



Applies to: All Staff

PURPOSE SUMMARY

Effective Date: 09/05/2023
Revision Date: 10/10/2013,
9/21/2017
Next Review Date: 09/05/2028

Allen County Children Services (ACCS) is mandated by the Ohio Revised Code to provide specific services to the community, such as emergency services, protective in-home services, emergency shelter, protective services, child placement services, adoption services, supplementary services and care, and administrative and supportive services. Allen County Children Services' mission is to protect children by supporting and strengthening families in partnership with the community.

ACCS is committed to ensuring the rights of any families and children served by our agency. ACCS strongly encourages anyone with concerns and/or complaints about the agency and its services to discuss them with the caseworker involved, his/her supervisor and program administrator. If this method does not resolve the issues, the agency offers the following formal Complaint Review Policy to those eligible.

It is the intent of this complaint review policy to ensure that a procedure is in place to receive, review, and resolve the following:

- 1) Complaint Reviews- Complaints concerning the provision of services from parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster caregivers, kinship caretakers, applicants or providers of approved adult-supervised living arrangements, and youth
- 2) Report Disposition Appeals-Appeals by alleged perpetrators who disagree with this agency's disposition of a report of child abuse or neglect

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 ACCS Foster Care/Adoption Manual 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 ACCS 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.

STANDARDS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

PROCEDURES:

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. **Concerns/Complaints regarding Agency Service Provision or Report Disposition**



- a. Eligible persons who have a concern/complaint regarding the Agency's service provision or report dispositions should initially express his/her concern to the caseworker, supervisor, and program administrator.
- b. If, after discussion (with caseworker, supervisor and program administrator), the issue is not resolved at this point, the staff member shall offer to provide a copy of this Complaint Review Policy, including Complaint Review Form, so that the complainant is aware of the option of formally requesting a review.

2. Confidentiality will not be compromised in any part of the grievance review policy or procedures.

3. Copies of ACCS Complaint Review Policy

- a. Upon request, ACCS will provide written copies of this Agency's Complaint Review Policy to an individual within three working days from the date of the request. The Complaint Review Policy is also available online on the ACCS website.
- b. All complaint/review policies and their respective forms are available by contacting:
 - i. **Human Resources Coordinator**
Allen County Children Services
123 West Spring Street
Lima, Ohio 45801
(419) 227-8590

4. Hearing, Visually Impaired or LEP Process

- a. The Agency will make special arrangements at the request of the party member for those with hearing or visually impaired or Limited English Proficiency.

B. ELIGIBLE PARTIES

1. COMPLAINT REVIEWS- The following individuals who have a concern/complaint regarding the provision of services are eligible for the review process:

- a. Parents
- b. Custodians
- c. Legal Guardians
- d. Foster Caregivers
- e. Kinship Caregivers
- f. Applicants or Providers of Approved Adult-Supervised Living Arrangements
- g. Children/Youth

2. REPORT DISPOSITION APPEALS

- a. Alleged perpetrators who disagree with the report disposition/resolution of child abuse or neglect.
- b. Alleged perpetrators must file their appeal within 30 days of the disposition or knowledge of the disposition.
- c. ACCS provides written notice initially to the alleged perpetrator of his/her right to appeal the report disposition and the method for the appeal per OAC 5101:2:36-03.



C. REQUESTING A FORMAL REVIEW

1. **Complaint Review Form** – A written statement (Complaint Review Form), signed by the complainant, must be submitted to Human Resources Coordinator, Allen County Children Services, 123 West Spring Street, Lima, Ohio 45801.
2. **The Complaint Review Form** must state the facts which the interested person believes provides a basis for his/her objection to the Agency action.
3. **Timeframes**- The Complainant shall return the completed copy of the Complaint Review form and any other pertinent information within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the Complaint Review Policy.

D. COMPLAINT REQUEST REVIEW

1. The Complaint Review Form will be reviewed by the Executive Director or designee
 - a. Upon receipt of the completed form, the Human Resources Coordinator will log and notify the Executive Director.
 - b. Should the request be deemed ineligible, the Human Resources Coordinator will provide written notification to the appellant of the denial and reasoning for such denial.
 - c. Should the request be deemed eligible, the Executive Director will assign an agency representative that has not been involved in the case to review the concern.

E. DENIAL OF COMPLAINT REVIEW OR APPEAL OF THE DISPOSITION-

No review will be granted under certain circumstances including but not limited to the following:

1. Ineligible parties
2. Removal of a child placed voluntarily by a parent or guardian.
3. Removal of a child from foster care for direct placement into an adoptive home. (Applies only to birth parents when Agency has permanent custody.)
4. Any issue for which a court review is available pursuant to statute and Administrative Code Rules (e.g. SAR).
5. Requests for a review that is beyond 30 days of the disposition or knowledge of the disposition.
6. Requests for a review on provision of services that is beyond 30 days of the event or learning of the event.
7. The grievance policy review procedure cannot be used to appeal decisions rendered by a court or services in a court ordered case plan but rather agency decisions.

F. CONDUCTING THE REVIEW/TIMEFRAMES OF THE REVIEW

1. The Complaint Review form and any other pertinent information must be received by this agency within fifteen (15) days following receipt of the notice of the Grievance Review Policy.
2. Within twelve (12) working days of the receipt of the completed Grievance Review form, the assigned agency representative, after gathering information through a case record review as well as when applicable interviews with agency staff, the complainant, and other involved individuals, will submit a report to the Executive Director. If further information is needed by the Executive Director, the assigned agency representative will gather the additional information. If Executive Director feels further investigation is warranted, they will re-assign to collect additional information.
3. The Executive Director will provide a response to the complainant within twelve (12) working days of receipt of the report from the assigned agency representative. If the complainant disagrees with the decision, a



meeting may be scheduled with the Executive Director to further discuss the complainant's concerns. This meeting will be scheduled one time for good cause on request of the complainant.

G. FINDINGS


1. The decision of ACCS regarding the complaint review or report disposition appeal is final and is not subject to a State hearing.
2. The report disposition shall be changed if any of the following occur:
 - a. The Report Disposition was made in error
 - b. The appellant did not engage in conduct constituting child abuse or neglect as defined as 2151.03 and 2151.031 of the ORC.
 - c. The report disposition is not supported by the totality of the information presented by the appellant, ACCS, or contained in the case record.
3. The agency representative will document in SACWIS (case record) the complaint or the report disposition appeal, the review process and findings of the complaint review or the report disposition review.
4. The agency representative will update SACWIS information as needed.
5. The agency representative will notify the principals of the report disposition in writing as to the revised report disposition.
6. ACCS will maintain all documents submitted or reviewed during the complaint review hearing process or report disposition appeal hearing process in the case record.
7. Individuals also have the option of contacting the Help Line of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to address their concerns regarding the agency. This resource may be contacted by phone at 1-866-886-3537 Option 4. Individuals, families or youth who have already reached out to the agency and believe the issue is still not resolved may file a complaint with the Ohio Youth and Family Ombudsmen by calling 1-877-OH-YOUTH.
8. The Ombudsmen does not have the authority to change the case disposition.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARD AND OAC SUPPORT

OAC: 5101:2-33-20

ASSOCIATED INFORMATION AND FORMS

1. ACCS Complaint Review Form
2. SACWIS Appeal disposition notification

Policy Approved: 09-05-2023	 Sarah N. Newland, JD Executive Director Allen County Children Services
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ACCS Complaint Form

This form is designed to initiate a complaint or an appeal of an investigative finding. Upon completion, please direct this form to:

Please Select One:

- Dispositional Appeal
- Complaint

Allen County Children Services
123 West Spring Street, Lima, Ohio 45801
419-227-8590 (office) 419-229-2296 (fax)
allen-pcsa-humanresources@jfs.ohio.gov

Name:	Telephone:	Date:	
Address:	City:	State:	Zip:

Many times, your concerns or problems relating to agency services, or the case resolution/disposition can be settled promptly and simply by discussing them with the assigned caseworker. We encourage you to do this first. If you do not get a satisfactory answer by talking with the caseworker, you should consult with the caseworker's supervisor and if you continue to have concerns, speak with the Program Administrator.

Who have you contacted regarding your concerns? (Please check and indicate date.)

- 1. Caseworker: _____ Date: _____
- 2. Supervisor: _____ Date: _____
- 3. Program Administrator: _____ Date: _____

Please state the basis for your complaint or appeal below. Additional pages may be attached to this form.

*Continued on page two.

*Continued from page one.

Note: Your signature attests to the fact that all statements made in the document are truthful.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*** The Complaint Form plus all pertinent information must be returned to ACCS within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the Complaint form.**