



GP 03

Complaints Policy

Classification:	General Policy
Responsible Authority:	The AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO) Board of Directors
Author:	Governance Committee
Approval Authority:	Board of Directors
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PURPOSE

This policy rests on the principles of progressive organizational management directing that responses to complaints should be preventive and remedial rather than punitive. Disagreements can occur at all levels and this policy outlines a fair process to relieve those disagreements.

This policy does not preclude a person from pursuing a case directly through the Ontario Human Rights Commission where appropriate or having normal recourse to the relevant laws and bodies that govern workplace relations.

SCOPE

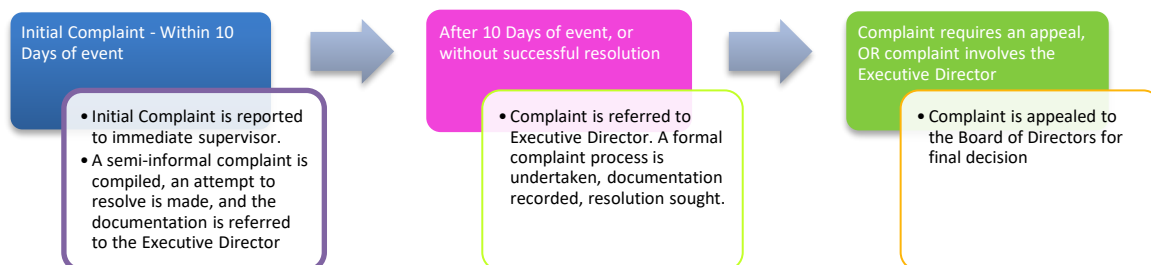
GP03 describes complaints procedures as applying to participants, volunteers and staff operating within the direction of the executive director.

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Complaint	The expression, either oral or written, of dissatisfaction with an interaction or outcome from an interaction.
Executive Director	The staff member of the ACO who is authorized with the daily management of the ACO. Also known as the ED.
Member	A person, firm, corporation or other organization who is admitted to membership in the corporation pursuant to the by-laws
Participant	Any individual who is receiving, participating, or attending an ACO event or service
Staff	A paid person under the employ of the ACO
Supervisor	A member of staff, (or occasionally a volunteer) who is directly controlling an event, interaction or group at the ACO
Volunteer	An unpaid person who is working for the ACO

POLICY

1. All people have the right to express dissatisfaction with an interaction or outcome from their experiences at the ACO. The purpose of this policy is to find a resolution that is expeditious, fair and reflective of the values that guide the ACO, and to document those experiences for further reflection. Complaints are a critical component of any organization learning and responding to their members.
2. The ACO will, to the best of its ability and in accordance with its confidentiality policy, ensure the confidentiality of the complainant is maintained and there is no reprisal to the complainant for coming forward with a grievance.
3. The ACO has a hierarchical structure for supervision as well as complaints. Annually, the board of directors is elected to govern the ACO, as well as direct the activities of the executive director. The executive director is employed by the board to ensure the operations of the daily activities at the ACO, including staff members. Those staff then direct volunteers, participants and others in activities.
4. Informal complaints may be mediated via an immediate supervisor, and should be conducted within 10 days of the interaction in question. That mediation and complaint should still be documented by that supervisor. If there is no resolution, or the resolution is not to the party's satisfaction, then the complaint should be escalated to the executive director. If there remains no resolution to the complaint, then the board of directors may be charged to examine the complaint.
5. In all parts of this process, any party to the complaint may involve a peer, friend or advisor to assist them, however this cannot include any party later involved in the hearing of the complaint (i.e. the executive director, or a board member). In the event that a member of the board, is chosen by the complainant (which is strongly discouraged), then the director must recuse themselves, in writing, to the chair of the board from any further discussion on the matter. This ensures impartiality in the event of a further escalation of the complaint.
6. If the complaint involves the ED, or a member of the board, this will be handled solely at the board level, i.e. Procedure 3. If the complaint involves a member of the executive of the board, then they cannot act in that capacity for the duration of the complaint process, and the board must appoint a temporary replacement for that discussion.
7. At all stages of complaint, a full report should be completed according to Appendix A of this policy.



PROCEDURE

<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
1. Informal Complaint	
1.1 Within 10 days of the event	
1.1.1 One, both, or all of the parties involved in the complaint may approach their immediate supervisor, and outline their understanding of the situation. This may be scheduled or informal.	Complainant
1.1.2 At this meeting, state the complaint clearly, preferably in writing.	Parties involved
1.1.3 Listen to the concerns of the parties and seek clarification, if needed.	Immediate Supervisor
1.1.4 Explore ways to resolve the concerns	Parties and Supervisor
1.1.5 Agree on a way to resolve the concerns and write down the solution for reference and for action/distribution as appropriate.	Parties and Supervisor
1.1.6 Any documentation must be presented to the Executive Director, who will retain it in accordance with the ACO's Privacy Policy.	Immediate Supervisor
1.1.7 If no resolution can be found, or if you feel that an appeal is required, escalate the complaint to the next level.	Immediate Supervisor, Parties, or both.
2. Formal Complaint	
2.1 After 10 days, or after unsatisfactory resolution	
2.1.1 One, both, or all of the parties involved in the complaint may escalate the complaint to the executive director.	Parties involved/Immediate Supervisor
2.1.2 A formal meeting should be held between all parties in the complaint and the executive director, as well as any witnesses within 10 days of the request being made. Documentation of should be recorded via the Complaint Reporting Form, Appendix 1.	Parties involved and executive director
2.1.3 Listen to the concerns of the parties and seek clarification, if needed, and launch a further investigation if required focussing on addressing the following details:	Executive Director
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the complaint, including time and date • Persons involved 	

- Names of witnesses, if any
- Action taken to date
- Solution sought

2.1.4	Explore ways to resolve the concerns	Parties and Executive Director
2.1.6	Any complaints dealt with under the formal complaint process should be summarized to the board.	Executive Director
2.1.7	An appeal of any decision can be made within 10 days to the board of directors, who will hear the complaint at their next board meeting (held monthly).	Parties involved.

3. Appeal

3.1 After executive director's decision, or if complaint involves the Executive Director

3.1.1	In the event that one or more parties require an appeal, this request should be made in writing to a member of the executive of the board of directors within 10 days of the decision made in 2.1.5 above.	Parties involved/Executive Director
3.1.2	Once the appeal has been requested, the board of directors will address this at their next meeting (generally monthly).	Parties involved and Board of Directors
3.1.3	The board of directors will review all documentation regarding the complaint, and may wish to invite the parties involved to address the board.	Board of Directors
3.1.4	Decide if the complaint has merit and on the manner in which the complaint is to be resolved	Board of Directors
3.1.5	Once a decision has been made, the board of directors will document the decision (with relevant redaction of any privacy concerns) in the minutes of the meeting, and inform the parties involved within 10 days, pending privacy regulations, which will constitute the final decision on the matter.	Board of Directors

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Forms that are generated by the procedure should be listed and included as an appendix.

Appendix 1 Complaint Reporting Form

RELATED POLICIES

GP02 - ACO Anti-Violence, Anti-Harrassment and Anti-Oppression Policy

RELATED MATERIALS

