

Child and Family Services Policy Manual: Constituent Complaint Complaints

Philosophy: Child and Family Services Division is accountable for assuring that constituent concerns and/or complaints are addressed. Constituent complaints may be obtained through various avenues; however, it is the intent of Child and Family Services Division to have consistency and efficiency in the resolution process, no matter how the information is obtained. Child and Family Services Division commits to a timely, reflective and responsive approach in attempts to resolve complaints.

CFSD recognizes the following key aspects in complaint resolution:

1. Complaints provide information and create opportunity to improve practice.
2. Complaints can be resolved at the most immediate and local level.
3. Being responsive and reflective about complaints applies to all CFSD staff.
4. Mutual respect promotes communication and resolution.
5. Resolution cannot always be achieved.

Process: Child and Family Services Division receives complaints through multiple and varied avenues. The most common avenues include:

- Governors Advocate Office
- DPHHS Director's Office
- DPHHS-CFSD Division Administrator's Office
- CFSD Complaint Resolution Process (On-line)
- DOJ Ombudsman

Complaints received through any of these avenues have a **specific set of required response timelines and information reporting needs. These standards are set by the office receiving** the complaint and require CFSD to respond within the expected timeline and in the required formatted standards.

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Complaints received by the Division may be sent directly to the Regional Administrator and the Field Services Manager for coordination of resolution steps and tracking purposes.

Operating Principles:

Operating principles will be applied to each complaint in an effort to prioritize, information gather, and resolve the complaint. The Field Services Manager and/or the Regional Administrator will identify the person responsible for each needed action, timelines for information gathering and the steps needed in gathering the information in response to the following:

Note: Complaints that include safety concerns will have an immediate response and the Regional Administrator/Bureau Chief will be notified of the complaint upon receipt (maximum of 24 hours).

Constituent contact from the Field Services Manager (or a designee) by phone, email or in person to confirm receipt of the complaint information will not exceed 48 hours.

- A desk review of the report and/or case records will be completed to identify needed steps.
- The CPS and/or CPS Supervisor, Child Welfare Manager and Regional Administrator will be contacted to gather further information.
 - If necessary, further contacts may also include Permanency Planning Specialist, Family Group Decision Making Coordinators; County Attorney, etc. to assist in information gathering that will lend to resolution outcomes.
- A consultation will be set to identify and document the resolution steps for each member involved in the complaint process.
 - This documentation will occur on the Case Consultation/Constituent Complaint

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Activity Form (CFS-451) completed by the
Field Services Manager or designee.

- All complaints will be tracked and findings documented to include systems issues, personnel issues, policy issues, and/or practice issues.
 - Findings and recommendations will be documented and made available to the staff involved in the case.
- A consultation will be set to identify and document the resolution steps for each member involved in the complaint process.

Prevention Steps For Consideration:

Complaints are commonly resolved at the most immediate level through prompt contact and information involvement with the constituent. This is best accomplished by and with the CPS and CPSS whenever possible. When this fails to resolve the complaint, the Child Welfare Manager is available in each region to coordinate and facilitate meetings in an effort to resolve the complaint.

Complaint Prevention Considerations:

1. Return calls within 48 hours.
2. Update your voice message to include your supervisors direct line number for contact in your absences.
3. Set aside protected time each week to return calls, respond to emails and meet with clients.
4. Follow-up to significant case decisions in writing.
5. Utilization of a family centered practice approach.

Child Welfare Managers Role:

Each CWM is specifically charged with the task of helping in the complaint resolution process in their assigned region. CWMs will be directed either through the RA or the FSM to manage the lead on the complaint received. All complaints will be tracked and findings documented to include systems issues, personnel issues, policy issues, and/or practice issues.

CFSD Complaint

If, while gathering information from the constituent the

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Resolution Process:	constituent wishes to file a formal complaint he/she will be referred immediately to the CFSD Complaint Resolution process. This will occur by either sending them a copy of the Complaint Resolution forms or referring them to the hyperlink which is on the CFSD website. If in fact the constituent submits a formal complaint the process lined out in the Child and Family Services Complaint Resolution Process will occur.
Desired Outcome:	CFSD will work in good faith to resolve constituent complaints by examining the information. Practices, policies, procedures and law will be reviewed in context of the complaint. CFSD strives to improve the delivery of services to the children and families and will utilize gained understanding through the complaint process in improving practice. Reports and findings regarding constituent complaints will be reviewed at CFSD Management Team meetings and used to identify needed development supports.