



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
**JUVENILE JUSTICE & REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION**  
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July 21, 2016

**TO:** JR Policy Holders

**FROM:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Clayton".

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John Clayton, Assistant Secretary  
Rehabilitation Administration

**SUBJECT** For Distribution: JR Policy 1.70, *Responding to External Customer Complaints*

The JR Policy Committee has completed the scheduled sunset review of Policy 1.70, *Responding to External Customer Complaints*. Policy 1.70 did not have any updates from the existing version released in 2014. This policy does not apply to complaints from youth or families, and is required by DSHS Administrative Policy 8.11.

The attached policy summary provides an overview of the policy.

This policy has a scheduled effective date of July 28, 2016. If you have questions regarding the policy, please contact JR's policy staff at [jrapolicy@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:jrapolicy@dshs.wa.gov).

Attachment: Policy 1.70

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SERVICES  
REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION  
JUVENILE REHABILITATION

**Policy 1.70– Responding to External Customer Complaints**  
*Summary*

- Establishes expectations for responding to and resolving external customer complaints in accordance with DSHS Administrative Policy

**Background:**

The existing policy was reviewed for the two-year sunset review.

**Policy Summary**

The policy has been revised to clarify the process for responding to external customer complaints in accordance with DSHS Administrative Policy. External customers do not include JR Youth or family members, who have different avenues for reaching JR with concerns. JR maintains a toll-free number to receive customer complaints from across the state. Staff will forward complaints to the appropriate area for resolution. Complaints regarding sexual abuse or sexual harassment will be directed to the End Harm toll free number in accordance with PREA requirements. External customer complaints must be tracked and responded to within specific timelines.

**Changes from Current Practice**

- There are no changes to current practice or timelines.
- The form has been updated.

Training Required: No

*Policy Effective Date: July 28, 2016*

*Staff are responsible for reading and understanding the information contained in the full policy.  
Review of this summary is not sufficient for full understanding.*

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SERVICES  
REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION  
JUVENILE REHABILITATION

**POLICY 1.70 RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL CUSTOMER  
COMPLAINTS**

**Policy Committee Chair**

Don Mead, Ed. D.  
Superintendent, Echo Glen  
Juvenile Rehabilitation

**Approved**



John Clayton, Assistant Secretary  
Rehabilitation Administration  
7/21/2016

**Authorizing Sources**

RCW 7.05.410  
DSHS Administrative Policy 8.11  
Governor's Executive Order 03-01

**Information Contact**

Jennifer Zipoy, Policy & Planning Administrator  
Juvenile Rehabilitation  
[jrapolicy@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:jrapolicy@dshs.wa.gov), Ph: 360-902-8092

**Effective Date**

7/28/2016

**Sunset Review Date**

7/28/2020

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**I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

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This document establishes policy for responding to and resolving external customer complaints as mandated by DSHS Administrative Policy 8.11.

All staff, contractors, volunteers, and interns working in the Division of Institution Programs, Division of Community Programs and Parole, and the Division of Operations and Support Services are responsible for reviewing and complying with JR policies.

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**II. POLICY**

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- 1. JR staff will respond to external customer complaints regarding service delivery.**
- 2. JR community facilities and regional offices will provide local contact information for customer complaints. JR also provides a toll-free number.**
  - 2.1. The toll-free number primarily serves employers and school personnel involved in minimum security classification youth programs or community members in close proximity to minimum security facilities.
  - 2.2. The toll-free number may be used by other external customers when they are uncertain of where to call or need to contact JR.
  - 2.3. In response to external customer complaints, JR staff answering the toll-free number will document and forward the information to the appropriate office or facility for response. JR

**Policy 1.70, Responding to External Customer Complaints 7/28/2016**

staff will utilize the Complaint Resolution and Response Form (DSHS form 20-263) when appropriate.

- 2.4. If the external customer requests confidential information, the provisions of Policy 1.40, *Maintaining Confidentiality of Records*, must be followed.
- 2.5. External customer complaints will be tracked by the receiving facility or office as required.
- 3. Complaints related to sexual abuse and sexual harassment in JR facilities should be directed to 1-866-END-HARM.**
- 4. Appointing authorities will have a system for responding to external complaints related to service delivery.**
- 5. Appointing authorities will designate a contact for receiving external complaints.**
  - 5.1. Staff will be informed who the contact is so they can forward external complaints about service delivery to the designee.
  - 5.2. The designee will acknowledge the customer's complaint by informing the customer that the complaint has been received and the date they can expect a response.
  - 5.3. The designee may forward complaints to the next level in the chain of command or to another individual equipped to respond to the specific complaint.
- 6. Service delivery complaints must be recorded and tracked.**
  - 6.1. Each office or facility must have a complaint tracking system. This requirement can be met through the use of the Complaint Resolution and Response Form (DSHS form 20-263).
- 7. JR staff will communicate in a courteous and respectful manner with customers making an external complaint.**
- 8. JR staff may redirect or discontinue communication with a customer who is being verbally abusive or threatening. This will be documented and communicated using the office or facility complaint tracking system.**
- 9. JR staff must follow DSHS Administrative Policy 8.11, *Complaint Resolution and Response Standards*, when they are responding to complaints.**
  - 9.1. Upon receiving in-person or telephone complaints, JR staff will acknowledge or respond within one business day to written or recorded messages.
  - 9.2. Upon receiving written complaints (letters, e-mails, etc.), JR staff will respond within seven business days. If the response will take longer than seven business days, interim contact will be made with the customer and a reasonable date of response given.
- 10. External customer complaints should be resolved at the lowest level possible. If an external customer complaint is not resolved, it must be communicated to the next level in the chain of command until such time the complaint is resolved. Final resolution within JR lies with the Assistant Secretary or designee.**

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**11. This policy does not replace or supersede:**

- 11.1. Any procedure developed to implement federal law, state law, or Washington Administrative Code (WAC) requirements, such as procedures for responding to abuse allegations.
- 11.2. DSHS Administrative Policy 18.69, *Delegation of Authority for Civil Rights Complaint Investigations*, for customer allegations of civil rights discrimination.
- 11.3. DSHS Administrative Policy 5.02, *Public Disclosure of and Access to DSHS Records*, for responding to public disclosure requests.

Policy 1.70, **Responding to External Customer Complaints 7/28/2016**

**III. DEFINITIONS**

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**Acknowledge:** Communicating with and informing the customer that their complaint has been received and a date by which a response can be expected.

**Complaints:** A customer’s expression of dissatisfaction with JR or DSHS service delivery where the customer clearly requests a response or resolution.

**Contact:** Specific people designated by an appointing authority to receive and track external complaints about service delivery.

**External Customer:** An individual who contacts administration, facility, or office with a complaint. External customers may include advocates, concerned citizens, elected officials, and businesses. External customers do not include JR Youth (use Policy 2.10, *Handling Youth Complaints*) or family members. When complaints or issues are raised during meetings or contacts that are part of the rehabilitative process, a response is required, however the tracking and procedural requirements specified in this policy do not apply.

**Respond:** To answer a question or complaint to the best of one’s ability.

**Service Delivery:** Performance of job duties or interaction as a DSHS/JR employee or contracted provider involving direct delivery of goods, services, or information to customers.

**Toll-free Number:** The telephone number maintained by JR for the public to report violations of youth placed in JR community facilities. This number is also designated as one way in which the public can voice complaints about issues, including service delivery. The current toll-free number is **1-800-933-9122** and is maintained by Oakridge Community Facility.

**IV. RELATED JR POLICIES**

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Policy 2.10 – Handling Youth Complaints

Policy 1.40 - Maintaining Confidentiality of Records

**V. FORMS AND DOCUMENTS**

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<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Available In ACT</b>	<b>Link to Paper form</b>
Complaint Resolution and Response Form		DSHS form 20-263

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