

COMPLAINT POLICY		
Policy #: AA2.3	Date of Approval: 4/15/08	Date Policy is Effective: 4/15/08
Responsible Person: Director		Approved By:
Reference:		Cross Reference:

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is a standardized complaint procedure within Health & Human Services.

Policy

It is the policy of Richland County Health & Human Services that anyone wishing to make a complaint. Furthermore, all complaints will be handled in a prompt and courteous manner.

Procedure

Complaints may be presented to any staff person either in writing, orally, or by alternative method. Richland County Health & Human Services makes every attempt to resolve the complaint at the time it's presented. The staff member and appropriate manager work with the complainant to formulize a resolution.

If the complaint is not immediately resolved, the complainant is offered the formal resolution process. Shorter timeframes other than indicated may be offered in emergency situations. The complainant always has the right to choose someone to represent or assist them, such as a family member, attorney, etc. The "[Complaint Record](#)" is used internally to track the timely process of the complaint.

FORMAL COMPLAINT:

1. All complainants' requesting the formal complaint process should receive the "[Richland County Health & Human Services Complaint Procedure and Complaint Flowchart](#)" and are required to submit a "[Richland County Health & Human Services Complaint form](#)" to the Administration & Building Operations Manager within 45 working days of the alleged incident.

2. The Administration & Building Operations Manager shall determine which unit manager to forward the complaint onto within two working days. STAGE 1 - The unit manager shall determine which process to follow and/or attempt to resolve the complaint within two working days:
 - a. All complaints involving AODA, Children with Disabilities, and Behavioral Health complaints are covered under the Clients Rights Grievance Process; Birth to Three Program complaints are covered under the Birth to Three Complaints, Mediations, and Hearings Process; and the Aging & Disability Resource Center complaints are covered under the Resource Center Complaint Process.

The unit manager shall supply the complainant with the necessary paperwork related to each process.

- b. All complaints involving Richland County Health & Human Services Administration, Adult Protective Services, Child & Youth Services Unit, Economic Support Unit (except for state appeals), or Public Health shall follow the steps listed below.
3. STAGE 2 – If the complaint is not resolved, the complainant or unit manager shall forward the complaint onto the Administration & Building Operations Manager. The Administration & Building Operations Manager shall investigate the facts and resolve the dispute or report the findings within 30 days from receipt of the complaint form to the complainant and the unit manager. The Administration & Building Operations Manager may negotiate a mutually acceptable plan and/or implement recommendations.
4. STAGE 3 – If the complaint is not resolved, the complainant or unit manager has 14 days from receipt of the Administration & Building Operations Manager’s report to request the Director conduct an administrative review. The Director will issue a written decision within 30 days.

In the case of a complaint against the Director, stage 3 would be revised and the Business & Financial Services Manager would conduct the administrative review of the Administration & Building Operations Manager’s report and issue a written decision within 30 days.

5. STAGE 4 – If the complaint is not resolved at this point, the complainant has 14 days from receipt of the administrative review to appeal the Director’s written decision to the Chairperson of the Richland County Health & Human Services Board. The Health & Human Services Board Chairperson will either hold a hearing or conduct an investigation and then issue a written decision with 30 days.
6. An alternate staff designee may be assigned in any of the procedures listed above in the case of a conflict of interest or bias.
7. Shorter timeframes other than indicated may be offered in emergency situations. The timeframes may be extended if agreed to by the complainant.

History

4/15/2008 – Policy revisited by Complaint Workgroup. One complaint form created, eliminated informal complaint stage, and revised formal stages. Clients Rights Specialist replaced with Office Supervisor.

9/6/12 Removed mention of CMO/LTS.

4/1/18 Replaced Office Supervisor with Administrative Supervisor.

9/16/2020 Administrative Supervisor changed to Administration & Building Operations Manager and Manager of Operations changed to Business & Financial Services Manager.

Annual Review Dates

2/28/07; 3/16/07; 9/6/12; 4/1/18, 10/29/2018; 9/16/2020