

The 519 Complaints Policy General Overview - 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

The 519 welcomes input. We investigate, examine and analyze complaints to help address, adjust and improve the way we do our work. The 519 accepts complaints from members of the public, including program participants, community, volunteers, and neighbours. We do not investigate complaints that are made on behalf of other people.

We seek to achieve a constructive resolution to all complaints where possible. The 519 strives to investigate, review and gather information in a non-biased manner so that we are able to fairly assess and resolve the complaint. Complainants will be asked to provide specific details so that complaints can be adequately and fairly investigated.

We are committed to providing an accessible complaints process and maintaining a safe and welcoming environment whenever possible that complies with our legislative and funder obligations. Accommodation through the complaint process is available at all stages in line with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and The 519's Accessibility policy.

The 519 is a City of Toronto Board of Management. We are required to meet conditions and obligations as a City agency, as well as funder requirements and various regulations and legislation. The 519's strategic directions and organizational mandate are approved by the Board. The responsibilities related to the operations of The 519 including matters involving employees are delegated to the Executive Director/Agency Head.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. The Complainant should speak with an employee regarding the issue/ complaint. Employees are expected to work with Complainant to try and achieve a positive resolution in line with organizational policy. If resolution is not achieved or possible at this stage, the employee will explain the next step in the complaint process which is to refer the matter to the relevant management employee.
2. If the Complainant chooses to elevate the complaint to the assigned management employee the Complainant is expected to provide relevant information that includes the complaint details and requested resolution – wherever possible this should be put in writing.
3. The assigned management employee will review the information provided by the Complainant and attempt to achieve an appropriate resolution. At the conclusion of the process the management employee will document the issue/complaint, steps taken to resolve the complaint and the decision regarding the complaint.
4. If resolution is still not achieved at this stage, the Complainant will be informed of the next step in the process. This may include a review of the decision by the relevant Director or Executive Director. This process may include meeting with the Complaint, reviewing the complaint details and decision. The Complainant is expected to document their complaint in writing, including relevant details and proposed resolution to the matter. At the conclusion of this process the Director/Executive Director will respond formally in writing to the complainant outlining the decision and process to appeal the decision.
5. If a resolution is still not achieved at the Complainant wants to appeal the Executive Director's decision the Complainant must submit a written complaint to The 519's Board Chair. The Board Chair will determine the next steps including documenting the final

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decision in writing to the Complainant and information regarding the City of Toronto Ombudsman.

TIME LIMITS

Complaints need to be submitted within a reasonable time frame otherwise the ability to investigate and resolve may be limited. All complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner while considering the seriousness of the complaint, impact of the issue on community/individual, and organizational resources and the time required to adequately investigate the complaint.

ROLE OF EMPLOYEES

The 519 creates space for change, contributing to the advancement of 2SLGBTQ+ justice, equality and inclusion in Toronto and beyond through service, space and leadership. The 519 is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that supports and fosters positive appropriate interpersonal interactions in our day-to-day work. The 519 values honesty, ethical conduct, positive solution-based decision-making, integrity and the fair, equitable, respectful treatment of all people regardless of their circumstances. Our employees are expected, at all times, to foster an atmosphere of respectful, professional, helpful community and public service.

Employees in the course of their duties are expected to comply with the policies and procedures of The 519 and all other applicable legislation and regulations. This includes but is not limited to, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Municipal Freedom of Information, Privacy and Protection Act (MFIPPA), the Ontario Human Rights Code, and various policies including Anti-Harassment and Discrimination, Wrongdoing and Reprisal Protection, Conflict of Interest policy, Workplace Violence, employment standards and other relevant policies and regulations.

ASSITANCE TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

A Complainant may engage an outside support person in the complaints process. The support person must consent to this role, be prepared to abide by the process and rules related to confidentiality. Formal consent documentation may be required.

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints are difficult, if not impossible, to assess or investigate and will not be dealt with through the complaint handling process. The 519 may receive an anonymous complaint, however, the effectiveness of the investigation, follow-up, and resolution will be limited. The 519 is not able to commit to investigating anonymous complaints or reporting on the conclusion as a result of the inability to exercise a complete investigation.

DEFINITION OF FRIVOLOUS AND VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

A frivolous complaint is one found upon investigation to have no reasonable grounds, does not make sense or is not serious in nature. A vexatious complaint is made without reasonable or probable cause or excuse and is instituted maliciously or on the basis of improper motives.

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The 519 treats all complaints seriously. In all cases, an internal review process is undertaken before a complaint is defined as frivolous or vexatious. In cases where complaints are deemed either frivolous or vexatious, The 519 will not conduct additional follow-up or continue to investigate the complaint. In such cases, Complainants will be directed to the Ombudsman of the City of Toronto for review should the complainant feel there is a procedural breach and they wish to complain further.

COMPLAINT ABOUT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A complaint about the Executive Director must be put in writing and directed to the Board Chair of The 519. The Board Chair will review the complaint and determine follow-up including reviewing the Complainant's written submission and management's response. At the end of that review, the Board Chair will inform the complainant in writing of the decision. All complaints regarding the Executive Director will be dealt with in a timely manner subject to the circumstances.

COMPLAINT ABOUT THE 519 BOARD

Complaints about the Board or members of the Board must be put in writing and directed to The 519 Board of Management care of the Board Chair. Formal complaints are managed by the Integrity Commissioner of the City of Toronto. For information about the process, please visit: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/accountability-officers/integrity-commissioner>.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The 519 is required to comply with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and other related legislation. The release of information recorded by The 519 is governed by the legislative requirements of the MFIPPA. All requests for information under the complaint process must be processed through the Corporate Access and Privacy office – contact The 519 Privacy Officer for more information privacy@the519.org.

ROLE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON OF THE CITY OF TORONTO

The City of Toronto Office of the Ombudsman is an independent impartial investigator of the public's complaints about the administration of the City government, including City agencies such as The 519. The Ombudsman may be approached to look at problems when The 519's procedures and processes have not resolved a complaint to the Complainant's satisfaction <https://www.ombudsmantoronto.ca>. The Ombudsman is a place of last resort and may make recommendations to agencies to change conduct, practices, or policies to create a system of administrative justice and fairness.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROCESS

Contact info@the519.org