Client Grievance Policy and Procedure

Purpose: The Client Grievance Policy and Procedure recognizes the rights of clients to submit complaints, grievances, and recommendations regarding the organization's services, staff, volunteers, or operations. All complaints and grievances will be handled objectively, fairly, confidentially as appropriate, and in a timely manner.

Food Outreach prohibits any form of reprisal, intimidation, or discrimination against an individual for voicing a complaint, submitting a grievance, or making a recommendation in good faith. Individuals may share concerns with any Food Outreach staff member or submit them electronically through the Feedback Form available on the Food Outreach website.

Food Outreach is committed to reviewing concerns, identifying appropriate resolutions, and using feedback to improve program quality and service delivery. Compliments regarding Food Outreach services, staff, and volunteers are also welcomed and shared with the team as appropriate.

Procedure

1. **Submission of Complaints, Grievances, and Recommendations**
    - Clients may share a complaint, grievance, or recommendation with any Food Outreach staff member.
    - Individuals may also submit feedback electronically through the Microsoft Form linked on the Food Outreach website.
    - Clients receive information about this policy in the Client Enrollment Forms, and Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) review the policy with clients during intake.

2. **Documentation and Initial Response**
    - Any staff member who receives a complaint or grievance will complete a Grievance Report Form immediately and submit it to leadership.
    - All reports will be documented and referred to the appropriate leadership personnel and Quality Improvement Committee for review and resolution.
3. **Review and Investigation**
    - The Director of Operations and Director of Programs review electronic submissions as they are received.
    - The review will assess the nature of the concern, relevant circumstances, and appropriate corrective actions or remedies.
    - Additional leadership and staff support will be sought as needed based on the nature and severity of the concern.
4. **Communication and Proposed Resolution**
    - Leadership will follow up with the individual who submitted the complaint or grievance, if desired, promptly and through their preferred method of contact, including by phone, certified mail, etc.
    - The follow-up will communicate the findings of the review and any proposed remedies or next steps.
5. **Escalation and Further Resolution**
    - If the concern remains unresolved following initial communication, it will be referred to the Executive Director for further review and a final determination.
    - The Executive Director will determine any additional actions necessary to address the concern.
6. **Documentation and Recordkeeping**
    - A summary of the grievance report, investigation findings, actions taken, and final outcome will be documented in the client file.
    - Grievance records will be maintained securely, with access limited to individuals who need the information to review or resolve the concern.
    - Records will be retained in accordance with Food Outreach's recordkeeping policies and applicable requirements.

7. **Quality Improvement and Organizational Review**
    - The Quality Improvement Committee will review electronic complaints, grievances, and recommendations quarterly to identify trends, recurring concerns, and opportunities for program improvement.
    - Food Outreach will use feedback and identified trends to inform corrective actions, policy revisions, staff training, and continuous quality improvement.

Non-Retaliation

No client will be threatened, intimidated, discriminated against, or otherwise penalized for submitting a complaint, grievance, or recommendation in good faith. All individuals are encouraged to share concerns and feedback without fear of reprisal.