

# AAA9 Grievance Procedures

## Policy

The Area Agency on Aging Region 9 (AAA9) has established this grievance procedure for use by older individuals who are dissatisfied with or denied any services funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA), and who are seeking a resolution of their grievances from the AAA9.

A. **Participant Rights:** AAA9 recognizes and acknowledges the rights of older individuals.

These rights include the following:

1. The right to contact the Office of the State-Long-Term Care Ombudsman (Ombudsman Program) to seek assistance in resolving grievances against the AAA or a provider. **1-800-967-0615**
2. The right to be fully informed, in advance, about each service that AAA9 or its providers offer to the individual, and about any change in the services being received by the individual that may affect the individual's well-being;
3. The right to participate in planning and changing services provided under the OAA by AAA9 or its providers, unless the individual has been judicially adjudicated incompetent;
4. The right to voice grievances with respect to any service that AAA9 provides, or fails to provide, to the individual without discrimination or reprisal as a result of having voiced the grievance;
5. The right to confidentiality of records relating to the individual;
6. The right of the individual to have the individual's property treated with respect;
7. The right to be fully informed (orally, and in writing), in advance of receiving a service of such persons rights under the OAA; and,
8. The right to receive a written response from AAA9 or its providers to every grievance voiced by the individual.

B. **Grievance Procedure Guidelines:**

1. **Notification of procedure:** A copy of AAA9's written grievance procedure, and contact information for the Ombudsman Program is provided to an individual when:
  - a. When the individual applies to AAA9 or a provider for the receipt OAA services;
  - b. When AAA9 or its provider denies the individual's request for OAA services;

- c. When AAA9 or its provider reassesses the consumer's eligibility for OAA services; and,
- d. When AAA9 or its provider proposes to reduce or terminate the individual's OAA services.

2. **Submission of grievances:** Grievances must be submitted in writing to:

The Quality and Planning Director  
Area Agency on Aging Region 9, Inc.  
1730 Southgate Parkway  
Cambridge, Ohio 43725

3. **Acknowledgment of receipt:** Once the Grievance is received by AAA9, The Quality and Planning Director will acknowledge it's receipt of the grievance(s) in writing within 5 business days of the date on which the grievance is received, unless the AAA is able to resolve the grievance sooner.

Individuals wishing to report grievances orally will be encouraged to submit their grievance in writing to assure accuracy and completeness. If, for any reason, an individual is unable to prepare a written grievance, or chooses not to, the AAA will transcribe the grievance on behalf of the individual; however, the individual will be asked to sign the grievance as prepared by AAA9 to confirm its accuracy.

When acknowledging its receipt of a grievance, AAA9 shall refer the individual to the Ombudsman Program for assistance in remedying the grievance.

AAA9 will never refuse to address a grievance, or an individual's concerns, because the person did not comply fully with the grievance submission policy.

4. **Fairness/Timeliness:** AAA9 will address any grievance it receives in a fair and timely manner. Every effort will be made to resolve grievances as early in the process as possible, preferably at the provider level. To this end:
- a. The grievance procedure shall ensure that the individual charged with responding to a grievance, the Quality and Planning Director unless otherwise assigned by the Executive Director, is neutral and was not involved in any of the events that serve as the basis for the grievance; and,

- b. If the Quality and Planning Director was involved in the events that serve as a basis for the grievance, the grievance will be handled by the AAA9 Executive Director.
  - c. Unless otherwise agreed to by AAA9 and the individual, the AAA must render a decision, in writing, as to each grievance received within **15** calendar days of its receipt by AAA9.
5. **Face-to-Face Discussion**: The AAA9 grievance procedure allows the individual who submits a grievance, and/or the individual's representative, if any, the opportunity to discuss the grievance in person with AAA9 representatives as assigned by the Executive Director prior to the AAA's issuance of any decision as to the grievance.
6. **Written Responses**: All decisions rendered by AAA9 in response to a grievance will be provided in writing to the individual who submitted the grievance, and/or the individual's representative, if any.
7. **Further Consideration**: The individual who submitted the grievance, or the individual's representative, if any, has no less than **10** calendar days to review the AAA's response to the grievance and offer a written response to AAA9 before the AAA's decision becomes final.
- C. **Retaliation**: AAA9 will not retaliate or discriminate against any individual who submits a grievance to AAA9 or one of its provider agencies. An individual's failure to submit a grievance in strict conformance with the AAA9 policy shall never result in the AAA refusing to address the individual's concern.
- E. **Records Retention**: For monitoring purposes, AAA9 will retain a copy of all grievances it receives, and its written responses to those grievances, for a period of **90** days after the date of first monitoring visit conducted by the ODA after the date on which the AAA's response became effective, whichever date is later.
- F. **Area Plan**: AAA9 shall include a copy of this grievance process with its area plan submission for approval by ODA.

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