



DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
Olympia, Washington

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TITLE: CLIENT GRIEVANCES POLICY 5.03

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Authority: 42 CFR 483.10, 483.420 (a)  
WAC 388-825-120  
RCW 71A.10.050  
DSHS Administrative Policy 8.01

**BACKGROUND**

Any client of the Division of Development Disabilities (DDD), or parent or guardian of a client, or any person acting on behalf of a client, has the right to make a complaint or to initiate a grievance on conditions, services, or treatment by staff or others.

**PURPOSE**

This policy provides a process for presenting concerns or complaints to the administration pertaining to the care, treatment, services, or the lack of treatment or services available for clients served by DDD. This policy will facilitate timely and effective responses to complaints that client, parents, guardians or others acting on behalf of the client have regarding care and treatment provided.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to clients served by the Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs), by State Operated Living Alternatives (SOLAs), and by Field Services Offices.

**POLICY**

The RHCs, SOLAs, and Field Services Offices shall ensure prompt action is taken to resolve complaints regarding services or staff by a client, parent or guardian, or other person acting on behalf of a client. RHCs, SOLAs, and Field Services shall:

- A. Establish appropriate procedures for responding to complaints and grievances;

- B. Provide information to clients regarding their right to submit grievances;
- C. Provide information to clients on the different levels of the grievance process, including time frames for each level;
- D. Inform clients of their right to advocacy and how to contact advocacy organizations; and
- E. Assist clients in processing grievances.

### **PROCEDURES**

- A. Standard Procedures for RHC
  - 1. A client may file an oral or written complaint or grievance with the Program Area Team (PAT) Director or social worker to whom the client is assigned. However, effort should be made to resolve the complaint informally prior to initiating the grievance process. A client filing a grievance without the assistance of parents or guardians shall receive assistance from staff at all levels of the process.
  - 2. The assigned social worker shall meet with the complainant, determine the significance of the grievance and report to the next line administrator (PAT Director or Superintendent) within seven (7) days.
  - 3. The PAT Director or Superintendent shall respond with the administrative resolution to the complainant, the Client Advocacy Committee and/or the Human Rights Committee within seven (7) days.
  - 4. The RHC Superintendent's decision is final.
- B. Standard Procedures for Field Services and SOLA
  - 1. The Field Services staff shall request the complainant to file the grievance in writing. If the complaint is not in writing, the person receiving it will document the concerns. A grievance may be against a DDD contractor, SOLA, or against a Field Services Office.
  - 2. Complaints of client abuse shall be immediately referred to the applicable protective services agency for action, as directed in DDD Policy 12.01, Incident Management.

3. The Field Services Administrator or designee shall gather information regarding the circumstances of the grievance to determine need for further action.
4. If the grievance is against a DDD contractor or SOLA, the contractor or SOLA shall be required to provide a written response, and propose any corrective action necessary.
5. Within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the response to a grievance, the Field Services Administrator or designee shall review the response and approve any necessary corrective action;
6. The Field Services Administrator shall place into the client case record a written summary describing what action was taken.
7. DDD shall contact the originator of the grievance to confirm that an appropriate resolution has been reached.

**SUPERSESSION**

Division Policy 5.03  
Issued October 29, 1993

Division Policy Directive: 330.2  
Issued November, 1986

Division Policy Directive: 537  
Issued December, 1982

Approved:     /s/ Timothy R. Brown      
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Date:     4/13/2000