

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
(CCDCFS)
Policy Statement**

Policy Chapter: Management, Public Relations
Policy Number: 10.06.10
Policy Name: Responding to Concerns

Original Effective Date: 05/06/2008
Revision Date(s): 01/01/2014
Current Revision Date: 01/01/2014
Approved By: Patricia L. Rideout

PURPOSE: To establish a process by which clients, patrons and Division stakeholders can report concerns regarding Division staff, services, or policies and receive a response.

SCOPE: This policy applies to the Community Relations Unit and all staff involved with anyone wishing to report a concern regarding Division performance.

POLICY

The Community Relations Unit creates and supports the means and processes necessary by which concerns are readily received, reviewed, and responded to in a professional and timely manner.

A. Receiving Concerns

1. The Community Relations Unit receives concerns from any party with an interest in the Division, its representatives, or the work and services provided, including but not limited to:
 - a. Division and County Staff
 - b. Family members
 - Case members reporting concerns regarding open cases are encouraged to contact the primary worker assigned to the case and the appropriate supervisory staff.
 - c. Providers
 - d. Contractors
 - e. Legal representatives and Guardians Ad Litem
 - f. Community Members

2. The Community Relations Unit receives concerns by the most feasible and practical means, including but not limited to:
 - a. Email to CustomerServiceCCDCFS@odjfs.state.oh.us or directly to a Community Relations Program Officer

- b. The Customer Care Line at (216) 432-CARE (2272) or direct call to Community Relations Program Officer
- c. Walk-ins to 3955 Euclid Avenue
- d. Written correspondence faxed to (216)432-5047 or mailed to Community Relations Unit, room 112 West, 3955 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115

B. Responding to Informal Concerns

1. Informal concerns are generally issues that are readily addressed through information, clarification, or re-direction to another agency or department. In general, informal concerns are addressed as follows:
 - a. All concerns are entered into the RESPOND system within two business days of the receipt of the concern.
 - b. Concerns are communicated to the appropriate workers by the Community Relations Program Officer within two business days following the receipt of the concern.
 - c. The response to the concern can be completed by either the assigned Community Relations Program Officer or other involved staff. Any disputes about who will respond to the concern will be managed by the respective supervisors.
 - d. The response to the concern may occur via a phone call, e-mail, or written response.
 - e. The response is completed within 10 business days of the receipt of the concern.
 - f. All resolutions are documented in Respond by the assigned Community Relations Program Officer.

2. Formal concerns are generally issues that require supervisory review, decisions, or further agency action. Formal concerns are addressed as follows:
 - a. All concerns are entered into the RESPOND system within two business days of the receipt of the concern.
 - b. Concerns are documented on the Formal Concerns Form and forwarded to the supervisor, senior supervisor, and deputy of the primary worker involved in the matter within 2 business days of the receipt of the concern.
 - c. Attempts to contact parties presenting the concern are made within two business days of receipt of the concern by the assigned Community Relations Program Officer.
 - d. A correspondence from Community Relations reiterating the issues, describing steps to be taken to address the issue, and the expected time frame for the response will be sent within 2 business days after contact is made with the person presenting the concern.
 - e. The response to the concern is prepared by any combination of the supervisory chain of command.

- f. The response is signed by the senior supervisor, deputy, and Division administrator (signed by the administrator only when the original concern was directed to the administrator).
 - g. Completed responses, including signatures, are forwarded to Community Relations, by the date indicated on the Formal Concern Form.
 - h. Community Relations staff follows up with appropriate staff on delayed responses.
 - i. Steps to resolve concerns are completed and documented in RESPOND by the assigned Community Relations Program Officer within 10 business days of the date of the assignment.
 - j. When additional time is needed or there is a delay in resolving a concern, the Community Relations Program Officers tracks and reports out on pending concerns weekly to their supervisor. When necessary, additional steps are taken by management to identify and resolve barriers to responding timely to concerns.
3. All correspondence to case members is appropriately documented in the case record.
 4. Third parties reporting concerns receive written follow-up, when possible, without disclosing confidential information.
 5. All responses to concerns addressed to the Division administrator receive a response signed-off by the administrator and a copy of the response is provided.
 6. Upon resolution and follow-up, RESPOND is updated and the matter is considered closed.
 7. Repeat Issues
 - a. Upon the third occasion of a reported concern from the same party regarding the same or similar issue a “mini-conference” will be held.
 - b. The mini-conference is attended by workers and supervisory staff who are familiar and/or involved in the matter.
 - c. All prior-reported concerns and correspondence are presented and discussed and the group reaches final consensus on the reply to the reporting party.
 - d. Final reply is issued to the reporting party.
 - e. This reply will be re-issued upon subsequent reports by the same party regarding the same or similar issue.

RELATED FORM:

Formal Concerns Form