

Office of Children's Services Complaint Process

If you have a complaint with an employee of the Office of Children's Services (OCS) that you are not able to resolve informally, you have a right to access the formal complaint process. OCS aims to treat every family served with dignity, respect and with consideration to their cultural values. The complaint procedure is a formal way to ensure your concerns are heard and addressed. Before filling out the following complaint form, please review what a complaint is and is not to determine if this is the right process for you. If you decide this is the correct process, complete the following form and e-mail, post mail, or fax it to the address/phone number provided below. You may also give it to an OCS staff person to send the complaint form for you. OCS staff will not take action against you for filing a complaint.

What is a complaint?

Allegations by an individual affected by a case-specific decision or action of an Office of Children's Services employee

Who can file a complaint?

- Parent or guardian
- Foster parent
- Adult family member
- A person with a significant relationship with a child
- A person participating in provision of services to a child or family

What is NOT considered a complaint, and what are my options?

The complaint procedure is <u>NOT</u> available for the following:	What do I do if this is my situation?
1. If you received a Closing Letter that identifies child abuse allegations have been substantiated, and you wish to review or overturn that decision.	You may request to appeal of a substantiated child maltreatment finding by completing the Request for Appeal form located at http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/default.aspx or by sending an e-mail to: hss.ocscommunications@alaska.gov
2. To complain about an action or inaction taken by the department more than three years ago	Talk to the supervisor and discuss what decision you want to appeal and they can give you more information. Or you may send an e-mail to hss.ocscommunications@alaska.gov
3. To appeal late payments or to contest foster care rates paid	Contact the case worker, licensing worker or the provider payment unit (1-877-456-2215)
4. To appeal a decision or action taken by the department that is reviewable by the court under AS 47.10	Contact your attorney if you have one. Otherwise, contact the case worker, supervisor, or another legal party to the case
5. To appeal any federal or state action that is governed by other state or federal agencies	Contact the agency you have a concern with
6. To appeal a decision regarding civil rights actions covered under the department's civil rights complaint procedures	You can contact the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Civil Rights Compliance Obligations at http://www.hss.state.ak.us/civilrights.htm
7. To a state employee unless that employee is also a client of the department, a client's parent or guardian, or a service provider for the department	Contact your supervisor, manager, or your union representative
8. To appeal a foster care licensing action under AS 47.32	Contact your licensing worker. You have a right to appeal and submit a request for a hearing
9. Complaints against personnel that are governed by the state personnel act (AS 39.25)	You can go to the Alaska Department of Administration Personnel and Labor Relations at http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/directorsOffice/overview/
10. For contract services disputes	Contact your union or administrative representative
11. To appeal a decision regarding grant programs that may be appealed under 7 AAC 78.310	You may appeal to the commissioner

Office of Children's Services (OCS) COMPLAINT FORM (Under Grievance Procedures)

A complaint is an allegation by an individual affected by a case-specific decision or action of an OCS employee. Prior to filling out this form, talk to the OCS employee or their supervisor to see if your complaint can be resolved. If the issue could not be resolved, complete this form and send it to the Community Relations Manager (contact information below). A supervisor will contact you and set up a meeting to address your complaint as long as it falls within the regulation standards. If it is not accepted, you will receive notice on why it was not accepted along with any other avenues you can pursue to resolve your concern. You may also contact the Community Relations Manager who can help you determine what process you need to access (For example, this is not the process if you want to appeal a substantiated finding of maltreatment).

 Date or Time Span of Incident

 Date Complaint Filed

 Name of Person Subject to Complaint

 Office Location

Identifying Information (Completed by Complainant)

 Name of Complainant (First Name, Middle Initial, and Last Name)

 Mailing Address: City, State, Zip

 E-mail

I prefer to be notified by e-mail rather than postal mail (*Must provide acknowledgment of email received*)

 Phone #1

 Phone #2

 Child or Children Involved with OCS (First Name, Last Name)

Relationship With Child or Family Involved with OCS

Child's Parent or Guardian
 Child's Relative
 Foster Parent
 Service Provider

Community Partner
 Other (Please Specify) _____

What is Your Complaint?

Briefly describe the situation which caused you to file a complaint:

What steps have you already taken to resolve the complaint?

What would you like to see happen to help resolve the complaint?

The Complaint Process (for complaints that fall within regulation)

Level 1:

- Within 5 days of OCS receiving your complaint, the Community Relations Manager (or designee) will review your complaint and inform you if the complaint has been accepted or rejected
- If your complaint is accepted, the supervisor of the unit will schedule a time to talk with you within 10 days of being assigned the complaint
- You and OCS staff involved in the complaint will have the opportunity to discuss the complaint and ways to resolve the issue
- The supervisor will send you a written decision within 15 days of your meeting

If Level 1 is NOT Resolved:

Level 2:

- If you do not agree with the decision, you will have 10 days to appeal to the Community Relations Manager
- The Regional Manager will schedule a time to talk with you within 10 days of receiving the appeal to the last decision, which may include the supervisor and assigned worker
- After hearing from you and the staff involved, the Regional Manager will consider everyone's input and send a written decision within 15 days of your meeting

If Level 2 is NOT Resolved:

Level 3 (Final Level):

- If you do not agree with the decision, you will have 10 days to appeal to the Community Relations Manager
- The Division Operations Manager (or designee) will schedule a time to talk with you within 10 days of receiving the appeal, which may include any relevant participants involved in the case
- After hearing from you and the staff involved, the Division Operations Manager will issue a proposed decision for the director or designee to accept, reject or modify the decision within 10 days
- You will receive a notice that the decision is a final agency action for purposes of judicial review

** Days always refers to business days*

Signed _____

_____ Date

Please mail, email or fax attention to:

Community Relations Manager (or Designee)

Office of Children's Services, State Office

130 Seward Street, Suite 400

Juneau, AK 99811

Fax: (907) 465-3397 Ph: (907) 465-3548 e-mail: hss.ocsccommunications@alaska.gov