

<b>University Settlement Policy</b>			
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<b>Issued:</b>	June 12, 2009	<b>Effective:</b>	July 1, 2009

**POLICY STATEMENT**

University Settlement is committed to providing the best possible service to the clients and communities we serve.

At University Settlement, we as staff, volunteers and board:

- Value partnerships and teamwork.
- Strive to be responsive to the community's needs.
- Celebrate the diversity of our community and endeavour to operate with equity and fairness.
- Believe in being accountable and transparent to our stakeholders.
- Work towards excellence in all that we do.

We recognize that concerns may arise and that they need to be addressed. We value feedback and, where appropriate, will incorporate feedback into changes and modifications to our programs and services.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that clients, program participants, and community members are aware of the process of making a complaint about their experiences at, and with, University Settlement and that any such complaint is dealt with in a fair and timely manner.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to anyone using University Settlement programs, services and facilities and/or interacting with our staff and volunteers in the community (hereafter referred to as clients).

**GUIDELINES**

- Clients have the right to provide feedback about their experience at University Settlement without fear of interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal.
- Feedback can be about anything including but not limited to: a service, a program, a person, or the physical environment, etc.
- Clients have the right to ask for translation if needed and we will make every effort to accommodate, where possible.
- Any individual who has a complaint filed against them has the right to be informed of the allegations and the right to respond.

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- The resolution of the complaint should be timely so as not to delay appropriate action for the complainant or cause undue stress for any individual involved.
- All complaints will be treated with confidentiality unless laws otherwise request informing appropriate authorities.

## **PROCEDURES**

- 1) Individuals with a complaint are encouraged to discuss their concerns directly with the other person involved, as many issues can be successfully resolved in this manner.
- 2) If this is not possible or has already been attempted without satisfactory resolution, feedback can be given in person, by telephone, by letter, or by electronic communication to the Director/Manager of the department in which the incident occurred, or any other management staff person.

If the concern is about the Management Team member, it should directly go to the Executive Director and likewise if the concern is regarding the Executive Director, it should directly go to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

Staff can provide you with the name and contact information of the appropriate person and this information is available on our website and at the reception of any of our offices.

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- 3) Once the Management Team member/Executive Director/Executive Committee of the Board of Directors is made aware of the complaint a review of the complaint will occur. The review includes talking with the individual(s) involved, and reviewing any documents necessary. If appropriate the staff person(s) is notified of the complaint and is asked for his/her comments regarding the issue. After reviewing the complaint, University Settlement might respond in the following ways by:
  - a. Providing an explanation.
  - b. Changing a decision.
  - c. Confirming an existing decision and explaining why that decision was reached.
  - d. Changing a policy or practice.
  - e. Providing additional training.
  - f. Other possible outcomes depending on the nature of the complaint.
  
- 4) If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, he/she may make their complaint directly to the next level either verbally or in writing.
  
- 5) If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, it will be referred to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will decide if they are able to resolve the complaint, strike a board committee and/or solicit the assistance of an external resource (such as a partner agency) to review the case as an impartial advisor. While it is hoped that the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will proceed quickly with the complaint, the complainant must recognize that the Board of Directors is a voluntary group and are not as accessible as staff of the Centre.
  
- 6) University Settlement will maintain a complaints tracking system for all formal complaints. A form will be filled out when complaints are received, and be used to track follow-up actions taken to resolve the complaint. These forms are maintained and reviewed by the Senior Director of Administration and Finance and the Executive Director or their designates. A report regarding the nature of complaints received and actions taken will be provided to the Board of Directors on an annual basis.