



## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE**

*[Approved on: November 20, 2025]*

### **PURPOSE**

This policy was developed to ensure a fair, consistent and transparent process to respond to and resolve public complaints about the programs, services and activities of Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS). ACAS staff and Board members will respond to each complaint in a considerate, respectful and timely manner and make every reasonable effort to arrive at a resolution.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all complaints received from members of the public (including ACAS service users, members, donors, volunteers, and community partners) about any aspect of our programs and services or the conduct of our staff members and volunteers.

### **POLICY**

All ACAS community members including service users, members, donors, volunteers and community partners have the right to express dissatisfaction about ACAS' programs, services and activities or the way in which ACAS employees or volunteers conduct themselves in performing their duties. ACAS shall provide and make accessible a process to encourage the timely resolution of complaints received in keeping with the procedure outlined below. When possible, the response will indicate any changes that will occur or reason(s) why changes cannot occur following the complaint process. The complaints process at ACAS will uphold confidentiality and ensure that the complainant does not experience any penalty or retaliation.

### **PROCEDURE**

Complainants may choose either an informal or a formal procedure to seek resolution of their concerns.

#### ***Informal Complaints***

We encourage a complainant to first attempt to address and settle any concerns through discussion with the ACAS staff person or volunteer most connected with the situation. If this informal process does not lead to resolution of the grievance, or the complainant is not satisfied with the response received, they can lodge a formal complaint.

#### ***Formal Complaints***

The procedure for formal complaints is as follows depending on the nature of the complaint.

#### **Complaints about a staff/volunteer**

Please direct your formal complaint to the Executive Director (in writing by email/mail or verbally by phone/in-person).

- 1) Please send your written complaint via email to [ed@acas.org](mailto:ed@acas.org) or mail in an envelope marked "confidential" to Executive Director, Asian Community AIDS Services, 260 Spadina Avenue, Suite 410 Toronto, ON M5T 2E4.

- 2) For a verbal complaint, please call the Executive Director at 416-963-4300 or book an in-person meeting with the Executive Director.
- 3) The Executive Director will review the complaint, complete an investigation, and provide a written response to the complainant within eight weeks. If more than eight weeks are required to complete the investigation, the Executive Director will provide the complainant with a written explanation about the delay.
- 4) The Executive Director will assess the gravity of the complaint and may consider putting any staff member named in the complaint on a paid leave until the review is completed. If the complaint is about a volunteer, they may be asked not to be active within the agency until the review is completed.
- 5) If a response to a complaint is deemed unsatisfactory, the complainant will be directed to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors within four weeks of receiving the Executive Director's written response.
- 6) The Executive Committee will call for a meeting to review the complaint and provide a written response to the complainant within six weeks of the meeting.
- 7) The decision of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall be final.

#### **Complaints about the Executive Director**

Please direct your formal complaint to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors (in writing by email/mail or verbally in-person).

- 1) Please send your written complaint via email to [boardchair@acas.org](mailto:boardchair@acas.org) or mail in an envelope marked "confidential" to Executive Committee/Board of Directors, Asian Community AIDS Services, 260 Spadina Avenue, Suite 410, Toronto, ON M5T 2E4.
- 2) For a verbal complaint, please book an in-person meeting with a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors (Board Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer or Secretary).
- 3) The Executive Committee will call for a meeting to review the complaint and provide a written response to the complainant within six weeks of the meeting.
- 4) The Executive Committee will assess the gravity of the complaint and may consider putting the Executive Director on a paid leave until the review is completed.
- 5) The decision of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall be final.

#### **Complaints about Board Member(s)**

Please direct your formal complaint to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors (in writing by email/mail or verbally in-person).

- 1) Please send your written complaint via email to [boardchair@acas.org](mailto:boardchair@acas.org) or mail in an envelope marked "confidential" to Executive Committee/Board of Directors, Asian Community AIDS Services, 260 Spadina Avenue, Suite 410, Toronto, ON M5T 2E4.
- 2) For a verbal complaint, please book an in-person meeting with a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors (Board Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer or Secretary).
- 3) The Executive Committee will call for a meeting to review the complaint and provide a written response to the complainant within six weeks of the meeting.
- 4) If the complaint concerns a member of the Executive Committee, that member shall remove themselves from the Committee while an investigation and response is pending.
- 5) The decision of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall be final.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- All formal complaints are required to be documented and formalized in writing with a signature using the Complaint Form\* before the review process is initiated. The ACAS representative hearing the complaint will assist the complainant with filling out the form if necessary.
- The staff person/volunteer about whom the complaint is being made will receive a copy of the signed Complaint Form.
- Formal complaints should be lodged in a timely manner and within a maximum of three months from the reason for the complaint. This will allow for a careful review of the facts. Complaints made about an event that occurred over three months preceding the initial report will still be reviewed but may not lead to a thorough review due to the passage of time.
- Any ACAS representative responding to a formal complaint will do so in writing.
- Information about this policy and copies of the complaint forms will be widely accessible through ACAS staff and made available for download on the ACAS website.
- All information concerning a complaint is confidential. Only parties involved in resolving the complaint should have information about the complaint. Documentation related to the complaint will be filed in the Executive Director's office. If a complaint involves the Executive Director or a Board member then the documentation will be held by the Board of Directors.
- No complainants will experience penalty or retaliation as a result of their complaint. If the complainant is a service user and they prefer not to access services at ACAS after lodging a complaint, the agency will help provide a referral to another organization or program that meets the service user's needs.

