

Complaints Policy / General Overview Information

POLICY STATEMENT

The 519 welcomes input. We believe complaints can be a valuable source of information. We investigate, examine and analyze complaints to help address, adjust and improve the way we do our work.

The 519 supports the right of community participants, volunteers, and community members to access a fair transparent process to complain about our programs, services, report fraud, a conflict of interest or wrongdoing and/or to dispute decisions we make that violate our organizational policies.

We are committed to providing an accessible complaints process and maintaining a safe and welcoming environment, 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).

We seek constructive resolution to all complaints where possible and in order to achieve this, 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 may be asked to provide specific details so that complaints can be adequately and fairly investigated.

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. Its responsibilities related to operations and matters involving employees are delegated to the Executive Director/Agency Head.

OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINT PROCESS

1. Complainant should speak with an employee regarding the issue/complaint. Employees are expected to work with Complainant to achieve a positive resolution where possible 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

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process. Employees will document the issue/complaint and steps taken to resolve the complaint and forward the information to their Supervisor/Manager or Director.

2. If no resolution is achieved, the employee will refer the Complainant to the appropriate management employee. If the Complainant chooses to elevate the complaint to the assigned management employee this individual will follow-up with the Complainant to review the complaint details.

Management will attempt to achieve an appropriate resolution and document the issue/complaint and steps taken to resolve the complaint. They will also explain the next step in the complaint process if the Complainant is dissatisfied with the decision.

3. If a resolution is still not achieved at this stage, the complainant will be informed of the next step in the process. This may include meeting with the relevant Director or Executive Director to achieve a resolution. At the conclusion of this process the Director/Executive Director will respond formally in writing to the complainant outlining the response and the process to complain if the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response.

4. If a resolution is still not achieved at the Executive Director level, the Complainant can submit a written complaint to The 519's Board Chair. In the event of a complaint the Board Chair will determine the next steps including documenting the final decision in writing to the Complainant and information regarding the City of Toronto Ombudsman.

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 LGBTQ2S equality and inclusion in

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Toronto and beyond through service, space and leadership. The 519 employees are expected to:

- Serve the public and community well
- Serve Council and our Board well
- Maintain political neutrality
- Uphold Toronto's motto - "*Diversity our Strength*"
- Use The 519 property, services and resources responsibly
- Apply judgement and discretion in our work
- Serve the public service well

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, Association of Community Centres (AOCC) Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy, Wrongdoing and Reprisal Protection policy, Conflict of Interest policy, Workplace Violence policy, employment standards and other relevant policies and regulations.

ASSISTANCE TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

When an employee receives a complaint, they are expected to try and resolve the issue/concern whenever possible within The 519's policies and procedures with support from management and seek guidance as appropriate including working with the complainant to identify resolutions to the complaint.

A Complainant may engage an outside support person throughout the complaints process. This support person

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must consent to this role and be prepared to abide rules around confidentiality. Formal consent documentation may be required.

DEFINITION OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints are often an expression of dissatisfaction sometimes specific to The 519 or larger systemic issues within the community. The complaints process works toward resolution often by providing information and helping the Complainant understand our mandate and legislative obligations. It also recognizes that there may be circumstances if a decision or action was not acceptable it will be reversed and/or corrected.

Complaints may include and are not limited to:

- The quality and types of services or programs we provide
- The way we operate our services and programs
- Our policies and procedures
- Our expectations of behaviour and community rules
- How we work with and treat the public
- The impact of programs and services in the neighbourhood
- Decisions about meeting space allocations and other policy based decisions

The 519 will accept a complaint from anyone from the public, including community participants, community members, volunteers, neighbours, and all other members of our community who are impacted by a decision or action involving The 519. We are not be able to investigate complaints that are made on behalf of other people.

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 proceed further.

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 reporting on the conclusion of anonymous complaints as a result of the inability to exercise a complete investigation process.

TIME LIMITS

Complaints need to be submitted within a reasonable time frame otherwise the ability to investigate and resolve may be limited.

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. In some cases, depending on the nature of the complaint, The 519 may seek advice from the appropriate City of Toronto departments. 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.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Complaints about the conduct of 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->

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[government/accountability-operations-customer-service/accountability-officers/integrity-commissioner.](#)

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality refers to keeping the details of complaint private as required under legislation. 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.

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.