



Stanislaus County Aging & Veterans Services

Complaint Resolution Process – Area Agency on Aging

Introduction

Stanislaus County Area Agency on Aging welcomes complaints, suggestions and compliments from our clients and the public. We encourage feedback and want to know how residents of the county think that services can be improved. Our agency considers complaints as an opportunity to enhance programs and services. This procedure is intended to clearly state the process for handling complaints and what customers can expect when they submit a complaint.

The goal of Our Complaint Resolution Process:

- ✓ To provide our customers with an easily accessible method of expressing concerns about the way in which Older Americans Act programs are provided.
- ✓ To offer prompt action and speedy resolution to problems.
- ✓ To provide consistency of approach to all complaints for all services.
- ✓ To record, monitor and review complaints related to service performance and help improve service delivery by identifying recurring problems and correcting them.
- ✓ To enable all our service providers to understand the importance of a quick and effective response to complaints from customers.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about a program, its services or its staff.

A complaint may involve, but not be limited to, any or all of the following:

- ✓ The amount or duration of a service.
- ✓ Denial or discontinuance of a service.
- ✓ Dissatisfaction with the service being provided or with the service provider.
- ✓ Failure of the service provider to comply with any of the requirements set forth in the Agency's regulations or in the contract agreement with the Agency.
- ✓ A customer has been treated unfairly or discourteously.

It is not a routine request for a service or a complaint about a third party.

Making a Complaint

A complaint can be made by telephone-209-558-7825, by fax-209-558-8648, in writing, by e-mail to Maria Profeta at profetam@stancounty.com or in person at the Aging & Veterans Services offices: 3500 Coffee Rd, Suite 19, Modesto, CA 95355.

On-line complaints can be made by going to the county website, <http://stancounty.com/crm/>, and follow the link to Aging and Veterans Services under Topic Areas, choose the program and complete the form.

The customer/client will be asked to provide the following information:

- ✓ Name
- ✓ Full postal address
- ✓ Contact telephone number/s
- ✓ Additional contact details e.g., e-mail address
- ✓ Details of the complaint
- ✓ What action the customer feels should be taken
- ✓ How the customer would like us to reply

Customer Complaints to Individual staff

a) In person or by phone:

Individual Area Agency on Aging staff may receive a complaint directly either in person or over the telephone. Complaints should be dealt with informally and resolved immediately, whenever possible. If immediate resolution is found and the customer is satisfied with the response provided, there is no need to record the complaint under the formal procedure. If the customer remains unhappy despite the resolution/explanation offered, it should be explained that the complaint can be formally recorded. It will be necessary to record the details, the nature of the complaint and the response as outlined above.

The customer's name, contact information and complaint should be given to the appropriate supervisor/manager to be recorded. If the customer does not want to take their complaint further, the staff should keep a personal record of the complaint in case the customer chooses to pursue it at a later date. A response should be given to the customer as quickly as possible. A full response must be provided within 15 working days.

b) In writing/e-mail:

Complaints may also be received directly in writing or by e-mail. The staff member contacted must acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and should respond in full within 15 working days. The response should explain that if the customer remains unsatisfied, their complaint can be formally recorded as outlined in the complaint procedure. The contact details for the appropriate supervisor/manager must be provided in the response. Staff supervisors/managers should keep a copy of the complaint and the response for one year.

Customer Complaints to Supervisor/Manager

On receiving a complaint staff will obtain & record the required information and refer the complaint to the appropriate supervisor/manager to deal with the complaint. The supervisor/manager will log the name and contact information of the customer/client and their complaint, make a copy and provide a copy to the Agency Director. The supervisor/manager will send an acknowledgement within five working days of receiving the complaint and provide their contact information and the date when the customer should expect a response (15 working days from the date of the acknowledgement). The acknowledgement should be made using an

appropriate medium, for example, if the complaint is received by e-mail the reply should be by e-mail unless the customer specifically requests otherwise. For complaints received by telephone or letter, response should be given in writing. The staff member dealing with the complaint is responsible for updating the supervisor/manager of any changes or new information. A full response should be provided to the customer within 15 working days of the date of the acknowledgement and a copy sent to the Agency Director. If it is not possible to respond fully within this time an explanation should be provided within the 15 working days to the customer with a revised response date. Any further delay should be acknowledged in the same way.

Appeal to the Agency Director

If a customer is unhappy with the response received to their complaint, they may appeal to the supervisor/manager who will then submit the complaint to the Agency Director. The Director will then review the complaint providing an independent and objective perspective on how it was handled, and the appropriateness of the response/solution provided to the original complaint. A response should then be sent from the Director to the customer/client outlining the result of the review and any action to be taken.

Appeal to the Board of Supervisors

If a customer is unhappy with the response received from the Area Agency on Aging Director, they may appeal to the Board of Supervisors. Contact with the Board should be made via a formal letter of appeal to: Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, 1010 10th St, Suite 6500, Modesto, CA, 95354.

Confidentiality

Area Agency on Aging staff will ensure the confidentiality of customers, their views and complaints by securing any written documentation in locked files. No information will be given to staff or providers without the consent of the customer.

Complaints to Our Service Providers

Our contractors have a responsibility to record the complaints that they receive and to report them to a designated staff member. The provider must maintain a complaint procedure and any unresolved complaint regarding a funded senior service program must be forwarded to the Department of Aging & Veterans Services. Customers must be provided with information regarding the procedures, posted and delivered directly to them. Any complaints received directly by the service provider must be available for review as part of the program monitoring.

Complaints About Area Agency on Aging Staff

A complaint about an Area Agency on Aging Staff Member should be directed to the Agency Director, 209-558-7825. The Director will review the complaint following the appeal procedure.

Contact Details: Complaint Monitoring Officers

Telephone Area Agency on Aging Services: (209) 558-7825

Fax: (209) 558-8648

E-mail:

Maria Profeta, Manager profetam@stancounty.com 209-525-4611

Tiffany Fanfa, Planner fanfatiff@stancounty.com 209-525-4612