



Richland County Children Services

731 Scholl Road, Mansfield, Ohio 44907-1571 • Phone (419) 774-4100 • FAX (419) 774-4114 • www.richlandcountychildrenservices.org

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. Any person (Grievant) who is a recipient of agency services may file, as appropriate, a complaint or grievance with the Agency by completing and returning the required Grievance forms. This would include:

- persons found to be the perpetrator of abuse and/or neglect through a disposition of indicated or substantiated
- parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster caregivers, foster caregiver applicants, kinship caregivers, adoptive applicants, adoptive parents and children involved with the Agency.
- 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. In addition, 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.

Forms are available in the Client's Rights Notification Packet or by contacting the Agency. The forms should be completed and returned to the attention of the Client's Rights Officer of Richland County Children Services. Grievances have four classifications of complaints/grievances available to persons served.

1. **Dispositional Appeal** - 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. Grievant will use the Disposition Appeal Grievance Form



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2. **General Complaint Grievance** - 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. Grievant will use the General Complaint Grievance Form
3. **Substitute Care and/or Adoption Process** - 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. Grievant will use the General Complaint Grievance Form
4. **Adoptive placement** - 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. Grievant will use the General Complaint Grievance Form

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.

Consumer Rights- It is the policy of the Richland County Children Services Board that substitute caregivers, adoptive parents and children who are clients of the Agency and their parents shall have the following rights

1. To be treated with courtesy and respect
2. To be spoken with in words that you understand
3. To ask questions and make your ideas known
4. To hear and talk about your strengths, family risk, and safety issues
5. To take part in talking about developing and reviewing your case plan
6. To decide whether to receive services and to know the possible consequences if you choose not to receive the services
7. To complain or file a grievance about the way you or your children have been treated, or about concerns you have
8. To seek legal advice



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9. To review parts of your record
10. The right to be informed in advance of the reason(s) for closing your case and to be involved in planning for the consequences of that event
11. To know the cost of the service and the access to services regardless of ability to pay
12. The right to appeal the case disposition within 30 days of receiving the disposition notification letter if you are the alleged perpetrator in the investigation
13. To receive interpreters and other auxiliary aids, such as TTY access and Ohio Relay Service provided at no cost to you to ensure and equal opportunity to receive and benefit from the services

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any person who is a recipient of agency services may file, as appropriate, a complaint or grievance. Any person calling in to the Agency requesting a Grievance Packet will also be given the opportunity to speak with the Grievance Officer.

Once the appropriate Grievance Form is completed, the Client Rights/ Grievance Officer will designate a Grievance Review Team which is a three-person team consisting of the Grievance Officer, and two other RCCS Supervisory staff not associated with the grievant's case. The Grievance Officer will appoint and notify the team appropriate to the case under review within 2 weeks receipt of the grievance form.

The 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

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 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 and 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



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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. Exceptions to this process will be made at the discretion of the Executive Director and Grievance Officer.
5. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a completed Grievance Form, the Grievance Officer convenes a Grievance Review Team to review all case documentation and the Grievance Form RCCS 800-05. The grievant will be given an opportunity to a face to face meeting between the Grievance Review Team and staff involved.
6. Within fifteen (15) working days of the Grievance Review Team 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 and EDMS under the Grievance Tab by the Grievance Officer. The Caseworker; Supervisor, Program Manager, Assistant Director and Executive Director will be notified of the outcome of the Grievance Review Team.
8. Should there be a change in the case disposition; letters will also be sent as required by Ohio Administrative 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.
9. Grievances are completed within 45 days receipt of the Grievance Form and the results of the Grievance Review Team are included in a Resolution Letter sent Certified Mail to the Grievant. IF the Grievant is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she may contact the Executive Director within one (1) week notification, otherwise the findings of the Grievance Review Team will be final.

FILING A GENERAL COMPLAINT GRIEVANCE

1. Any person who is a recipient of agency services may file, as appropriate, a complaint or grievance. Any person calling in to the Agency requesting a Grievance Packet will also be given the opportunity to speak with the Grievance Officer.
2. Any person who wants to file a grievance contacts the Agency receptionist and requests a copy of Agency Policy and Procedure and related forms.



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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. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a completed Grievance Form, the Grievance Officer convenes a Grievance Review Team to review all case documentation and the Grievance Form RCCS 800-05. The grievant will be given an opportunity to a face to face meeting between the complainant and the Grievance Review Team and staff involved.
5. Within fifteen (15) working days of the Grievance Review Team 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.
6. All activities are to be documented in SACWIS and EDMS under the Grievance Tab by the Grievance Officer. The Caseworker; Supervisor, Program Manager, Assistant Director and Executive Director will be notified of the outcome of the Grievance Review Team.
7. Grievances are completed within 45 days receipt of the Grievance Form and the results of the Grievance Review Team are included in a Resolution Letter sent Certified Mail to the Grievant. IF the Grievant is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she may contact the Executive Director within one (1) week notification, otherwise the findings of the Grievance Review Team will be final.

**Richland County Children Services
Alleged Perpetrator Appeal of Disposition**

**Grievance Officer
Richland County Children Services
731 Scholl Road
Mansfield, Ohio 44907**

Name of Person Filing the Appeal:

Date Dispositional Letter Rec'd from Agency:

Last First MI

Date of Birth _____

Address:

Case Disposition: (circle)

Street

Indicated Substantiated

City State Zip Code

Phone Numbers:

(Where you can be reached during the day)

Please state the specific change in Case Disposition you are requesting:

Evidence to Support this Change:

Signed: _____ Date Completed: _____

**RETURN ONLY THIS COMPLETED PAGE IN AN ENVELOPE TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.
THIS COMPLETED APPEAL FORM MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 30 DAYS
FROM THE DATE OF THE DISPOSITIONAL LETTER YOU RECEIVED.**

**Richland County Children Services
General Complaint Form Policy 14.6 (b) Only**

Name of Person Making Complaint:

Address:

Last First MI

Street

Phone Numbers:

City State Zip Code

(Where you can be reached during the day)

Names of Children Involved:

Date of Birth

1. Date of Incident/Decision which resulted in this complaint:

_____ **(NOTE: THIS MUST BE COMPLETED)**

2. Date addressed with caseworker: _____

3. Caseworker's name: _____

4. Specific Complaint: (Explain the Incident/Decision which resulted in this complaint)

5. What is the solution you are proposing?

6. What have you already done to resolve this issue?

**STOP and Return All Pages to:
Richland County Children Services
Grievance Officer
731 Scholl Road
Mansfield, Ohio 44907**

You may also drop this packet off at the front desk during normal hours of operation as posted

****Note: This information must be returned to the Agency within 10 days of your initial discussion with the caseworker if you are not satisfied with the result of this discussion****