



Grievance Policy & Procedure

Policy

North Homes Children and Family Services (NHCFS) will respond to all grievances in a fair and efficient manner for all parties involved. There will be no adverse action or retaliation taken against a client, prospective client, or a client's authorized representative as a result of filing a complaint or grievance, regardless of outcome.

Procedure

NHCFS has developed a grievance procedure that allows a client or prospective client, their family/guardian, legal representative, or concerned person in the individual's life to express concern and/or file a formal grievance about any aspect of their experience participating in an agency program.

Staff verbally explain the grievance procedure to the individual at service initiation, annually, and upon request; a copy is provided to the individual and their legal guardian/representative (when applicable) at service initiation and annually. Staff will not attempt to influence an individual's statement about the program/service in the grievance document or during an investigation resulting from the grievance, if applicable. Staff will assist the individual in filing a grievance, if needed or requested.

Informal Grievance Resolution

It is the belief of NHCFS that the majority of issues with staff and/or service delivery are most effectively resolved by talking directly to the staff involved. This is the first step in healthy conflict resolution. Individuals and legal representatives are encouraged to address concerns verbally with staff involved prior to filing a formal grievance.

If the individual does not feel comfortable speaking directly with the staff involved, they may speak to the appropriate Clinical Director or Program Director; or, Quality Assurance (QA) Director or QA Specialist. They may also request to speak to the QA Director to express concerns regarding agency policies or procedures.

If an attempt at informal resolution is not successful, or if the individual does not feel comfortable addressing the concern verbally, they are directed to follow the steps for a formal resolution of a grievance.

Formal Grievance Resolution

It is important that the grievance process is handled in an accepting and non-intimidating environment with appropriate and objective personnel. If verbal resolution is not satisfactory and the individual wishes to file a formal grievance, the steps to take are as follows:

1. The individual must submit their formal grievance in writing. The agency *Grievance Form* will be provided to upon request and staff will help in completing the paperwork, if needed. If the individual is particularly vulnerable or has difficulty expressing their grievance in writing, they may verbally file it with a staff member and the staff member will document on the grievance form.

2. Upon receipt of the written grievance, the agency has three (3) business days to respond to the grievance; the individual filing the grievance will receive a written response within this time frame. The grievance is given to the appropriate Clinical Director or Program Director (or designee) to begin attempts at resolution. If a satisfactory resolution is reached, no further action is required. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the grievance goes to the QA Director (or designee).
3. The QA Director (or designee) has seven (7) business days from receipt of the grievance to respond and begin attempts at resolution; the individual filing the grievance will receive a written response within this time frame. If a satisfactory resolution is reached, no further action is required. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the grievance goes to the Chief Operations Officer (COO) or Compliance Officer.
4. The COO or Compliance Officer has ten (10) business days from receipt of the grievance to respond and begin attempts at resolution; the individual filing the grievance will receive a written response within this time frame. If a satisfactory resolution is reached, no further action is required. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the grievance goes to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
5. The CEO has fifteen (15) business days from receipt of the grievance to respond and begin attempts at resolution; the individual filing the grievance will receive a written response within this time frame. If a satisfactory resolution is reached, no further action is required. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the individual will be directed to the appropriate Licensing Board or other external entity (i.e. Minnesota Department of Human Services).

Responses and steps taken are documented on the original grievance form by all staff who reviewed the grievance. An individual who reports a grievance will not be subject to adverse action by NHCFS as a result of filing the grievance. A grievance may be submitted to the highest level of authority, NHCFS Board of Directors, at the request of the individual filing the grievance; this request will be facilitated by the QA Director.

After a grievance is filed and resolved, QA staff will document the grievance and the resulting action (including investigation findings, if applicable) taken by the agency. A copy of the grievance is kept on file for at least five years or two licensing/certification periods, whichever is longer.

LICENSING BOARDS AND STATE OFFICES

Minnesota Department of Human Services – Licensing Division

PO Box 64242

St. Paul, MN 55164-0242

Phone: (651) 431-6500

Fax: (651) 431-7673

Licensing Complaints and Maltreatment Intake: Phone: (651) 431-6600

The Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

121 7th Place East

Suite 420 Metro Square Building

St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2117

Phone: (651) 757-1800 or (800) 657-3506

Beltrami: (218) 828-2366 Itasca, St. Louis, Carlton: (218) 279-2526

<https://mn.gov/omhdd>

Minnesota Board of Behavioral Health & Therapy

2829 University Ave SE, Suite 210

Minneapolis, MN 55414

Phone: (651) 548-2177

Fax: (651) 617-2187

bbht.board@state.mn.us

Minnesota Board of Psychology

Phone: (612) 617-2230

<https://mn.gov/boards/psychology/public/complaints>

Minnesota Board of Social Work

2829 University Ave SE, Suite #340

Minneapolis, MN 55414

Phone: (612) 617-2100; (888) 234-1320

Fax: (612) 617-2103

<https://mn.gov/boards/social-work/>

Minnesota Board of Marriage and Family

2829 University Ave SE, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55414

Phone: (612) 617-2220

Fax: (612) 617-2221

<https://mn.gov/boards/marriage-and-family/>

