



**NPAAMB**  
**INDIGENOUS**  
**YOUTH**  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
**& TRAINING**

Policy:	<b>Client/Consumer Complaint Policy</b>		
Section:	Human Resource – Legislated Policies		
Policy Number:	To Be Assigned	Approval Date:	June 2, 2017
Approved By:	Executive Director	Effective Date:	May 29, 2017
		Updated:	

## **CLIENT/CONSUMER COMPLAINT POLICY**

### **Intent**

Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board (NPAAMB) recognizes that there are some circumstances that may give rise to a complaint by clients and consumers with regard to the services provided by NPAAMB and/or treatment and conduct by NPAAMB staff and/or Board members.

This policy and procedure sets out the direction for NPAAMB staff to receive and respond to complaints. It applies to complaints about NPAAMB responses or services, received from individual youth clients, their parents/caregivers (for those clients under the age of 18), support network members, or others.

This policy will assist the NPAAMB Board, Executive Director, and program staff to address client complaints and maintain a record of complaints, including the actions taken to resolve the issue. On an annual basis, the complaints record will be used to improve the services delivered by NPAAMB.

The Complaint Policy is a formal safeguard established in part to reduce the vulnerability of NPAAMB supported youth. It reflects the Core Values of NPAAMB and a culture of openness, respect, responsiveness and learning. This policy forms one element of a comprehensive organizational approach to quality assurance and as such

is complemented by the policies regarding on and off duty conduct of staff and board; privacy; confidentiality.

## **Responsibilities**

**a) NPAAMB Board of Directors:**

Ensures that the policies and procedures regarding escalated complaints received by the process are responded to in a timely manner

Ensures that any complaints from clients/consumers that involve the Executive Director are responded to in a timely manner and follow the policy and procedures set forth in this policy

**b) NPAAMB Executive Director:**

Ensures that the policy and procedures on client complaints are incorporated into NPAAMB's quality assurance system.

**c) Management:**

Ensures that complaints are resolved in a timely manner, are kept confidential, and that a record of all complaints is maintained for accountability.

**d) Staff:**

It is the program staffs responsibility to ensure that clients are informed of agency service expectations, and that clients are provided with a written complaints guide that is easy to understand and use.

**e) Client/Consumer:**

NPAAMB expects that those making a formal complaint will:

- File the formal complaint as soon as possible after the decision or action they are concerned about has occurred.
- Provide information to support their complaint
- Act in good faith during the process
- Respect the confidentiality of other clients/consumers affected by the event that gave rise to the complaint
- Will not submit complaint on behalf of another person unless the client/consumer is under the age of 18 years and/or is affected by a diagnosed disability which would prevent them from advocating for their respective complaint

## **Definition**

Complaint: A concern about NPAAMB services or responses that has been submitted through the mechanisms provided for in the Client/Consumer Complaint Policy. A “complaint” is defined as negative feedback to NPAAMB, whether it is written or verbal. A written statement of concern or a problem is considered a formal complaint. Requests for information are not considered complaints.

Types of complaints include where a client/consumer has been:

- deemed ineligible for a service;
- excluded from a particular service;

or, where the client/consumer has a complaint about:

- the amount of service provided;
- the termination of a service; and,
- the quality of service provided, including the professional conduct of the staff providing the service.

A client may have a perceived complaint, based on their misinterpretation of the program’s policies and procedures, about their ability to access services.

“Malicious complaints” are complaints motivated solely on the intention of doing harm.

A “conflict of interest” is defined as participation or involvement in decisions where the result of the decision will unduly or unfairly favour one person over another as a result of relationships or preferences based on prohibited grounds.

“Prohibited grounds” under the Human Rights Code include: sex, race, age, creed, colour, marital status, sexual preference, disability, political or religious affiliation or family status.

## **Conflict of Interest**

If the nature of the complaint creates a conflict for the Executive Director, the complaint will

bypass the management level and be forwarded directly to the NPAAMB Board of Directors and discussed at the next scheduled Board Meeting. NPAAMB's conflict of interest policy will apply in all complaint cases.

### **Confidentiality**

Client complaints will be held in strict confidence by all parties involved. All complaints will be kept separate from client files, *with the exception of malicious complaints*.

### **Client access to their complaint file**

Any information regarding a client/consumer in NPAAMB complaints system is considered a part of the clients' personal record. A client will have access to their complaints record when a written request is submitted to the Executive Director. The complaints record will be provided to the client within 7 working days.

### **Principles**

NPAAMB respects the following principles when responding to and resolving complaints:

***Accessibility***- Clients/ Consumers have access to clear information about how the complaints resolution process works and can make a formal complaint in a clear manner.

***Administrative Fairness***- The process is transparent and applied fairly and consistently across the organization. Decisions are documented and communicated to the person making the complaint.

***No Retaliation***- Anyone making a formal complaint is able to do so in a safe and comfortable way, free from actual or threatened negative consequences from NPAAMB.

### **Operational Context**

NPAAMB promotes and encourages informal problem-solving efforts with individuals, clients and consumers on a regular day-to-day basis. This is the preferred route for addressing concerns.

When such efforts are unsuccessful, NPAAMB informs clients/consumers that they have a right to file a formal complaint through the complaints resolution process under this policy. The resolution process begins when a complaint is formally submitted to the Executive Director.

## **Process**

### **1. Completion of Client/Consumer Complaint Form**

- located on NPAAMB's website [npaamb.com](http://npaamb.com)
- email completed form to the attention of NPAAMB's Executive Director at [ed@npaamb.com](mailto:ed@npaamb.com)
- if assistance is required to complete the form, a staff member not involved in the incident/event that gave rise to the complaint will assist or in some cases, an advocate for the consumer/client may assist with completion of form
- NPAAMB Executive Director and/or designated Manager will respond to the formal complaint within 5 business days for non-urgent complaints and within 48 hours for urgent complaints

### **2. Meeting with NPAAMB Executive Director and/or Manager designate**

- To discuss the formal complaint in more detail
- A support person may attend the meeting with the client/consumer as a witness and in the case of those with disabilities, an advocate may attend and participate in the discussion

### **3. Resolution**

- Every effort will be made to come to a forward-looking resolution that will satisfactorily address the client/ consumers formal complaint
- The resolution of the complaint will be provided in writing to the client/consumer within 5 business days of the Resolution meeting. In the case of formal complaints involving a conflict of interest by the Executive Director, then the resolution meeting and outcome will be provided within a reasonable time frame of the culminating event by the NPAAMB Board of Directors- Personnel Committe

- References: Client/Consumer Complaint Form

**Acknowledgement & Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have read and understand the Client/Consumer Complaint Policy of NPAAMB. I agree to adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules set forth in this Policy, I will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_