

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES,
DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE
AGENCY POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Policy Title: **Client Grievance**

Revised Date: 11/02


Type: Agency

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Approval: 
Executive Director

3/28/2008
Date


Secretary, Board of Directors

4/08/2008
Date

1. **Policy Statement:** Catholic Social Services values its clients. Agency personnel are expected to strive to meet the needs of clients effectively, efficiently, and in a pastorally sensitive manner. Personnel are asked to be attentive to client satisfaction, be alert to indications of dissatisfaction, and be open and approachable to those who wish to address a perceived problem. When conflicts with clients arise, personnel are asked to work with them to solve any problem openly and honestly, and, if necessary to produce a satisfactory result, recommend that the client work toward resolution with a supervisor, Program Director, Regional Director or the agency's Executive Director. The agency commits its representatives to respond to complaints and grievances in a timely manner whether they are communicated in writing (formal) or in person (informal).

II. **Agency Values:** Dignity of the Human Person; Justice

III. **Purpose/Rationale:** To assure the best possible service for clients, it is necessary to listen to them at all steps in the process. Grievance procedures should allow the client a simple and effective way to communicate perceived problems with the way they are being treated and guarantee that Catholic Social Services will respond to those grievances in a manner consistent with agency values.

IV. **Procedures/Guidelines:**

A. Staff response to a complaint:

1. A worker, upon learning of a complaint, shall make every reasonable effort to resolve the issues surrounding the complaint.
2. If the worker is unable to resolve the issue, the worker shall encourage the client to address the issue with the worker's supervisor or the program director either by personal contact or in writing. The appropriate referral will depend on the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

Policy Number: 102.03

Page 1 of 3

The worker shall offer to assist in arranging personal contact with the supervisor or program director. If the client indicates a preference to communicate in writing, the worker shall provide them with the Agency's Client Grievance Form. The grievance may be written on the form provided, or written in any other form such as a letter. The Grievance form shall state as such.

- B. Responsibilities of supervisors and program directors in responding to a complaint:
1. Supervisors and program directors shall make themselves available to clients wishing to meet (in person or on the phone) to discuss a complaint and shall make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter.
 2. If the supervisor or program director is unable to resolve the client issue, they shall encourage them to address the issue with the agency's executive director either by personal contact or in writing. The supervisor or program director shall offer to assist in arranging personal contact with the executive director. If the client indicates a preference to communicate in writing (and has not already documented the complaint in writing), the supervisor/director shall provide the Agency's Client Form to them.
 3. Upon receipt of a written complaint (whether on the Grievance Form or otherwise), a supervisor or program director shall, within 10 business days research the issue and attempt to make personal contact with the person making the grievance to gather any necessary additional information and complete steps 1 and 2 above. Within 5 business days of this personal contact, or if attempts to reach the client or Foster Parent within 10 business days are unsuccessful, the supervisor or program director shall reply to them in writing and summarize the outcome of the discussion or, if no discussion took place, the status of research into the complaint and the proposed resolution. If no discussion took place, this written response shall offer the client the option of presenting the issue to the agency's Executive Director either by personal contact or in writing and shall provide the executive director's contact information. In any event, copies of the written complaint and the written response shall be forwarded to the Director of Quality Improvement, the Executive Director and other staff members involved in the matter.
- C. Responsibilities of the executive director in responding to a complaint:
1. The executive director shall be available to the person/s wishing to meet (in person or on the phone) to discuss a complaint and shall make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter. However, if the person making the grievance has not addressed the complaint to the Program Director, the Executive Director may direct them to discuss the issue with the Program Director first. If the issue cannot be resolved in a satisfactory manner at that level, the Executive Director may become involved to a greater degree.

2. Depending on the outcome of a personal contact from a client regarding a complaint, the executive director will determine if it is necessary to provide a written response to them. If a written response is necessary, the director should follow the guidelines for a written response listed below.
 3. Upon receipt of a written complaint (whether on the Client Grievance Form or otherwise), the executive director shall, within 10 business days research the issue and attempt to make personal contact with them to gather any necessary additional information and complete step 1 above. Within 5 business days of this personal contact, or if attempts to reach the person making the grievance within 10 days are unsuccessful, the Executive Director shall reply to them in writing and summarize the outcome of the discussion or, if no discussion took place, the status of research into the complaint and the proposed resolution. Copies of any written complaint and the written response to a complaint (whether written or brought in person) shall be forwarded to the Director of Quality Improvement and other staff members involved in the matter.
- D. Responsibilities of the Director of Quality Improvement with respect to written complaints:
1. The Director of Quality Improvement shall maintain a log of written complaints and written responses to complaints and shall report to the Board of Directors, at least annually, summarizing the nature of complaints and the outcomes achieved.
- E. Copies of all documentation related to a grievance shall be included in the case file.