

Issue: Consolidation of Grievances for a Single Hearing; Ruling Date: August 3, 2017; Ruling No. 2018-4597; Agency: Department of Social Services; Outcome: Consolidation Granted.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Human Resource Management
Office of Equal Employment and Dispute Resolution

CONSOLIDATION RULING

In the matter of the Virginia Department of Social Services
Ruling Number 2018-4597
August 3, 2017

This ruling addresses the consolidation of the grievant's two grievances filed with the Department of Social Services (the agency). For the reasons discussed below, the Office of Equal Employment and Dispute Resolution (EEDR) at the Department of Human Resource Management finds that consolidation of these grievances into a single hearing is appropriate and practicable.

FACTS

The two grievances at issue are 1) a June 2, 2017 grievance challenging the agency's issuance of a Group I Written Notice for alleged unsatisfactory performance, and 2) a July 20, 2017 grievance challenging the agency's issuance of another Group I Written Notice, with termination, for alleged continued unsatisfactory performance. The agency has requested consolidation of these matters.

DISCUSSION

Approval by EEDR in the form of a compliance ruling is required before two or more grievances may be consolidated in a single hearing. Moreover, EEDR may consolidate grievances for hearing without a request from either party.¹ EEDR strongly favors consolidation and will consolidate grievances when they involve the same parties, legal issues, policies, and/or factual background, unless there is a persuasive reason to process the grievances individually.²

EEDR finds that consolidation of the June 2 and July 20 grievances is appropriate. These grievances involve the same grievant and could share common themes, claims, and witnesses. The grievances relate to an alleged pattern of behavior by the grievant that resulted in similar disciplinary actions issued. Further, we find that consolidation is not impracticable in this instance. Therefore, the two grievances are consolidated for a single hearing. A hearing officer will be appointed in a forthcoming letter.

¹ *Grievance Procedure Manual* § 8.5.

² *See id.*

EEDR's rulings on compliance are final and nonappealable.³



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³ See Va. Code §§ 2.2-1202.1(5), 2.2-3003(G).