

<b>Policy Name</b>	Complaints Procedure Policy	<b>Policy Number</b>	1.5
<b>Approval Level</b>	Board of Directors	<b>Group</b>	Administration & Finance
<b>Required By</b>	Toronto Shelter Standards Chapter 7; <i>Housing Services</i> Act s. 155-159, O Reg 367/11		
<b>Cross Reference</b>	Intake and Assessment Policy Admission Policy		
<b>Effective Date</b>	February 24, 2025	<b>Last Review Date(s)</b>	February 24, 2025
<b>Next Review Date(s)</b>	February 23, 2026	<b>Responsibility</b>	Executive Director

## **Romero House Complaints Procedure Policy**

- 1. Preamble**
- 2. Definitions**
- 3. Goal of this policy**
- 4. Types of Complaints**
- 5. Principles**
- 6. Procedure for Making and Handling Complaints**
- 7. Application of this policy**

# **ROMERO HOUSE**

## **Complaints Procedure Policy**

### **1. Preamble**

Romero House values building a community where all people feel respected. This involves welcoming feedback, concerns, and complaints from residents and walk-ins who receive services from the organization. Romero House views such information as an essential component of our work and life together.

Romero House is committed to responding to all complaints in a fair, professional and transparent manner.

This policy outlines the process and procedures that Romero House adheres to when a resident or walk-in makes a complaint regarding their stay at or support from Romero House, or when a resident or walk-in wishes to appeal a decision that has been made by Romero House.

### **2. Definitions**

**Resident:** refers to a person (not including staff and workers) who is currently listed on a signed tenancy agreement with Romero House

**Walk-in:** refers to a person who is receiving assistance from Romero House via the intake program, including former residents

**Complaint** - any expression of dissatisfaction, either verbally or in writing, about services or operations requested of or delivered by Romero House and about interactions between members of Romero House community.

**Formal complaint** – a complaint that cannot be resolved with an informal intervention, requiring the filing of a *Formal Complaint and Appeals Form*.

**Appeal** - a request that a higher authority review a decision made by Romero House staff in order to have the decision changed or reversed.

**Frivolous Complaint** - a complaint found upon investigation, to have no reasonable grounds, to make no sense, or to not be serious.

**Vexatious Complaint** - a complaint made for the purpose of annoying others.

**Complaint and Appeals Committee** – a committee made up of three board members to respond to formal complaints.

### **3. Goal of this policy**

To goal of this policy is to:

- Provide a mechanism for persons who have requested or received services from Romero House to raise concerns
- Ensure that all who receive services from Romero House feel welcomed, respected and are treated equitably.
- Ensure accountability in the service that Romero House provides.
- Ensure that Romero House complies with its own policies and procedures.
- Value feedback in order to assist in improving services, policies and procedures

### **4. Types of Complaints**

The scope of complaints may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The services or programs the organization provides
- Organizational policies and procedures
- House rules and expectations
- Staff/worker/volunteer engagement or interactions with residents or walk-ins

Note that complaints related to allegations of harassment or discrimination will be responded to according to Romero House's Harassment Policy

### **5. Principles**

- The process for making complaints and the complaints and appeals process is clearly communicated and accessible
- All complaints are received and evaluated in a fair, professional and timely manner and necessary corrective action is taken where warranted.
- Complainants are advised of their options to escalate their complaint if they are dissatisfied with its treatment or outcome
- Complaints are used to assist in improving services, policies and procedures

### **6. Procedure for making and handling complaints**

- A. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Anonymous complaints may be made by mail to the Romero House Centre. However, it should be understood that the effectiveness of the organization's ability to conduct follow-up and seek an appropriate resolution may be limited in such cases.
- B. As per the chart below, the nature of the complaint determines the manner in which complaints are to be addressed and how they can be escalated

through the organization and beyond, if the complainant feels the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved.

Based on the nature of the complaint, the appropriate primary contact should be informed of the complaint to conduct follow-up, mediation and seek appropriate resolution.

If the complaint is not resolved after the intervention of the primary contact, the appropriate secondary contact (if applicable) should be informed to conduct further follow-up, mediation and seek appropriate resolution.

If the complaint is still not resolved, the complaint should be documented in the Romero House's Formal Complaint and Appeals Form as a formal complaint, and then brought to the attention of Romero House's Complaints and Appeals Committee to conduct further follow-up, mediation and seek appropriate resolution.

If the complaint cannot be resolved and it relates to housing at 2387 Dundas Street West (Edna Lane), it should be escalated to Toronto Shelter Support Services for resolution.

Nature of the Complaint	<b>Primary Stage</b> Report to and dealt with by	<b>Secondary Stage</b> Report to and dealt with by	<b>Tertiary Stage</b> Complaints and Appeals committee	<b>Final Stage</b>
About a Volunteer/Worker/Staff	Director or Assistant Director	Director	Complaints and Appeals Committee	
About the Director	President/Chair of the Board		Complaints and Appeals Committee	
Services and Programs and all other complaints	Responsible Team Member	Team member supervisor (i.e. Asst Director, Director)	Complaints and Appeals Committee	
About housing provided at Edna Lane (2387 Dundas Street West)	Responsible Team Member	Team member supervisor (i.e. Asst Director, Director)		Toronto Shelter Support Services

- C. Romero House will not follow the above procedure if it is determined that a complaint is frivolous or vexatious.
- D. A written record of all formal complaints and a written record of the resolution of formal complaints should be kept by Romero House.
- E. Within 30 days of being received, the Complaints and Appeals committee will notify the complainant of the resolution in writing. If investigation determines that the reasons for the complaint are not justified, and no further action is required, the complainant is notified. If investigation determines that the complaint is justified, the complainant is notified of corrective action to be taken and any remedy proposed. If investigation requires more time, an update is provided.
- F. All complaints and appeals will be kept confidential insofar as only the individuals directly involved (including designated staff and/or Board members) in a complaint or appeal process should have access to the information about the complaint.
- G. Any decision made by Romero House's Complaints and Appeals Committee should be considered final, and once the Complaints and Appeals Committee renders such a decision, the person making the complaint will have exhausted Romero House's complaints and appeals process.

## **7. Application of this policy**

The complaints procedure as set out in this policy shall be posted in the Romero House Centre, the Romero House website, and provided to new residents and shall be made available to any person served by Romero House upon request. It shall also be clearly communicated to staff, workers, and volunteers on an annual basis and/or when beginning service at Romero House.

<for information purposes - not as part of the policy – it can be developed separately so changes can be made more easily)

## ROMERO HOUSE COMPLAINT AND APPEALS FORM

Please fill out this form as completely as possible and return to: **Romero House**, 1558 Bloor St. West Toronto, ON, Email: [info@romerohouse.org](mailto:info@romerohouse.org) Phone: 416 763 1303

### Contact info of Complainant

<b>Full Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>

How do you wish to be reached regarding your complaint?     Email     Phone

**Acting as a Representative:** If you are submitting a complaint on behalf of someone else, Romero House may, depending on the nature of the complaint, require written permission from that person to gather personal information from you. In filing this complaint, are you acting as a representative of someone else?     Yes     No

<b>If Applicable, Name of Representative:</b>
<b>Contact info for Representative:</b>

### Details of the Complaint (for purpose of review and corrective action)

1. Nature of the Complaint. Please include as much information as possible
2. Staff/Workers/Volunteers Involved (if known):
3. If applicable, How has your complaint been dealt with thus far? Provide as much detail as possible.

--

4. How would you like to see your complaint resolved?
-------------------------------------------------------

5. List of enclosed documents. (Please include copies, not originals, of any documentation in support of your complaint.) If applicable.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Complainant's Signature
-------------------------

Date submitted
----------------

**To be completed by Romero House for Complaints and Appeals Committee**

Complainant:
Date Received:
1. Detail communications with complainant and other parties
2. Detail decision and action taken at primary and secondary stage (if any)
3. Detail the complainant's response (if any)
4. Any recommendations or additional information for committee
Completed by:
Date:

**To be completed by Complaints and Appeals Committee to keep on file**

<b>Record of Formal Complaint Resolution</b>
Name of Complainant
Details of Complaint
Communications with Complainant and other parties
Decision and Action Taken
Complainant's Response
Completed by:
Date: