
	SECTION 4: Safeguards	Policy Number: OPR4-SFG 03
	OPERATIONS	Original Date Approved: 1995
	POLICY:	Last Revised Date: 09/2015
	EXTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS	Review Date(s): 12/2016, 06/2015, 06/2013,
APPROVAL: Executive Director Signature 		Page 1 of 2

POLICY


The Association shall maintain a complaint process for use by community stakeholders that:

1. Addresses complaints in a timely way.
2. Is accessible to meet the needs of the person submitting the complaint/feedback.
3. Provides for an appeal of decisions/answers.
4. Provides for a five step resolution process.
5. Provides a fair review process that is free of any coercion, intimidation or bias.
6. Identifies and addresses any person/persons who may have a conflict of interest in the matter.

PROCEDURE

STEP ONE

1. The person making the complaint shall bring the matter to the Executive Director.
2. In the event that the person first approaches a member of the Board of Directors with the complaint:
 - a. The Board member will not discuss the issue with the complainant but will advise them of the complaint process and direct the person to contact the Executive Director.
 - b. The Board member will advise the Executive Director of the person's complaint and any background information they have about the issue.
3. Once the Executive Director has been contacted by the complainant, the Executive Director will arrange to meet with the person within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint.
4. The Executive Director may consult with the Board Chair or a Board member who may have background information on the issue.
5. At the initial meeting with the complainant, the Executive Director will encourage the person to describe their issue fully and will seek clarification from the person as required. Further investigation by the Executive Director into the matter may be required to seek additional information if needed.
6. The Executive Director shall ensure minutes are taken at all meetings with the complainant. Minutes shall include the date, time, place and subject of the meeting, significant issues and occurrences, all steps identified during the meeting to address the problem and any plans for further action.
7. If a plan to resolve the issue cannot be developed between the person and the Executive Director, the complaint process will move to Step Two.
8. If the person and Executive Director are unable to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution and cannot agree to any further process to do so, the Executive Director will advise the person to put their issue in writing and submit it to the Board of Directors through the Executive Director.
9. If the complaint/feedback is an allegation of abuse, or is of a criminal nature which requires Police involvement, the agencies policy on Abuse and the Ministry of Community and Social Services Quality Assurance Measures Directives will be activated and MCSS serious occurrence reporting will be completed as required.

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STEP TWO

1. The Executive Director will meet with the Board Chair and one other member of the Board to be selected by the Board Chair within seven (7) working days to discuss the outcome of the initial meeting with the complainant, review the minutes and the steps undertaken to resolve the issue.
2. If the Board Chair and Board member believe that the issue has been adequately addressed they will advise the complainant.
3. If the Board Chair and Board member, in consultation with the Executive Director, feel there are other steps, which could or should be taken to resolve the issue, they will instruct the Executive Director to proceed with these steps.
4. The Executive Director will report back, within fifteen (15) calendar days, to the Board Chair and other member of the Board on the implementation of the plan to resolve the complaint. The Executive Director will make a recommendation as to the next steps if more work still needs to take place. The process may end at Step Two if the proposed plan has been followed and the complaint has been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant and the Board.

STEP THREE

1. If the complainant and the Executive Director are unable to develop a plan to resolve the complaint at Step One, then the complainant may file a written complaint with the Board within fifteen (15) calendar days of the initial meeting with the Executive Director. If no complaint is filed within this timeframe, the complaint will be dismissed.
2. If a written complaint is received a decision may be made to:
 - a. meet directly with the complainant to find a solution; or
 - b. advise him/her of the proposed resolution of the matter; or
 - c. proceed to Step Four and bring the matter to the Appeal Committee for a determination.

STEP FOUR

1. Once the matter is brought to the Appeal Committee, the Committee shall discuss the issue and make a final determination. The Committee may:
 - a. seek the assistance of a mediator to work with both parties to discuss the issue and find common ground; or
 - b. make a final determination of how the issue can or cannot be addressed and convey this to the complainant and it shall be noted as the final decision.
 - c. The Committee will report its decision at the next regular meeting of the full Board and have it recorded in the meeting minutes.