

Title: Client Complaint/Grievance

Applies to: Agency Wide

Purpose: To ensure a clear and consistent process for resolving client/customer complaints/grievances that incorporates 1) accessibility; 2) procedural fairness; 3) timeliness; 4) confidentiality; and 5) systematic review of complaint data to identify problem areas and analyze trends.

Policy: Catholic Charities complaint handling policy is a user friendly system for accepting client/ customer feedback that includes:

- Clear delegations and procedures for staff to deal with complaints and provide remedies;
- Internal and external referral procedures if complaint is not resolved at front line;
- Complaint review performance standards including timeframes for response and quality of response; and
- Systematic review of complaint data to identify problem areas, analyze trends and feed the outcome of systemic findings into best practice within the organization

Clients who lodge complaints are protected from retaliatory actions.

Staff must not attempt to influence a client's statement about the program in the grievance document or during an investigation resulting from a grievance.

The client complaint procedure is a confidential process confined only to those individuals directly involved.

Client complaint procedures will be posted in a highly visible area at each location where client services are provided, and will be posted in various languages to accommodate limited English-proficient clients.

A client's parent or legal representative, a guardian, or a concerned person in the resident's life may file a complaint/grievance.

Staff must provide any necessary assistance to clients who need assistance in filing a grievance.

Procedures:

There are four tiers of complaint resolution:

Tier 1 Front Line Complaint Resolution

Most complaints should be capable of informal resolution by front line staff. Staff are authorized and encouraged to deal with and resolve complaints.

1. Front line staff are trained and empowered with clear delegations to resolve complaints whenever possible at first contact.
2. Program managers and designated complaint staff may review and informally resolve client complaints particularly when the complaint is against a front line staff.

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3. Front line staff should automatically refer the complaint to a manager when:
 - the problem is with the front line staff member;
 - A restriction or significant disciplinary action is a possible outcome.
4. All complaint details must be logged by staff for later analysis through the Process Quality Improvement (PQI) reporting.

Tier 2 Manager/Senior Manager Review

When a complainant is dissatisfied with a response from a Tier 1 review, the complainant submits a complaint in writing, or verbally to staff who writes for client, on a complaint form for a Tier 2 review. The complaint is reviewed by the program manager for disputes informally resolved by front line staff or it is reviewed by a more senior manager for disputes informally resolved by program managers.

1. The program manager/senior program manager will interview the client in a confidential manner to gain a full understanding of the nature of the grievance.
2. The program manager/senior program manager will make every effort to objectively and confidentially investigate all aspects of the client's grievance by interviewing witnesses and other persons as needed.
3. Based on results of number one and two above, a written response will be provided to the complainant within 5 working days.

Tier 3 Senior Manager/Director Review

When a complainant is dissatisfied with a response from a Tier 2 review, the complainant is instructed how to submit the complaint for a Tier 3 review. Under a Tier 3 review, the written complaint and response are reviewed by a senior program manager or division director. After conducting a thorough review, a written response of the results of the review is provided to the complainant within 5 working days.

1. The senior program manager/division director will interview the client in a confidential manner to gain a full understanding of the nature of the grievance.
2. The senior program manager/division director will make every effort to objectively and confidentially investigate all aspects of the client's grievance by interviewing witnesses and other persons as needed.
3. The senior program manager/division director has 5 working days to respond to the client in writing with their determination.

Tier 4 VP Program Operations Review

When a complainant is dissatisfied with a response from a Tier 3 review, the complainant is instructed how to submit the complaint for a Tier 4 review. Under a Tier 4 review, the written complaint and response are reviewed by the V P of Program Operations. After conducting a thorough review, a written response of the results of the review is provided to the complainant within 5 working days. The response includes instructions and resources describing how the client can bring the complaint to an external agency for outside review.

1. The V P of Program Operations will interview the client in a confidential manner to gain a full understanding of the nature of the grievance.
2. The V P of Program Operations will make every effort to objectively and confidentially investigate all aspects of the client's grievance by interviewing witnesses and other persons as needed.

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3. The V P of Program Operations has 5 working days to respond to the client in writing with their determination.
4. Written response from the V P of Program Operations will include a referral to the appropriate external third party reviewer depending on the origin of the complaint and the licensed status of the program area.

Recordkeeping:

Complaint data is confidential. The program manager will keep documentation of complaints in a secure location. Program managers will compile aggregate complaint data and review routinely for the purpose of identifying trends. Complaint data is reported on a quarterly basis using the quarterly reporting form. Quality improvement initiatives will be created to address identified negative trends.

A central file of all complaints will be held by the V P of Program Operations for PQI analysis and review on a quarterly basis.

A review of quality improvement initiatives related to client complaints will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine effectiveness. Progress and results of these initiatives will be reported to the PQI Oversight Committee on a quarterly basis.

Definitions:

Term	Definition
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction that can include but is not limited to, services, manner of treatment, outcomes, or experiences.
Retaliatory	Harmful action against a person or group in response to a grievance, be it real or perceived.

Resources: [Quarterly report form](#)

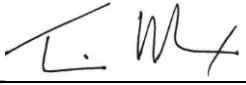
Forms: Client complaint form
Client compliant aggregate report

Related Documents: Do you have a complaint Poster (Hmong)
Do you have a complaint Poster (Somali)
Do you have a complaint Poster (Spanish)
Do you have a complaint Poster (English)

Issued By:
VP of Program Operations

Issued Date:
12/1/12

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