



**COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

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6.1.3 Complaints

Policy Statements:

1. PLEA is committed to building the trust and respect of all of its stakeholders through providing quality services in an open and accountable manner. PLEA respects the right of program participants, their families, referring agencies, donors and other stakeholders to raise concerns and make complaints regarding the application, interpretation or administration of the organization's policies and procedures, program services or rights.
2. All program participants, their families, referring agencies, donors and other stakeholders are entitled to have concerns addressed and complaints resolved quickly, fairly and constructively.
3. All concerns and complaints will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct a fair investigation as advised by the PLEA Privacy Officer.
4. All complaints are treated equally regardless of who makes them and whether they are verbal or written.
5. An informal (local resolution) approach to resolving concerns and complaints is endorsed whenever possible.
6. The right of program participants to use an advocate, either from their own support system or through advocacy organizations, is respected.
7. Formal complaints will be investigated and corrective action may be considered, if required.
8. Complaints will be reviewed to consider trends, areas needing improvement and the actions taken.
9. These policies and procedures apply to all complaints that arise regarding any aspect of the services that PLEA provides.

Definitions:

A complaint is when a program participant, resident, family member, referring authority, donor or other party raises a concern or makes a complaint.

A formal complaint is when an individual raising a concern either is dissatisfied with Step 1 of the process (local resolution) or when they wish to make a formal complaint. Formal complaints may be verbal or in writing. A written record is maintained of all formal complaints.

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Procedures:

1. Whenever a program participant, family member, referring authority, donor or other stakeholder has a concern or complaint about any aspect of PLEA's services every effort is made to resolve the issue informally with the PLEA personnel that the individual chooses to approach with the issue. There will be no recrimination against anyone for presenting a complaint or discussing a problem in good faith.
2. Complaints can be made in person, in writing, or over the telephone to any PLEA staff.
3. Personnel who receive a concern or complaint are required to inform their Program Manager as soon as practically possible.
4. Personnel are responsible for listening carefully to the individual's concern, and trying to resolve it within 5 calendar days. This is Step 1 of PLEA's procedure for responding to complaints. All individuals are entitled to file a formal complaint at any point in this process and should be assisted to do so.
5. If the concern or complaint is not resolved through this informal process, individuals are encouraged to present their complaint to the Program Manager responsible for the services they are concerned with. Individuals may make their complaint either verbally or in writing. Managers are responsible for maintaining a written record of all the complaints that they receive. This is Step 2 of PLEA's procedures.
6. The Program Manager will meet with the individual and respond to their complaint within 5 calendar days of receiving it. The response will include both decisions made and actions taken. All formal complaints will be responded to in writing. If the complaint is not resolved at this step, the Program Manager informs the individual that they may take their complaint to the Program Director and/or Executive Director.
7. If the individual chooses to proceed, the Program Manager forwards the complaint to the Program Director and/or Executive Director. The complaint may be made verbally or in writing depending on the preferences of the individual.
8. Within 7 calendar days of receiving the complaint, the Program Director and/or Executive Director will contact the individual to discuss the facts and nature of the complaint, and inform them of the decisions made and actions taken. They will also be informed that this is the last step of the process and that the decision made at this level is final.
9. Program Managers, the Program Director and/or the Executive Director are responsible for contacting the PLEA Privacy Officer regarding all complaints that reach Step 2 of these procedures, for providing details on the nature of the complaint and the outcome, and providing a copy of all the written materials. The Privacy Officer keeps a record of all complaints that reach Step 2 of the process.
10. All complaints that reach Step 2 of the process are reviewed semi-annually by the Risk Management Committee to identify possible trends or areas needing improvement. The Risk Management Committee will make recommendations for any follow-up actions and will track progress on those actions.
11. The Executive Director informs the Board at least annually of the number, type and disposition of formal complaints received.