

Top tips for making a complaint

Making a complaint can be difficult, time consuming and stressful. But these tips may help to make the process easier both for you and for the person dealing with your complaint.

Don't delay

- To the DVP-Funded Program:
 - Complain to the DVP-funded program as soon as possible after the event(s) leading to your dissatisfaction. It is much easier to remember all the details.
 - If you are unsatisfied with the reply, you may have the opportunity to take your complaint to the next step; again, do so as soon as possible and explain why you are not satisfied with the first reply.
 - Follow the program's Grievance Procedures.
- To DVP:
 - If you are still not satisfied with the program's response to your complaint, follow the DVP Citizen Complaint Procedures.

Make checks

- To the DVP-Funded Program:
 - When you have decided to complain, make sure you are complaining to the right organization and the right department within that organization. Using the programs Grievance Procedure should help with finding the right person to talk to.
- To DVP:
 - Be sure to thoroughly read the procedures and forms for the program's grievance procedures and DVP Citizen Complaint Procedures.

Tell them it's a complaint

- To the DVP-Funded Program
 - Tell them straight away this is a complaint, and you want it put through the grievance procedure. Ask for details of the grievance procedure and find out who will be handling your complaint.
- To DVP:
 - Be sure to use the Citizen Compliant Form to indicate you are complaining about a DVP-funded program.

Put it in writing

- To the DVP-Funded Program:
 - It is helpful to put your complaint in writing if you can. Make sure to write "complaint" at the top of your letter or email, so there can be no doubt.
- To DVP:
 - Use the Citizen Complaint Form to file a complaint with DVP. If you have any problems filling out the form, contact DVP staff at 303-866-3150.

Be clear and brief

- To DVP-Funded Programs:
 - Cover all the relevant points, but be as brief as you can. Avoid writing long letters or emails – you may feel you need to write in great detail but in most cases this is not necessary.
 - Make it easy to read by using numbered lists and headings to highlight the important issues.

- Give your contact telephone and email details. Then, if the person dealing with the complaint needs more information, he or she can contact you and ask.
- To DVP:
 - Use the DVP Citizen Complaint Form. Feel free to attach additional pages as necessary.

Provide evidence

- Send copies of relevant documents – but only those that will help the person taking your complaint to understand your complaint or provide evidence to support it. Make sure you keep copies yourself - you may want to keep any original documents and send copies of these with your complaint.
- Keep notes of any telephone calls about the complaint, including the name of the person you spoke to. This may be important later.

Check it through

- Get family or friends to read your complaint before you send it – if they can't understand it then the person you send it to will likely struggle too.

Be clear about what you want

- To DVP-Funded Programs:
 - Explain clearly what you hope to achieve by complaining. But be realistic: your aims need to be fair and proportionate to the problems you have had.
- To DVP:
 - Explain clearly what you hope to achieve by complaining. However, be sure to read the DVP Citizen Complaint Procedures to understand the limited responses and role DVP has in complaints against funded programs.

Be polite

- Whether writing or speaking to a staff person, try to remain polite and calm.
- Be assertive, not aggressive. Your experience of making a complaint is likely to be more productive if you calmly discuss the issues with the DVP-funded program staff person or the DVP staff person – getting angry tends not to lead to a better outcome and just makes the complaint process unpleasant for everyone.

Respond appropriately

- Respond appropriately if asked to do so by the DVP-funded program staff person or DVP staff; read any letters and documents that are sent to you. If for some reason you cannot reply within the stated timescale, such as if you are unwell or other circumstance, tell them why and ask for more time.

Be patient

- It may take some time for your complaint to be considered. Don't be afraid to chase politely if nothing seems to be happening to progress matters.
- Be sure to read the DVP Citizen Complaint Procedures to understand the timeline for addressing Citizen Complaints at DVP.