

# TUSCARAWAS COUNTY JOB & FAMILY SERVICES GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR CLIENTS

## POLICY

1. A panel of management-level staff reviews the following types of grievances from parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster caregivers, foster caregiver applicants, kinship caregivers, adoptive applicants, adoptive parents and children:
  - complaints regarding the provision of agency services;
  - appeals by alleged perpetrators regarding the disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect investigated by the agency;
  - appeals by adoptive parents regarding approval, denial, suspension, or termination of State Adoption Maintenance Subsidy (SAMS).
  
2. Complaints that are not processed through this Grievance Procedure are:
  - matters decided by the courts, i.e., custody, visitation, support;
  - complaints regarding the decision of the agency to accept or not accept a referral for investigation;
  - complaints by a parent regarding the disposition of a case when all of the allegations concern the other parent;
  - complaints directed at the laws which establish program eligibility criteria, benefit amounts or this agency's functions should be directed to federal and/or state senators and representatives;
  - complaints directed at state policies, rules, and regulations determining the manner in which federal and state laws are to be interpreted and implemented. These complaints should be directed to:
    - Ohio Department of Job & Family Services
    - Customer Access Line, 1-866-635-3748;
  - complaints regarding discriminatory acts, policies or practices pertaining to the foster care and adoption process that involve race, color, or national origin. These shall be referred to the agency Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) Monitor and handled per Rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Ohio Administrative Code;
  - adoptive families who believe an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely on the basis of geographic location or who want to appeal the decision regarding their nonrecurring adoption application. These shall be referred to an agency adoption specialist to request a state hearing;
  - complaints regarding public assistance adverse actions. These should be directed to the state hearing and county conference process as described in the notice of adverse action;
  - complaints regarding the administering of the Ohio Works First (OWF) Program. These will be directed to the agency's OWF ombudsperson.

## PROCEDURE

Grievances are presented in the following manner:

- Step 1:** Within thirty (30) calendar days of the alleged action, the grievant must try to resolve the issue by discussing his/her complaint with the worker's immediate supervisor.
- Step 2:** If the grievant is not satisfied with the resolution in Step 1, the grievant may request a grievance review within fourteen (14) days of the supervisor's response. The request for

a grievance review must be put in writing on agency form TCJFS 12, Request For A Grievance Review. The TCJFS 12 form may either be accessed by obtaining a copy from the agency's website, [www.TCJFS.org](http://www.TCJFS.org), or the client may request one from the agency Director's office, in which case it will be sent along with a list of legislators (JFS 142 form) within three (3) calendar days. The completed TCJFS 12 must be returned to the agency, Attention Director, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the supervisory response in Step 1.

**Step 3:** Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving a completed Request for a Grievance Review (TCJFS 12), a two-stage review is held with a panel of three management-level staff. This review includes (1) a meeting with the grievant, and (2) an interview with the worker and/or supervisor of the case to address the grievant's issues.

Members of the review panel cannot be involved in any other stage of the case. When the grievant chooses to bring a legal representative to this meeting, the agency's legal counsel will be present to represent the agency.

If the grievant is an adoptive applicant, a prospective adoptive family, or an adoptive family, this review will include a face-to-face meeting with the grievant, the adoptive family's caseworker, the adoption services supervisor, and the agency Director or his/her designee.

**Step 4:** Within fifteen (15) calendar days of the review, a written response from the panel will be mailed to the grievant. Copies of the Request for a Grievance Review and the panel's written response will be filed in the grievant's case record and given to the Director and staff counsel.

If the verbal or written response from this Procedure changes a disposition/resolution, the State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) information will be changed accordingly.

**The failure of a grievant to adhere to the timelines outlined in this policy will result in the agency declining to review the grievance.**

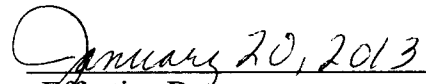
---

**Note to persons who are hearing or visually impaired or have limited English proficiency:** This agency will provide an appropriate interpreter to communicate this Policy and Procedure to you and accompany you through its steps if you need assistance.

---

Information about each grievance will be logged and reviewed by the agency's Continuous Quality Improvement Committee on a quarterly basis.

  
Michelle Tope, Director

  
Effective Date