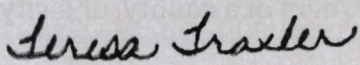




Estb. 1887

Washington County
 Department of Human Services
POLICY

<p>POLICY TITLE Child Welfare Grievance Resolution</p>	<p>REFERENCE SB 23-210, SECTION 19.3.211 AND SECTION 28-5-101(3), C.R.S., 12 CCR 2509-7</p>
<p>POLICY NO. DHS-CW-2024.1</p>	<p>EFFECTIVE DATE January 1, 2024</p>
<p>DIRECTOR APPROVAL </p>	<p>REVISION DATE(S)</p>

BACKGROUND

Washington County Department of Human Services (WCDHS) is responsible for the provision and administration of child welfare services as defined in Section 28-5-101(3), C.R.S. These services are intended to strengthen the ability of families to protect and care for their own children, prevent involvement or continued involvement in the child welfare system, minimize harm to children and youth, and ensure permanency planning. The goal of the treatment/prevention plan shall be to support the intactness of families, when appropriate, through the provision of services aimed at stabilizing the family situation and strengthening the parents/guardians in fulfilling their parental responsibilities to their children. Intervention shall be guided by respect for the family’s integrity, knowledge of the legal bases for action, and sound social work practice.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and procedures for WCDHS child welfare staff regarding the grievance resolution process as required in 12 CCR 2509-7.

DEFINITIONS

Grievance – a complaint filed concerning the conduct of Department employee(s) in performing their duties under Article 3 of the Children’s Code. The term does not include complaints regarding actions by the courts, attorneys, law enforcement officials, employees of the State of Colorado, foster parents, or other providers of services to children, or other family members.

Complainant – any person who was the subject of an investigation or a report of child abuse or neglect or any parent, guardian, or legal custodian of a child who is the subject of a report of child abuse or neglect and brings a grievance against a county department per the provisions of Section 19-3-211, C. R. S.

Conduct – the manner in which a county department employee behaves when performing his/her duties under Article 3 of the Children’s Code. If an employee makes a decision that is appealable under Colorado statutes and the rules governing child welfare services, an individual may pursue those remedies. The grievance resolution process does not modify the time frames for pursuing the other forms of relief available under Colorado statutes and the rules governing child welfare services.

Governing body/board – the board of county commissioners of a county, or a city council of a city and county, per Section 19-1-103(54), C.R.S.

Director – the director of the county department

Recommendation – a proposed course of action that may be implemented by a county director to resolve a grievance. These proposed actions may include reassigning a case to a different employee, requiring an employee to receive training, or administering disciplinary action to an employee, subject to applicable safeguards afforded to the employee through the personnel system under which the employee is employed.

POLICY

Filing a grievance:

The complainant must submit any grievance to WCDHS in writing no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the alleged incident of employee conduct which is complained of, and must state the following:

1. The complainant’s full name and mailing address;
2. A short, specific statement of the complainant’s grievance
3. The applicable case name and number (if known); and

4. The resolution desired by the complainant.

Time frames for resolving a grievance:

Any grievance received shall be forwarded to the county director for internal resolution within ten (10) working days after it has been received by the county department.

The county director will act on the grievance within twenty (20) calendar days after receipt. If the WCDHS has resolved the grievance to the complainant's satisfaction, the director will issue a written final decision within thirty-five (35) days of receipt of the grievance. If the WCDHS is unable to resolve the grievance to the complainant's satisfaction, the grievance will be referred to the governing board, and upon the request of the complainant, WCDHS shall refer the grievance to the Office of The Child Protection Ombudsman.

PROCEDURE

WCDHS will post information about the grievance process on Washington County's public-facing website to ensure that individuals involved in the child welfare system know the process.

Annual Reports:

On or before July 31 of each year, WCDHS will submit to the State Department an annual report regarding the resolution of grievances as required in 12 CCR 2509-7. At a minimum, the report will include:

1. The number of grievances received by the county director, the number of grievances referred to the governing board, and the actual time frames for resolving grievances at each level.
2. A brief description of the disposition of the grievances, including the number that were concluded without any action taken, the number that were substantiated, the number resolved by case reassignment, the number resolved by requiring additional training, the number resolved by imposing disciplinary action against a county employee, and the number of resolved in other ways; and
3. A copy of WCDHS' grievance policy.

WCDHS will publicize the availability of the process for all dependency and neglect cases through the "Notice of Rights and Remedies" as specified in Section 7.601.31 of 12 CCR 2509-7 and by informing child welfare clients, guardians, and legal custodians of the process during the initial contacts with parties and periodically throughout the provision of services related to dependency and neglect cases. WCDHS may provide any other information about the process as deemed relevant by the governing board.