



# Inmate Grievance Procedure

Prepared by the Uptown People's Law Center

## Quick Facts

1. Before filing a lawsuit, an inmate **MUST** complete the grievance process. Therefore, it is important that all prisoners with a grievance start and complete the process as soon as possible.
2. Grievances must include as much detail as possible, including specific names, dates, and facts
3. A grievance must be filed within 60 days of the incident giving rise to the complaint.
4. If an inmate does not receive a response at any stage of the process, he/she should move along to the next step in the process, including a note as to why the prior stage was not completed
5. If filing a grievance about a facility other than the one where the prisoner is currently incarcerated, the grievance can be sent directly to the ARB.
6. It's **VERY** important to keep notes and records of any communications with prison staff about the status of grievances.

## The Grievance Process

**Step 1:** Fill out the grievance form, including as many specific details as possible, within 60 days of the alleged incident.

**Step 2:** Bring the issues and the grievance form to the attention of the prison counselor. If the counselor is unable to resolve the issue informally, follow the remaining steps.

**Step 3:** After obtaining the counselor's signature, submit the grievance form to the prison's Grievance Officer by depositing it in the living unit mailbox or the place designated by the prison.

- **IMPORTANT:** Keep a copy of the grievance.
- The Grievance Officer will review the grievance and forward his/her recommendation to the Warden, who will make the final decision at the prison.
- The Warden has 2 months to respond to a grievance.

**Step 4:** If unsatisfied with the Warden's decision, appeal the decision to the Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections by sending your grievance to the Administrative Review Board (ARB) within 30 days of the Warden's decision.

- Include a copy of the Grievance Officer's report and Warden's decision with the appeal and keep a copy of all documents.
- If the grievance was rejected by the Grievance Officer/Warden as untimely, include an explanation of good cause with the appeal to the ARB detailing why the appeal was not filed in time, attach any supporting notes or documentation.
- If you do not receive a response from the Grievance Officer/Warden within 2 months, forward a copy of your grievance to the ARB stating that you did not receive a response.
- The ARB has 6 months to respond to a grievance appeal.
  - If no response is received within 3 or 4 months, write a letter to ARB inquiring into the progression of their decision.

**Completion of the Process:** The grievance process is only complete after each of the above steps has been taken. An inmate **CANNOT** file a lawsuit until he/she has completed the entire process.