

Client/Consumer Grievances

SUMMIT COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

<p>ORC: 5153.16; 5153.166</p> <p>OAC: 5101:2-33-20; 5101:2-5-13</p> <p>USC: N/A</p> <p>CFR: N/A</p>	<p>ORIGINAL: 9/15</p> <p>REVISIONS: 6/16; 6/11/19</p> <p>RELATED FORM(S): Consumer Grievance/Appeal</p> <p>RELATED PROCEDURE/POLICY(IES): Disposition Appeals</p>
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administrative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety & Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services - All Departments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services - Foster & Adoption |

All Staff Bargaining Unit Non-Bargaining Management

POLICY:

Parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster caregivers and applicants, kinship caretakers, children, and applicants or providers of approved adult-supervised living arrangements ("Clients/Consumers") may file a grievance regarding Summit County Children Services' (SCCS') provision of services. SCCS receives, reviews, and attempts to resolve these types of complaints within a reasonable amount of time.

PROCEDURE:

SCCS recognizes each Client/Consumer's right to file a grievance and provides a formal Client/Consumer grievance process. However, all Clients/Consumers must attempt to resolve complaints or concerns through the assigned caseworker, supervisor and/or Department Director prior to utilizing the formal grievance process. Clients who disagree with the disposition of a report of abuse or neglect shall refer to the procedure regarding Disposition Appeals.

Upon request, the Office of Client Rights provides a copy of this procedure and a Client/Consumer Grievance/Appeal form ("grievance packet") to the requestor within three (3) business days of the request. Copies of the grievance packet are also available at the SCCS front desk and Family Interaction Center, and are disseminated in those areas upon request.

SCCS provides language interpreters for individuals with limited English proficiency, interpreters for the hearing impaired, and assistance for the visually impaired by contract for service when it is determined that such services are necessary in order for a client/consumer to understand and/or participate in the grievance process. Additionally, SCCS can access Ohio Relay Service 7-1-1 to assist the hearing impaired.

Formal Complaint/Grievance Process:

A formal grievance is a complaint filed by a client or consumer when resolution of the complaint cannot be accomplished through informal means with agency staff as discussed above.

A formal grievance must be filed no later than 60 (sixty) days after the event or circumstances giving rise to the complaint, or learning of the event or circumstances giving rise to the complaint.

- Clients/Consumers expressing the desire to pursue a formal grievance are referred to the Client Rights Officer. The Client Rights Officer discusses the matter with the Client/Consumer, including what other steps, if any, have been taken to resolve the matter or may be utilized attempting to resolve the matter prior to the hearing of a formal grievance.
- If a grievance, formal or informal, alleges discriminatory actions of SCCS on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, military status, ancestry, genetic information or religion, the SCCS Civil Rights Coordinator must be notified and follow up accordingly.*
- Clients/Consumers wishing to file a formal grievance must complete a Client/Consumer Grievance/Appeal form and submit the same to the Agency's Office of Client Rights.
- The Client Rights Officer will assist a Client/Consumer with completing the grievance form upon request.
- The Office of Client Rights contacts the Client/Consumer within ten (10) business days of receipt of the grievance to schedule a time to meet and discuss possible avenues for resolution. The aggrieved must be available to participate in a formal grievance meeting with the Client Rights Officer, assigned supervisor, and Department Director, or their designee, within thirty (30) business days of the Office of Client Rights' receipt of the grievance. For review of unresolved grievances involving foster caregivers or applicants, the Client Rights Officer acts as the Executive Director's designee and ensures that review occurs within thirty (30) days of the submission.
- The Client Rights Officer may review SCCS records in addition to gathering pertinent information from the aggrieved, caseworker, supervisor, Department Director, and/or other individuals as deemed necessary and relevant to respond adequately to the formal grievance.
- The Client Rights Officer provides the aggrieved a written response, (via U.S. postal mail), within fourteen (14) business days of the meeting. The involved SCCS personnel are advised of the response provided.
- The complaint, review process, and findings are documented in the case record.

*The Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex or religion. The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act prohibits discriminatory acts, policies or practices involving race, color or national origin pertaining to the foster care or adoption process. See the SCCS procedure *Complaints in the Adoption or Foster Care process involving Race, Color or National Origin* for additional information. All complaints involving Title VI of the Civil Rights Act or the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act must be filed on a separate form and will be processed by the SCCS Civil Rights Coordinator in accordance with Ohio and Federal law. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is the delegated authority to investigate these types of complaints.