

Utah State Career Service Review Office



STRATEGIC PLAN
2025

CAREER SERVICE REVIEW OFFICE

OVERVIEW

The Career Service Review Office is a non-public facing, independent agency of Utah's executive branch. It serves as an administrative court for executive branch employees of the State of Utah. Its primary objective is to provide a hearing and appropriate due process for executive branch employees who qualify. This Strategic Plan identifies the office's ongoing efforts to maintain and improve independence, timeliness, and efficiency.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Career Service Review Office administers the Utah State Employees' Grievance and Appeals Procedures for executive branch employees.

CORE VALUES

Independence

Independence from outside influences is key to the CSRO. The office must be able to render decisions free of influence and without fear of repercussions.

Fairness

The office maintains neutrality in the review of all personnel grievances and treats all parties with dignity and respect.

Accountability

The office maintains stringent standards of conduct, self-enforcement of legal and ethical rules, and efficient stewardship of public funds and property.

GOALS

1. Conduct Impartial Hearings

Independence is of the utmost importance to the CSRO to ensure fair and impartial hearings. The CSRO will maintain its status as an independent agency, free from the influence of other executive branch agencies. The CSRO will advocate for resources and policies that support and protect its independence.

2. Issue Quality Written Decisions

The CSRO will issue written decisions with legal predictability, coherence, and consistency. Decisions will adhere to the applicable rule of law, including statutes, case law, rules, and policies.

3. Improve Access for Unrepresented Employees

Many employees who appear before the CSRO are not represented by counsel, while the Agencies are represented by the Utah Office of the Attorney General. The CSRO strives to simplify the process for unrepresented employees.

4. Conduct Timely Proceedings

With limited exceptions, the CSRO will adhere to the hearing date and discovery schedule established at the outset of each grievance appeal.

FY 25 WORK PLAN

Timely Hearings

Parties who appear before the CSRO are entitled to have their grievances completed within statutory timeframes. When an employee files a Grievance Form, the office schedules deadlines using this template:

Jurisdictional Decision (Order of Dismissal)	15 days after jurisdictional review
Initial Letter to Grievant & Scheduling Order	1-2 days after receipt of Grievance Form
Notice of Appearance of Counsel	3-4 days after date of Scheduling Order
Initial Witness and Exhibit List	1 week after date of Scheduling Order
First Discovery Due	2 weeks after date of Scheduling Order
Motions to Compel	2 weeks before the end of discovery
Last Day to Send Discovery	30 days before the end of discovery
Discovery Deadline	1 week prior to Final Witness and Exhibit List
Final Witness and Exhibit List	1 week prior to Motions in Limine
Notice of Hearing	End of week after final lists
Motions in Limine	3 weeks before subpoenas issued
Responses to Motions in Limine	2 weeks before subpoenas issued
Replies on Motions in Limine	1 week before subpoenas issued
Subpoena Lists Due and Subpoenas Issued	2 weeks before evidentiary hearing
Level 4 Hearing	1 week before 150 Day deadline
150 Day Deadline	150 days after jurisdiction is established
Level 4 Written Decisions	20 working days after the hearing is closed

The CSRO’s governing statute requires the hearing to be conducted within 150 days of the date jurisdiction is established. To move the hearing beyond 150 days, the parties must establish the existence of “extraordinary circumstances.” The CSRO abides by its statutory deadlines without exception, as reflected in its Performance Measures.

Qualified Hearing Officers

The CSRO must issue impartial decisions that are both well-reasoned and well-written. Hearing officers are required to demonstrate competent legal writing and research, which includes mastery over applicable statutes, case law, rules, and policies. The CSRO is responsible for the quality control of a hearing officers’ work product; written decisions are edited for spelling,

grammar, and other writing errors. The office does not suggest substantive alterations to the legal analysis, findings of fact, or legal conclusions in a hearing officer's work product. If a hearing officer's impartiality is compromised, they must recuse themselves, or in some instances the office may order recusal. For external accountability, CSRO decisions may be appealed to the Utah Court of Appeals. The CSRO responds promptly to feedback from the courts when a response is warranted.

Customer Experience

The CSRO is not currently participating in Phase 2 of the CX integration. The Division of Human Resource Management (DHRM) conducts periodic customer surveys of attorneys who appear before the CSRO. Because the CSRO functions like a court, the DHRM survey is modeled off a similar assessment used by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Among other subjects, it seeks feedback regarding the CSRO processes, timeliness, hearing officer bias, and adherence to the rule of law. The CSRO responds promptly to this survey feedback.

Budget

The office does not anticipate special budget requests this year or the following year.

Remote Hearings

Most of the CSRO's hearings are conducted by remote on WebEx. This makes the hearing accessible to employees and employers in rural offices. Remote hearings also allow most witnesses to appear from their workplace, which minimizes disruption to the State.

Commitment to the Rule of Law

The CSRO's chief responsibility is interpreting and applying Utah Code Sections 67-19a-101 through 501. To do so effectively, hearing officers consider only relevant and properly presented evidence and faithfully apply the law.

Performance Measures

- 1) The CSRO shall issue a written decision within 20 working days after an evidentiary hearing is adjourned (Utah Code § 67-19a-406(3)(a)).
- 2) The CSRO shall issue a jurisdictional decision within 15 days of the date a new grievance is filed (Utah Code § 67-19a-403(3)(b)).
- 3) Absent "extraordinary circumstances," the CSRO shall conduct an evidentiary hearing within 150 days of the date jurisdiction is established (Utah Code § 67-19a-404(1)(b)(ii)(B)).
- 4) The CSRO shall hire and retain hearing officers who meet the performance standards for Administrative Law Judges set by the Utah Department of Human Resource Management.