

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging

Title III Older Americans Act Grievance Policy & Procedures

Policy

The Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA) 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 COAAA.

A. Participant Rights

COAAA 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 for Region 6 (Ombudsman Program) to seek assistance in resolving grievances against the AAA or a provider by phone at 1-800-536-5891 or online at <https://www.easterseals.com/centralohio/our-programs/senior-services/long-term-care-ombudsman.html>
2. The right to be fully informed, in advance, about each service that COAAA 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 COAAA or its providers, unless the individual has been judicially adjudicated incompetent;
4. The right to voice grievances with respect to any service that COAAA 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 COAAA or its providers to every grievance voiced by the individual.

Grievance Procedure Guidelines:

- 1. Notification of procedure:** A copy of COAAA's written grievance procedure, and contact information for the Ombudsman Program, is provided to an individual when:

- a. When the individual applies to COAAA or a provider for the receipt of OAA services;
- b. When COAAA or its provider denies the individual's request for OAA services;
- c. When COAAA or its provider reassesses the consumer's eligibility for OAA services; and,
- d. When COAAA or its provider proposes to reduce or terminate the individual's OAA services.

Submission of grievances

Grievances must be submitted in-writing or by email to:

Grant Ames, MSW
Director of Government & Strategic Initiatives
Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging
3776 S High Street
Columbus, OH 43207
Email: Games@coaaa.org

Consumers and caregivers can also contact COAAA at **614-645-1508** to request information on the grievance process.

Acknowledgment of receipt:

Once the Grievance is received by COAAA, the agency will acknowledge its receipt of the grievance(s) in writing within five (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 ensure accuracy and completeness. If, for any reason, an individual is unable to prepare a written grievance, or chooses not to, COAAA will transcribe the grievance on behalf of the individual; however, the individual will be asked to sign the grievance as prepared by COAAA to confirm its accuracy.

COAAA 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:

COAAA 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, as 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 designated reviewer was involved in the events that serve as a basis for the grievance, the grievance will be handled by the COAAA Executive Director or designee.
- c. Unless otherwise agreed to by COAAA and the individual, the AAA must render a decision, in writing, as to each grievance received within thirty (30) calendar days of its receipt by COAAA.

5. Face-to-Face Discussion:

The COAAA 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 COAAA 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 COAAA 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. The written response shall include:

- (a) The date the grievance was received by the AAA.
- (b) The nature of the consumer's or caregiver's grievance, including all relevant dates.
- (c) Actions taken by the AAA to attempt to resolve the grievance informally, including the outcome.
- (d) Notice of any reconsideration or further review that is available to the consumer or caregiver within the AAA.

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 COAAA before the AAA's decision becomes final.

C. Retaliation:

COAAA will not retaliate or discriminate against any individual who submits a grievance to COAAA or one of its provider agencies. An individual's failure to submit a grievance in strict conformance with the COAAA policy shall never result in the AAA refusing to address the individual's concern.

E. Records Retention:

The period for each provider and each AAA to retain a copy of each grievance, response, and outcome is ninety days after the first monitoring visit conducted by the AAA or AGE (respectively) following the date on which the provider's or AAA's response became final.

F. Area Plan:

COAAA shall include a copy of this grievance process with its area plan submission for approval by AGE.

Effective 12/01/2025