



SNAP 102-2 APPLICATION PROCESSING General Complaints

Supersedes: SNAP 102-2 (10/01/09)

Reference: 7 CFR 271.6

Overview: Federal law requires states to maintain a system for handling general program complaints filed by clients, potential clients, or other concerned individuals or groups. This does not include complaints alleging discrimination based on the protected classes outlined under Civil Rights law, or complaints that can be pursued through the fair hearing process.

DEFINITION OF GENERAL COMPLAINT:

Any complaint regarding such areas as processing standards or service to clients and potential clients.

Examples of complaints:

- Consistently late benefit delivery
- Late processing of applications
- Staff rudeness or misunderstandings
- Concern about office hours or access
- Information not being shared or telephone calls not being returned

HCSO CENTRAL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Central Office will maintain records for three full federal fiscal years of complaints received and their disposition and will follow up to see that the complaints are responded to and resolved. The records will be reviewed at least annually to assess whether patterns of problems may be present in local offices, project areas, or throughout the state and to identify causes of those problems. When warranted, Central Office may have to take corrective action in the resolution of certain complaints.

In addition, Central Office will make information on the complaint system available to clients, potential clients, and other interested persons. This can be done with written materials, posters, or other appropriate means.

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER AND SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Field Office Managers and Supervisors are responsible for notifying clients and the public of their right to file general program complaints. They will maintain a central complaint log that contains at least the minimum information listed below, and will follow up on complaints to see that they are responded to and resolved. Complaints need to be reviewed periodically to see whether patterns of problems may be present and to identify possible causes of the problems. They are responsible to ensure that staff is trained on the proper processing of complaints.

CLIENT SERVICE COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Client Service Coordinators are responsible to record complaints received and see that they are logged, responded to, and resolved.

COMPLAINT LOGS:

Complaint logs need to contain the following minimum information:

- Name, address and phone number or other means of contacting the complainant.
- Name and location of the organization, office, or person the complaint is against.
- The date(s) on which the action causing the complaint occurred.
- The reason for the complaint.
- The action taken and the resolution or disposition of the complaint.

MONITORING:

Complaint logs are routinely reviewed during the SNAP Management Evaluation (ME) Process and reviews in OPA offices. Logs are evaluated for completion, complaint resolution, and are analyzed for patterns of problems and potential causes and solutions. Compliance with the General Program Complaint procedure is noted in the report generated following all MEs.

Effective Date: September 01, 2016