and of the complainant's duty to assure that the agency is informed immediately if the complainant retains counsel or a representative.

(e) Prior to the end of the 30-day period, the aggrieved person may agree in writing with the agency to postpone the final interview and extend the counseling period for an additional period of no more than 60 days. If the matter has not been resolved before the conclusion of the agreed extension, the

notice described in paragraph (d) of this section shall be issued.

(f) Where the aggrieved person chooses to participate in an alternative dispute resolution procedure in accordance with paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the pre-complaint processing period shall be 90 days. If the claim has not been resolved before the 90th day, the notice described in paragraph (d) of this section shall be issued.

(g) The Counselor shall not attempt in any way to restrain the aggrieved person from filing a complaint. The Counselor shall not reveal the identity of an aggrieved person who consulted the Counselor, except when authorized to do so by the aggrieved person, or until the agency has received a discrimination complaint under this part from that person involving that same matter.

[57 FR 12646, Apr. 10, 1992, as amended at 64 FR 37656, July 12, 1999]

§ 1614.106 Individual complaints.

(a) A complaint must be filed with the agency that allegedly discriminated against the complainant.

(b) A complaint must be filed within 15 days of receipt of the notice required by § 1614.105 (d), (e) or (f).

(c) A complaint must contain a signed statement from the person claiming to be aggrieved or that person's attorney. This statement must be sufficiently precise to identify the aggrieved individual and the agency and to describe generally the action(s) or practice(s) that form the basis of the complaint. The complaint must also contain a telephone number and address where the complainant or the representative can be contacted.

(d) A complainant may amend a complaint at any time prior to the conclusion of the investigation to include issues or claims like or related to those raised in the complaint. After requesting a hearing, a complainant may file a motion with the administrative judge to amend a complaint to include issues or claims like or related to those raised in the complaint.

(e) The agency shall acknowledge receipt of a complaint or an amendment to a complaint in writing and inform the complainant of the date on which the complaint or amendment was filed.

The agency shall advise the complainant in the acknowledgment of the EEOC office and its address where a request for a hearing shall be sent. Such acknowledgment shall also advise the complainant that:

(1) The complainant has the right to appeal the final action on or dismissal of a complaint; and

(2) The agency is required to conduct an impartial and appropriate investigation of the complaint within 180 days of the filing of the complaint unless the parties agree in writing to extend the time period. When a complaint has been amended, the agency shall complete its investigation within the earlier of 180 days after the last amendment to the complaint or 360 days after the filing of the original complaint, except that the complainant may request a hearing from an administrative judge on the consolidated complaints any time after 180 days from the date of the first filed complaint.

[57 FR 12646, Apr. 10, 1992, as amended at 64 FR 37656, July 12, 1999]

§ 1614.107 Dismissals of complaints.

(a) Prior to a request for a hearing in a case, the agency shall dismiss an entire complaint:

(1) That fails to state a claim under § 1614.103 or § 1614.106(a) or states the same claim that is pending before or has been decided by the agency or Commission;

(2) That fails to comply with the applicable time limits contained in §§ 1614.105, 1614.106 and 1614.204(c), unless the agency extends the time limits in accordance with § 1614.604(c), or that raises a matter that has not been brought to the attention of a Counselor and is not like or related to a matter that has been brought to the attention of a Counselor;

(3) That is the basis of a pending civil action in a United States District Court in which the complainant is a party provided that at least 180 days have passed since the filing of the administrative complaint, or that was the basis of a civil action decided by a United States District Court in which the complainant was a party;

(4) Where the complainant has raised the matter in a negotiated grievance procedure that permits allegations of