

# Community Complaint Procedure

# COMMUNITY COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a process whereby members of the community having concerns regarding the Head Start program in Sacramento County may have those concerns or complaints heard. One of the important functions of the Policy Council of the Head Start program, consistent with Federal Regulations, is to establish a procedure for the airing of community complaints. Moreover, it is the position of this agency that parent involvement in the airing and resolution of community complaints is a fundamental key to the successful operation of the Head Start program.

The procedures outlined in this document have as their goal the informal resolution of complaints. It is recognized that frequently complaints and concerns arise out of a failure of communication. Thus, many complaints or concerns can be resolved when the interested parties meet informally to discuss the concerns. To that end, a complainant must demonstrate that he/she has attempted to solve his/her concern prior to filing a complaint under this procedure.

The following are applicable to this complaint resolution procedure:

1. A formal hearing is not authorized at any step of the procedure. While a complainant shall be afforded a full opportunity to air his/her concerns, there does not exist the unlimited right to call witnesses. This procedure does not authorize the issuance of subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses.

There shall be no right to cross examination. Formal rules of evidence will not be followed at any step of the process.

2. This procedure does not apply to the complaint from any person employed in any fashion in any Head Start program in Sacramento County. Grievances of employees shall be handled consistent with applicable personnel policies.

3. This procedure does not apply to the complaints of any contractor of the Head Start program.
4. The Deputy Director of the Agency must concur in the resolution reached at any step of the procedure.
5. All complaints must be set forth in writing, outlining in reasonable detail, the nature of the complaint and the remedy sought. Agency staff will be designated by the Head Start Deputy Director to assist complainants in preparing a written complaint.
6. Petitions will not be accepted.
7. All complaints shall be filed with the Head Start Deputy Director, Sacramento Employment and Training Agency, 925 Del Paso Blvd., Suite 200, Sacramento, CA 95815.

#### STEP1 ~ INFORMAL REVIEW

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Head Start Deputy Director shall cause to be scheduled an informal review meeting. The Head Start Deputy Director and Policy Council Chair, or their respective designees, shall meet with the complainant to discuss the issues and attempt to reach a resolution of the issues. If a mutually agreeable resolution cannot be reached, within five (5) calendar days a written request will be sent to the complainant that he/she proceed to the next level of review.

#### STEP 2 ~ POLICY COUNCIL COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PANEL

For each complaint, the Policy Council Chair shall appoint a Complaint Resolution Panel comprised of four (4) members of the Policy Council. No member of the panel shall be a representative of an agency against which the complaint was made. The Grantee Social Services/Parent Involvement Coordinator shall also be a member of this committee. The

Chair of this committee shall cause to be scheduled a meeting of the panel with the complainant.

At the meeting, the complainant shall be afforded the full opportunity to present his or her concerns. The party or parties against whom the complaint is made shall also be afforded an opportunity to be heard.

If a mutually agreeable resolution cannot be reached at this meeting, it shall be the responsibility of the Complaint Resolution Panel to send the complaint to the next level of review within five (5) calendar days.

### STEP 3 ~ POLICY COUNCIL

Upon receipt of an appeal of a complainant from STEP 2, the appeal shall be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting.

At that meeting, the complainant shall be afforded an opportunity to present his or her concerns. The party or parties against whom the complaint was filed shall also be afforded an opportunity to be heard.

Thereafter, the Policy Council shall make its decision with respect to the complaint and that decision shall be recorded in the official minutes of the Policy Council and forwarded to the Executive Director of the Agency as the Policy Council's recommendation. The Executive Director of the Agency shall, thereafter, cause to be issued the final decision of the Agency which shall be in writing and shall exhaust all Agency remedies.