

SKILLS, Inc.
Program Services
Policy and Procedure

Subject: GRIEVANCE PROCESS POLICY

Policy: Any person receiving supports by SKILLS or their guardian, or representative will have a process available to express and receive consideration of their grievances. Any person has the right to communicate their grievance and recommend changes and should be encouraged and assisted in exercising their right as a citizen. Individuals may freely communicate grievances and recommend changes in policies and supports to the staff of SKILLS and/or to any outside representative of their choice, without restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the person filing the complaint, the person's Case Manager will be notified in writing who will then commence the Department's Level 1 grievance resolution process. The person filing the grievance may choose to directly invoke the Department's grievance resolution procedure rather than going through SKILLS.

Procedure:

1. If a person receiving supports, their guardian, or their representative is dissatisfied with an action, issue, or circumstance concerning that individual, or if there should be a complaint or misunderstanding, the individual should **first** be encouraged to resolve it in the most direct fashion, i.e., speaking directly with the other person(s) involved.
2. Staff and/or the person should determine, during the course of conflict resolution, if an item warrants review through a formal grievance procedure. Staff should use the following criteria to determine whether an item requires the completion of a written grievance report. If any of the following are present, a report is to be completed:
 - a. Individuals receiving support services, their guardian, or their representative request report to be filed.
 - b. Item has been brought to the attention of staff person(s) previously and has gone unresolved.
 - c. Item may have an immediate negative impact if left unresolved. This usually occurs as the result of a long-standing uncorrected issue or some action, which has just occurred. This impact would

constitute a serious threat or change in the health, safety, or welfare of an individual.

3. A grievance report must be completed for any complaint justifying a formal review and given to the Team Leader/Assistant Manager/Manager. Staff are to assist the person in completing the report when necessary.
4. Team Leader/Assistant Manager/ Manager will provide a written response and identify any corrective action necessary within five (5) working days.
5. Team Leader/Assistant Manager/Manager will then follow up with the individual receiving supports, guardian, or representative to determine if actions taken resolved the grievance for them.
6. Team Leader/Assistant Manager/ Manager will provide a copy of the report to the person receiving supports and retain a copy for their records.
7. The original copy of the grievance report will be forwarded to the Director of Program Services to review and take action as necessary. Upon request, the grievance may be reviewed by either the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors.
8. The Director of Program Services will sign the original and forward it to the appropriate Case Manager to be filed in the person's case file. The Director of Program Services will retain a copy to be available for management reports.
9. If the grievance has not been resolved within eight (8) business days, the Director of Program Services will notify the person's Case Manager in writing. The Case Manager will document the grievance in the person's record and begin the Department's Level 1 grievance resolution process.
10. If the individual with the complaint resides in a PNMI or is an AMHI class member, refer to *Regulations Governing the Licensing and Functioning of Assisted Housing Programs section 5.8*.

Agency Responsibilities:

1. Staff must complete the *Maine College of Direct Support* module **ME Grievance Process** prior to working alone with any people supported by SKILLS. This module must be repeated every 36 months.
2. A copy of the *Grievance Process* handout/poster is given to the individual and their guardian upon admission and during the individual's planning meeting.

3. A copy of the *Grievance Process* handout/poster is posted in an appropriate common area in every SKILLS program.
4. The *Grievance Process* handout/poster is posted on the SKILLS website.
5. Training:
 1. The Team Leader/ Assistant Manager/ Manager will:
 - a. Explain each point of the policy/procedures with every new hire, allowing time for questions and addressing any concerns.
 - b. Explain policy/procedures revisions during staff meetings, allowing time for questions and addressing any concerns.
 - c. Review policy/procedures individually with specific staff when an issue arises.
 - d. Review policy/procedures.
6. The Team Leader/Assistant Manager/Manager will document training on New Hire Checklist or other appropriate format and forward it to Human Resources for inclusion in the employee file.

