

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to ensure that complaints received from members of the public about United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County ("UWVEC") services and programs are dealt with promptly, consistently and fairly in accordance with UWVEC's highest standards. UWVEC recognizes that, when a person has a complaint, the way in which his or her complaint is handled is critical to the person's ongoing relationship with UWVEC.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all complaints received from members of the public (including donors, prospective donors, community members, etc.) about UWVEC's operations, which includes the conduct and behaviour of all employees and volunteers.

As UWVEC, its funded partners and collaborators are distinct and separate entities with independent governance and management structures, complaints about other related organizations will not be dealt with by UWVEC. UWVEC will refer such complaints to the organization for appropriate action and will work with the organization to seek resolution.

This policy does not apply to complaints by funded partners and collaborators (funded or unfunded) about the funding decisions United Way has made. The appeals process for funding decisions is identified in the Community Investment Policies.

POLICY

UWVEC will fully, fairly and transparently deal with complaints received from members of the public regarding its staff, volunteers, or operations in a timely manner.

Definition: Complaints are defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with regard to a service/program, an action or a decision taken by UWVEC, or the way in which UWVEC employees or volunteers carry out their duties. Complaints typically arise when a person believes:

- UWVEC has failed to do something agreed upon or expected
- A UWVEC policy or procedure has not been followed
- An error has been made
- UWVEC employees or volunteers acted incorrectly

A complaint is distinct from an inquiry, feedback, or a suggestion.

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To launch a formal complaint, the Complainant must submit his/her concerns in writing (letter, fax or e-mail) and identify him or herself. UWWEC will not respond to verbal or anonymous complaints, however accommodations will be made for individuals with disabilities. Once a formal complaint is registered, UWWEC is committed to handling the complaint promptly, consistently and fairly. The Complainant will be treated with respect and be kept informed of status of the complaint, the investigative steps being followed and expected timelines for resolution.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Complainant will be provided with clear reasons for the decisions relating to the complaint. If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, he or she may appeal the decision and have the matter escalated to the Chief Executive Officer ("CEO") or the Board of Directors.

To ensure transparency in the way complaints are being handled, UWWEC will ensure that this policy is available on our website.

PROCEDURE

Informal Complaint

Anyone who has a concern is encouraged to speak to the employee at UWWEC who is most connected with the situation to resolve it before it becomes a formal complaint. This informal process can be used to resolve many inquiries or matters of simple error that can be corrected to the satisfaction of the person with the concern. Departments may establish protocols and responsibilities for handling informal complaints. Staff should keep Department VPs apprised of complaints as they arise. If the matter is not resolved, the person may make a formal complaint to UWWEC.

Formal Complaint

Step One – Initial Complaint & Investigation

A formal complaint should be made in writing (by mail, fax or email) to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) providing details of the complaint and contact information of the Complainant. If the individual is unable to register his complaint in this manner due to a disability, he/she may contact the CEO to request accommodation, which will be provided appropriate to the individual's needs and circumstances. If the complaint concerns the CEO, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of UWWEC's Board of Directors.

Upon receiving the complaint, the CEO will log the complaint in a registry and identify an investigating individual to handle the complaint investigation, normally the corresponding Department VP.

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The CEO will respond to the Complainant within two (2) business day of receiving the complaint to confirm that the complaint has been received, and indicate expectations as to the duration of the investigation, if it can be reasonably assessed at that point. Once appointed, the investigating individual will communicate with the Complainant as necessary.

The investigating individual will be accountable to the CEO for the investigation and timely resolution of the complaint. The target timeframe for concluding a complaint investigation is twenty (20) business days from the receipt of the complaint. If this timeline cannot be met, the Complainant will be informed of the reasons and be given a revised timeframe.

The investigating individual will consult with other employees to determine the facts. Throughout the process, confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible without impinging on the investigation.

The investigating individual should record the following:

- Name and position of the Investigating individual
- Name and contact information of the Complainant
- Log the written complaint and the date it was received
- Details of the complaint, key steps in the investigation, investigation notes, and other key documents gathered during the investigation
- Other key personnel involved
- The findings, recommended resolution and rationale

The investigating individual will report the findings and recommendations to the CEO in writing. With the CEO's consent the investigating individual will then communicate the findings and resolution to the Complainant.

Step Two - Appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of UWWEC

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the findings or the corrective action, he/she may submit a written appeal to the CEO within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the communication. If the CEO was involved in the complaint or the investigation, the appeal should be made to the Chair of UWWEC's Board of Directors.

Step Three - Appeal to the Board Chair of UWWEC

If the issue cannot be resolved under Step Two, the Complainant may require that the issue be considered by the Board Chair who may:

1. Elect to bring the matter before the Board with a recommended disposition;
2. Deem the complaint to be frivolous or vexatious or otherwise without merit and inform the complainant that no further action will be taken.



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Step Four - Mediation

Upon the recommendation of the Board, efforts to settle the unresolved issue may resort to the use of a mediator. A mediator helps disputing parties work toward a mutually acceptable resolution by maintaining open communication in an effort to identify issues, interests and possible options.

MONITORING

The CEO will report to the Board at least annually on the number and type of formal complaints received and their resolution.