

Dept. of Workforce Development: Upgrade enables online filing for Civil Rights complaints

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MADISON – As part of continuing, agency-wide modernization efforts, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has expanded its equal rights complaint filing system to accept online applications for the department's most common civil rights complaints.

"DWD is continuing to expand access to resources that provide for the protection and economic advancement of all Wisconsin workers, employers, and job seekers," said DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek. "From enforcing Fair Housing laws to investigating civil rights complaints to supporting employers that play by the rules, DWD helps ensure that Wisconsin is a fair and just place for all people to live and work."

DWD's Equal Rights Division launched a pilot program in April 2021 allowing individuals to file labor standards complaints securely online. Labor standards complaints include those for unpaid wages and overtime, plant closing and mass layoff notice violations, and other wage related claims.

The pilot was well received by users. By the end of 2021, online submissions accounted for 75 percent of all new labor standards complaint filings. With this success, DWD upgraded the online filing system in November 2021 to accept civil rights complaints related to Fair Employment Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, and Fair Housing Act violations.

Since the November launch, DWD's Equal Rights Division has received more than 170 online civil rights complaints.

“The DWD Equal Rights Division is making services more accessible to the modern workforce,” Equal Rights Division Administrator Jesús Villa said. “The addition of our online complaint filing program and other digital processes such as online hearings and mediations help us better serve the people of Wisconsin.”

DWD is currently exploring further enhancements including expanding the online application system to accommodate other types of complaints and adding functionality to upload documentation to online civil rights complaints. These efforts represent another component of DWD’s ongoing work to improve service to DWD customers – employers, job seekers, current employees, and those experiencing employment disruptions.

Other recent examples of DWD’s modernization efforts and customer service improvements include the adoption of “plain language” standards for many forms, expanded call center hours, introduction of a chatbot to answer commonly asked questions, and virtual appointment scheduling for job seekers in need of employment coaching and job search assistance.

DWD’s online complaint filing application can be found on the [DWD Equal Rights webpage](#). To file a labor standards or civil rights complaint online, users must first create a DWD ID. The online complaint filing process is designed to take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Questions about the complaint filing process and how to enforce your rights may be sent to the [Equal Rights Division](#).