

Grievance and Appeals Policy

Any client of CAC programs has a right to file a grievance. Clients have the right to present and resolve complaints and grievances with the CAC. CAC staff adheres to the following Grievance and Appeals Policy:

A. Definition

CAC staff work to ensure that all clients are treated fairly and with respect. Clients may file a grievance when they feel they have been treated unfairly regarding procedure and/or that services requested were denied in violation of CAC procedures, applicable law, or conditions of the grant funding. These grievance procedures incorporate appropriate due process standards and provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of the grieved behavior.

B. Non-Recrimination

Staff shall not dissuade a program client from presenting the grievance, complaint or appeal nor should staff retaliate in response to the client having filed a grievance, complaint, or appeal.

C. Confidentiality

All forms and correspondence of the situation will be maintained in a confidential manner.

D. Grievance & Appeal Procedure

- 1.) Clients who feel they have not been treated fairly may discuss the situation immediately with the Program Director or submit a complaint on CAC's website. Information provided to the customer satisfaction survey will not be used to initiate a grievance. The client may communicate with the Program Director by telephone, email or mail. If the client wishes to file a grievance, it is the responsibility of the client to contact the Program Director or submit online. Non-Director staff is not engage in any further discussion on the matter with the client.
- 2.) Staff will notify the Program Director of the potential grievance within 24 hours, documenting the circumstances and providing any other pertinent information.
- 3.) Once the client initiates a grievance, the Program Director will either discuss meet with the client to discuss the circumstances of the complaint. Meetings can take place

- via phone, in-person, zoom or teams. Notes of this conversation will be placed in the client's file. If there is no case file, the Program Director is to open an *ad hoc* file.
- 4.) If the complaint is due to a staff member's behavior and is found to be factual, the Program Leader will discuss the matter with the staff member and take appropriate disciplinary action.
 - 5.) If the client is not satisfied with the conversation with or response from the Program Leader, the client will be referred to the Executive Director or the person that the Executive Director designates as responsible for handling grievances.
 - 6.) The Executive Director or designee will review all documentation of all the actions taken to-date and will make a final attempt to resolve the situation with the client as soon as possible.
 - 7.) If the client is still not satisfied, the only remaining internal recourse is to begin the formal appeal process.

E. Formal Appeal Process

The appeal process begins with the client securing a "Client Appeal Form" that is available upon request any CAC office. If the Executive Director or designee is unable to resolve the matter to the client's satisfaction, the Executive Director or designee should offer the Client Appeal Form to the client.

- 1.) The client needs to complete and sign the Client Appeal Form and submit it and any supporting documentation to the Executive Director or designee.
- 2.) If the client completes the form at a CAC office, staff needs to route the form and any attachments to the Executive Director or designee within two days.
- 3.) Within two business days of receiving the completed Client Appeal Form and any attachments, the Executive Director or designee is to contact the client to acknowledge receipt.
- 4.) Within 20 business days of receipt of the written appeal and complete information, the Executive Director or designee will form an Appeal Panel from among the Board of Directors and schedule a meeting of the Panel for the presentation of the appeal.
- 5.) The Executive Director or designee will notify all Panel members and the client as to the date/time/place of the meeting. The client may bring any additional information or individuals to the meeting.
- 6.) At the Appeal Meeting, the Appeal Panel will review the Client Appeal Form and any supporting documentation submitted with the Client Appeal Form. The Appeal Panel will review any documentation that staff has submitted to the Executive Director or designee. The Appeal Panel will permit the client or a

representative of the client to make a statement if they so wish. The Appeal Panel may ask questions of the client or the client's representative, or of the Executive Director or designee. The Appeal Panel will deliberate and make a determination.

- 7.) Within 30 business days of the meeting, a representative of the Appeal Panel will inform the client in writing of the determination made by the Appeal Panel.
- 8.) The Appeal Panel will inform the full Board of Directors of the appeal and its determination at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.
- 9.) The Executive Director or designee will inform the Program Director if there are any programmatic or disciplinary actions to be taken.

The determination reached by the Appeals Panel is the final internal, Agency determination.

All appeal-related information is stored in a secure location and maintained by the Executive Director.