

425.00 Client Grievance Procedure

A person having a complaint about the manner or quality of assistance rendered by the program, or denial of services, or about alleged violations of state or federal laws, regulations, or the Clients' Bill of rights, may file a grievance.

- 425.10 Creation of Client Grievance Committee The Chair of the Board of Directors shall appoint a grievance committee consisting of three persons, who shall be members of the Board of Directors. One member shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board to chair the committee.
- 425.20 Posting of this Resolution
- 425.21 A summary of this policy shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the reception area of each office of the program, including branch offices and satellite offices. A copy of the summary is provided to each client when service is initiated. A copy of the full policy will be provided to any person, free of charge, upon request.
- 425.22 A person who, because of handicap or other reason, is interviewed by a program staff member outside the offices shall be provided a copy of the policy summary.
- 425.30 Grievance Procedure.
- 425.31 Informal Process: (Optional) All clients are encouraged to first talk with staff about any concerns regarding their treatment or services. However, this informal process is not required before filing a formal grievance.
- 425.32 Formal Process: Any client who wishes to file a formal grievance can do so by completing a Client Grievance Form. A staff member can assist clients in the completion of this form if desired. The Client Grievance Form shall be forwarded upon receipt to the Client Rights Specialist.
- 425.33 Clients receiving services from the Adoption, International Adoption, or Birthparent Support Programs should file grievances within 6 months of the date the case is closed. Complaints for any other program should be filed within forty-five (45) days of the incident or within forty-five (45)

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days of the time a person filing on behalf of a client learns of the incident. This time may be extended for good cause.

425.34 The Client Rights Specialist shall investigate the complaint and will work with the appropriate Program Director to resolve the grievance. Unless the grievance is resolved informally, the Client Rights Specialist will formulate a written response to the complainant that will be mailed no later than thirty (30) days from receipt of the complaint. If a complaint is time-sensitive or involves allegations of fraud, an expedited review will occur. If the complaint is about a Program Director, the Client Rights Specialist will work with the Assistant Executive Director for Programs or the Executive Director to resolve the grievance in the same manner. If a written response is formulated, the response shall state what steps, if any, will be taken on the matter and the Agency's position as to the merit of the complaint. The Client Rights Specialist shall maintain a file of all client grievances received.

425.35 If the Program Director or Client Rights Specialist is unable to respond within the time allowed, another staff member will be designated to respond to the complainant.

425.36 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and action of the Client Rights Specialist and Program Director, the complainant may submit a written statement to the Executive Director at the following address:

Executive Director
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse, Inc.
3710 East Avenue South
La Crosse, WI 54601

Upon receiving such a request, the Executive Director shall investigate the complaint and either resolve the grievance informally or mail a written response to the complainant no later than thirty (30) days from the receipt of the complaint. The response shall state what steps, if any, will be taken on the matter and a position as to the merit of the complaint. If the Executive Director is unable to respond due to a schedule conflict, the response shall be provided by a staff member designated by the Executive Director.

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- 425.37 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response and action of the Executive Director, he or she may request an opportunity to submit an oral and/or written statement to the Client Grievance Committee. Upon receiving such a request, the Executive Director shall notify the chairperson of the Grievance Committee, who shall call a meeting of the Grievance Committee within a reasonable time to consider the matter. The complainant may appear at the meeting and may be accompanied by another person. Necessary Catholic Charities staff may also be present.
- 425.38 Upon request, the complainant shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to dictate a brief statement to a program staff member who shall transcribe the statement and include it in the complainant's file.
- 425.39 In hearings before the Client Grievance Committee, a record of the hearing shall be kept, plus a record of the findings and decisions of the committee. These records shall be made a part of the client's grievance file.
- 425.40 The Client Grievance Committee shall review the complaint and determine an appropriate course of action.
- 425.41 A file containing every complaint and a statement of its disposition shall be preserved by the Client Rights Specialist. The file shall include any written statement submitted by the complainant.
- 425.50 State Review
- 425.51 Family Services: In addition to the procedures outlined above, any requester or birth parent not satisfied with an action taken by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse, Inc. regarding the adoption programs may ask the Wisconsin Department of Children & Families to review the action. Requests for a review by the Secretary or a designee should be addressed to:

Department of Children & Families
Division of Safety & Permanence
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916

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425.52 Catholic Charities Credit Counseling Services: In addition to the procedures outlined above, any participant in a debt-management program who is not satisfied with the actions taken by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse, Inc. after utilizing this grievance procedure may ask the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions to review the action. Requests for such a review by the Secretary or a designee should be addressed to:

Consumer Credit Examiner
Licensed Financial Services, Division of Banking
P.O. Box 7876
Madison, WI 53707-7876

425.53 Social Services: In addition to the procedures outlined above, any participant receiving services for developmental disabilities has rights under Wisconsin Statute sec. 51.61(1) and HFS 94, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Please consult with the Client Rights Specialist for more information.

425.54 The program shall also make available, upon request by any party, the Equal Opportunity Complaint Review Procedures of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse, Inc.

425.60 Complaints related to a Hague Convention adoption case may be made to the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoptions Complaint Registry if the complaint cannot be resolved through the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse grievance process. Complaints should be submitted to:

Attn: U.S. Central Authority
U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Office of Children's Issues, Adoption Unit (SA-29)
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520
(888) 407-4747

425.61 Semi-annually, Catholic Charities will submit a summary of complaints to the Council on Accreditation and the

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United States Secretary of State. This report will include the number of complaints related to issues of compliance with the Convention, the IAA, or the regulations implementing the IAA as well as a description of how each complaint was resolved. If there is a discernible pattern in complaints, Catholic Charities will provide information in the report about what systemic changes will be made in response to these patterns.

425.70 Clients or their representatives will not be subject to any form of retribution for filing a complaint; expressing a grievance; providing information in writing or interviews to an accrediting entity on the agency's performance; or questioning the conduct of or expressing an opinion about the performance of the agency.

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