

Deputy's Corner / Focus on the CAO / Up and Coming / TANF R / Change Center

Operations Memorandum - Administrative OPS061201

12/19/06

SUBJECT: Client Grievance Process
TO: Executive Directors
FROM: Joanne Glover, Director, Bureau of Operations

Purpose

To ensure County Assistance Offices (CAO) continue to follow the uniform procedure which enables clients to file grievances previously outlined in OPS 93-12-5.

Background

In their interaction with CAO staff, clients have the right to receive courteous treatment and to provide input regarding their present needs and future aspirations. They also are entitled to receive benefits and services without regard to race, creed, national origin, political or religious affiliation, age, sex, sexual preference, or physical or mental handicap. Clear explanations of benefits and services due or denied must be provided. Confidentiality, as well as reasonable access to any CAO employee's supervisor, are also extended to the client. Finally, all clients must be treated professionally and with appropriate promptness and be afforded an administrative review to determine if the treatment received violates any of the rights set forth above.

Discussion

Proper treatment of clients should be reviewed with staff and the attached procedure (Attachment A) followed any time a client feels a CAO employee has not treated them in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this memorandum and other departmental documents while conducting Commonwealth business. These procedures do not supersede or replace any other existing regulations or procedures, e.g., appealing decisions affecting the amount or duration of benefits, discrimination complaints, etc. Responsibility for coordinating and communicating resolution of the grievance resides with the CAO. Routine monitoring will be handled through the Bureau of Operations.

The Client Grievance Form, PA 1597 (Attachment B), and the Client Grievance Tracking Log, PA 1598 (Attachment C), are currently on DocuShare.

Each CAO should display signs in the intake and waiting areas. Previously printed posters were distributed to CAOs.

Next Steps

1. Continue to implement the Client Grievance Procedure.
2. Care must be taken not to violate any of the basic rules of employee or client confidentiality, labor agreements, or Department regulations.
3. Designated supervisory or management staff should be identified to conduct investigations to ensure uniformity and consistency in the Client Grievance Process. A central file for the Tracking Log and Grievance Forms should be established and information retained for two years. Local management should monitor the information to determine appropriate training or other support activities needed.

Attachment A: Client Grievance Procedure

Attachment B: [Client Grievance Form, PA 1597](#)

Attachment C: [Client Grievance Tracking Log, PA 1598](#)

ATTACHMENT A

CLIENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

<u>Actor</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Action</u>
Client and/or Client Representative methods:	1.	Register the grievance by one of the following a. Call the Client Hotline; b. Call or see a supervisor in the CAO; or c. Write to the CAO explaining the nature of the grievance.
Manager/Designated Supervisor Tracking	2.	Register the grievance on the Client Grievance Log (PA 1598).
	<u>NOTE:</u>	If the grievance is verbally presented, the particulars must be recorded on a PA 1597, Client Grievance Form, as soon as possible, and before an investigation is begun, the PA 1597 must be shown/read to the client and/or representative. When agreement on the issues is reached, the client/representative is not available to sign the PA 1597. If the client/representative is not available to sign, the manager/supervisor notes that agreement on the issue was reached and dates and signs the form accordingly.
investigation.	3.	Conduct a timely and complete investigation of the grievance. Document the results of the Ensure statements of those involved are recorded on the proper forms and notarized, as applicable (this is particularly applicable if discipline of an employee may result).

IF EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE IS NOT A POTENTIAL OUTCOME OF THE GRIEVANCE, GO TO STEP 4a.

IF EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE IS A POTENTIAL OUTCOME OF THE GRIEVANCE, GO TO STEP 4b.

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<u>Actor</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Action</u>
Designated Manager/ Supervisor (are)	4a.	<p>Identify whatever corrective action(s), if any, is warranted as a result of the investigation.</p> <p>Before initiation of any corrective action(s), meet with the client and/or representative to explain the results of the investigation, what action(s) will be implemented, why those actions will occur and the timetable for implementation. If no corrective action is needed, the client should be so informed, and proper explanations made.</p> <p>If the meeting and/or corrective action(s) resolves all outstanding issues, have the client and/or representative sign a statement to that effect. . .</p> <p>If the corrective action(s) only resolves all outstanding issues, have the client/and/or representative sign a statement to that effect.</p> <p>If appropriate, further investigation of the outstanding issues should occur.</p> <p>If additional corrective action(s) then become warranted, go back to Step #3 and proceed accordingly until all outstanding issues are resolved satisfactorily.</p> <p><u>NOTE:</u> Within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the grievance, the client and/or representative must be met with or contacted:</p>

1. To explain the status of the investigation and the projected date it will conclude; or
2. To explain the results of the investigation and what actions will be taken (as noted in Step 4a).

4b. A pre-disciplinary conference (PDC) must be scheduled.

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<u>Actor</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Action</u>
Designated/Manager Supervisor Departmental		<p>The PDC is to be held in accordance with rules and regulations.</p> <p>If the employee is represented by a union, the PDC shall be held in accordance with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, i.e., right to notice of the charges, right to union representation, right to offer an explanation, and have the explanation appropriately considered, etc.</p> <p>Based on the results of the incident investigation and the explanation of the employee, initiate appropriate administrative action, including discipline.</p> <p><u>NOTE:</u> Within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the grievance, the client and/or representative <u>MUST</u> be met with or contacted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To explain the status of the investigation and the projected date it will conclude; <li style="text-align: center;">or 2. To explain the results of the investigation and what actions will be taken (as noted in Step 4a).

A PDC must occur prior to the above meeting. The client and/or representative cannot be informed of what discipline was imposed for whom. They are to be told only that the appropriate administrative action was taken. If that action involves a staff or client reassignment, they should be informed of the change but not the reason for it. If in doubt about what, if any, information is to be shared, contact the labor relations coordinator/designee in advance of the meeting.

CLIENT GRIEVANCE FORM

CASE NAME (Last, First, M.I.)

CASE RECORD NUMBER

DATE

TIME

A.M.

P.M.

LOCATION WHERE INCIDENT HAPPENED:

CAO/DISTRICT OFFICE/OUTPOST

NAME OF PERSON YOU ARE FILING THE GRIEVANCE AGAINST:

NAME (Last, First, M.I.)

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE (Explain what happened)

(If additional space is needed, please use back of form)

RESOLUTION:

SIGNATURE OF PERSON MAKING GRIEVANCE

CLIENT GRIEVANCE TRACKING LOG

REPORTED TO:		PROBLEM	CASE RECORD NO.	INFORMAL MTG. DATE	RESOLUTION: /DATE
LAST NAME	DATE				