



Richland County Children Services

GRIEVANCE POLICY

PURPOSE:

To provide information for service recipients about the process for handling of grievances and/or complaints. Pursuant to OAC 5101:2-5-13 (A) (6) and 5101:2-33-20 and the Agency will have a means for receiving, reviewing and resolving grievances. In addition, the agency will have a grievance process to resolve differences with a substitute caregiver or applicant relative to the requirements imposed by OAC 5101:2-7 and 5101:2-33- 03 and any other agency policy.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Any person who is a recipient of agency services may file, as appropriate, a complaint or grievance with the Agency by completing required forms. If you are not sure which one to request, contact your caseworker or the ask for the Grievance Officer. The forms should be completed and filled either by Regular US Mail or personal service at the Agency front desk during regular business hours. Richland County Children Services shall have four classifications of complaints/grievances available to persons it serves.

Grievances may be filed by persons found to be the perpetrator of abuse and/or neglect through a disposition of indicated or substantiated. This grievance (known as a Dispositional Appeal) must be completed and filed with the Agency within 30 days of the date on the notification letter sent to the person(s) named as the perpetrator(s). Only the named perpetrator(s) of child abuse or neglect can appeal a disposition. A parent, legal guardian or custodian may appeal a disposition on behalf of a minor child named as a perpetrator for whom he or she is legally entitled to

exercise the rights and responsibilities of parenthood under Ohio Law (request RCCS Program Procedure for Filing an Appeal of a Case Disposition Decision).

Complaints may be filed by parents, custodians, legal guardians, substitute caregivers, substitute caregiver applicants, kinship care givers, adoptive applicants, adoptive parents and children involved with the Agency. These complaints may only be filed by the person directly involved in the incident or directly affected by a decision of staff of the agency or by a parent, legal guardian, legal custodian or adoptive parent of a minor child involved with the Agency (request RCCS Program Procedure for Grievances).

Complaints regarding discriminatory acts, policies, or practices pertaining to substitute care and/or the adoption process that involve race, color or national origin shall be handled under OAC rule 5101:2-33-03 and not subject to the procedures outlined below. If there is a question about this type of complaint, please contact your caseworker and see the below procedure for the Grievance Process (request RCCS Program Procedure for Grievances).

Complainants who believe an adoptive placement was denied or delayed based solely on the geographic location of the prospective adoptive family have a right to file a complaint with the Agency.

Complaints/grievances are not legal proceedings, but are administrative in nature and therefore Rules of Evidence do not apply.

In preparing for a complaint/grievance process, records of the agency are confidential; however, information that was already or would be normally supplied to the person bringing the complaint/grievance will be made available upon request. A Complainant or Grievant must make requests in writing for agency documents to the Manager of Legal Services who will review the request and respond to the complainant/grievant as to what information is available for review.

Note that a complaint/grievance process is available and located in the client rights packets for both intake and ongoing services, in relevant substitute care and adoption care policies and on the Agency website.

This Policy and Procedures Manual will be communicated to individuals who are hearing or visually impaired in accordance with provisions of the Agency's Americans with Disabilities Act Personnel Manual Section 2.1 and its related procedures and will be communicated to individuals of limited English proficiency in accordance with provisions of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

To provide information for service recipients about the process for handling of grievances and/or complaints.

PROCEDURE

Any person who is a recipient of agency services may file, as appropriate, a complaint or grievance with the Agency by completing required forms and filing them either by Regular US Mail or personal service at the Agency front desk during regular business hours. Richland County Children Services shall have four classifications of complaints/grievances available to persons it serves.

1. Grievances may be filed by persons found to be the perpetrator of abuse and/or neglect through a disposition of indicated or substantiated. This grievance (known as a Dispositional Appeal) must be completed and filed with the Agency within 30 days of the date on the notification letter sent to the person(s) named as the perpetrator(s). Only the named perpetrator(s) of child abuse or neglect can appeal a disposition. A parent, legal guardian or custodian may appeal a disposition on behalf of a minor child named as a perpetrator for whom he or she is legally entitled to exercise the rights and responsibilities of parenthood under Ohio Law.
2. Complaints may be filed by parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster caregivers, foster caregiver applicants, kinship care givers, adoptive applicants, adoptive parents and children involved with the Agency. These complaints may only be filed by the person directly involved in the incident or directly affected by a decision of staff of the agency or by a parent, legal guardian, legal custodian or adoptive parent of a minor child involved with the Agency.
3. Complaints regarding discriminatory acts, policies, or practices pertaining to foster care and/or the adoption process that involve race, color or national origin shall be handled under OAC rule [5101:2-33-03](#) and not subject to the procedures outlined below. If there is a question about this type of complaint please contact your caseworker and ask for a copy of the Adoption Policy for more information on how to file this type of complaint.
4. Complainants who believe an adoptive placement was denied or delayed based solely on the geographic location of the prospective adoptive family have a right to file a complaint with the Agency. If there is a question about this type of complaint please contact your caseworker and ask for a copy of the Adoption Policy for more information on how to file this type of complaint.

Complaints/grievances are not legal proceedings, but are administrative in nature and therefore Rules of Evidence do not apply.

In preparing for a complaint/grievance process, records of the agency are confidential; however, information that was already or would be normally supplied to the person bringing the complaint/grievance will be made available upon request. A Complainant or Grievant must make requests in writing for agency documents to the Manager of Legal Services who will review the request and respond to the complainant/grievant as to what information is available for review.

The Grievance Review Team is a three-person team consisting of the Grievance Officer, and two other RCCS Supervisory staff; The Grievance Officer will appoint and notify the team appropriate to the case under review.

Note that a complaint/grievance process is available and in the client rights packets for both intake and ongoing services, in relevant foster and adoption care policies and on the Agency website.

FILING AN APPEAL OF A CASE DISPOSITION DECISION

PURPOSE

To provide a process for the appeal of a dispositional case decision by the alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect. The Dispositional Review Team is a three-person team consisting of the Grievance Officer, and two other RCCS Supervisory staff; none of whom were directly involved in the dispositional decision. The Grievance Officer will appoint and notify the team appropriate to the case under review.

PROCEDURE

1. Within two (2) working days of the completion of assessment activities, RCCS caseworkers provide Alleged Perpetrator(s) with a written notification of the disposition of a report of child abuse and/or neglect that implicated him/her as the alleged perpetrator. Such notification includes notice of the Alleged Perpetrator's right to appeal the disposition within 30 days receipt
2. An alleged perpetrator (complainant) who wants to appeal the disposition of his/her case, contacts the Agency receptionist within 30 calendar days from the date the dispositional letter was received and requests a copy of Agency Policy 14.6, this procedure and related forms.
3. Within 3 working days of the above request, The Grievance Policy and this procedure and related forms are mailed to the complainant and the Agency receptionist on duty documents this request and fulfillment of this request in SACWIS and sends an e-mail to the Grievance Officer notifying a packet was mailed.
4. A completed Appeal of Disposition form must be received by the agency within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of receipt of the dispositional letter. If the Appeal is received after the forty-five (45) day period, the complainant is notified that his/her disposition will not be reviewed.
5. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a completed Grievance Form, the Grievance Officer convenes a Dispositional Review Team to review all case documentation and the Grievance Form RCCS 800-05. There is not a right to a face to face meeting between the complainant and Agency staff, though the Grievance Officer may determine this is necessary. This is at the discretion of the Grievance Officer and Dispositional Review Team.

The Grievance Officer may contact the complainant to extend time lines, if necessary.

6. Within fifteen (15) working days of the Dispositional Review meeting, the complainant will be notified in writing by the Grievance Officer through certified mail of the Review Team's decision to change the original disposition or allow it to remain.

7. All activities are to be documented in SACWIS under the Grievance Tab by the Grievance Officer and paperwork filed in the case file under PQI which covers the intake under review.
8. Should there be a change in the case disposition; letters will also be sent as required by Ohio Rule regarding original notifications of the case disposition. The appropriate Intake Supervisor shall ensure the disposition change (if any) is recorded in SACWIS and letters are sent per rule within 10 working days of the change of disposition.