

**SCIOTO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES,
CHILDREN SERVICES DIVISION
GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

REVISED: 04/01/2023

EFFECTIVE: 04/01/2023

PURPOSE

To provide information for service recipients about the process for the handling of grievances and/or complaints.

PROCEDURE

Any person who is a recipient of agency services may file, as appropriate, a complaint or grievance with the agency by completing required forms and filing them either by Regular US Mail or personal service at the agency front desk during regular business hours. Once received, it shall be forwarded to the agency director immediately. Scioto County Department of Job and Family Services/Children Services Division shall have five classifications of complaints/grievances available to persons it serves.

1. 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. (See policy below on how Dispositional Appeals are conducted.)
2. **Complaints** may be filed by parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster caregivers, foster 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. (See form below.)
3. **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](#) and not subject to the procedures outlined below. If there is a question about this type of complaint, please contact your caseworker and ask for a copy of the Adoption Policy for more information on how to file this type of complaint.

4. **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. If there is a question about this type of complaint, please contact your caseworker and ask for a copy of the Adoption Policy for more information on how to file this type of complaint.

5. **Complaints** from the general public or from an individual that is not party to a case. These complaints will be investigated the same as any other complaint, however, since the individual is not a party to the case and all children services records are confidential, very little to no information will be shared with the complainant. The agency will take the information, conduct an internal investigation and determine whether any agency rules or policies were violated. The Director of the Scioto County Department of Job and Family Services has the discretion to conduct the internal investigation using agency staff or the Director may request an independent, third-party person to conduct the investigation. (See form below.)

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 agency Director or agency designee who will review the request and respond to the complainant/grievant as to what information is available for review.

FILING AN APPEAL OF A CASE DISPOSITION DECISION

PURPOSE

To provide a process for the appeal of a dispositional case decision by the alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect. The review team, at a minimum, will consist of the agency Director or designee, and two other Scioto County Department of Job and Family Services Supervisory staff and/or team leads; none of whom were directly involved in the dispositional decision. The agency Director will appoint the members on a case-by-case basis.

PROCEDURE

1. Within two (2) working days of the completion of assessment activities, Scioto County Department of Job and Family Services/Children Services Division caseworker will provide the 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. (SACWIS generated letter.)
2. An alleged perpetrator/s who wants to appeal the disposition of his/her case, within 30 calendar days from the date the dispositional letter was received, must submit the request in writing to the agency indicating the desire to appeal the disposition and the reason why. If requested, the agency will provide a copy of the grievance appeal procedure to the alleged perpetrator/s. Requests made after the 30-day time period will be rejected.
3. Upon filing the dispositional appeal request, the agency will date stamp the request upon receipt. The hearing shall be scheduled no later than fifteen (15) calendar days after the receipt of the request for a dispositional review. The alleged perpetrator/s will receive written notice containing the date, time and location of the dispositional appeal review hearing and the name, address, and telephone number of the person to contact in event the requestor is unable to attend the review as scheduled. If rescheduling is necessary, written notice of the new date and time shall be mailed to the requestor, and the hearing date may then occur after the fifteen (15) calendar day limit. All written notices shall be retained in the client file. At the hearing, the Chair of the review team will outline the rules as to how the review hearing will be conducted. The Chair can limit who may be present at the hearing.
4. Once the dispositional review is completed, the agency Director shall issue a written response within fifteen (15) calendar days following the hearing.
5. When the review hearing appeal decision has been issued, the agency shall promptly implement the decision. When an appeal of an agency disposition/resolution of a report/referral of child abuse or neglect results in a change in the original disposition, the

caseworker shall update the Central Registry information in accordance with OAC 5151:2-35-16.

6. In order to communicate the dispositional appeal policy to all individuals, the agency shall provide and interpreter for individuals who speak a language other than English. Consultants from Services for the Visually Impaired and Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall be provided by the agency for individuals who are visually or hearing impaired.
7. Complaints, categories 2-5 above, will be forwarded to the agency Director immediately upon receipt. Once received by the Director, the agency Director or designee, will contact the complainant within two (2) working days, to acknowledge the receipt of the complaint and inform the complainant that an agency staff member or a neutral, third-party individual will be contacting them to collect information about the complaint.
8. If the complaint is verbal, the agency Director or designee will send the complaint procedure and form to the complainant within one working day of the verbal conversation. Once received, procedures outlined in step 7 will take place.
9. Once an investigator has been assigned, the investigator will contact the complainant and interview the complainant. A written report will be prepared and sent to the agency Director detailing the results of the investigation. This report will be sent to the agency Director within 15 working days of the completion of the investigation. Since children services records are confidential, little if any information regarding the investigation will be shared with the complainant. However, the agency will endeavor to make whatever information that is allowable for release available to the complainant.

10. Time Frames

- Dispositional Appeals- To be completed within thirty (30) calendar days;
- Categories 2 and 5- To be completed within thirty (30) days calendar, when practical, but no more than forty-five (45) calendar days; and
- Categories 3 and 4- to be completed within the time frames prescribed within OAC 5101:2-33-03 and the agency adoption policy.

