

 **DOUGLAS COUNTY**
COLORADO
Conflict Resolution Process

Because contact with the Complaint processor at the Colorado Department of Human Services and/or the Child Welfare Ombudsman have authority to consider a broader scope of complaints or concerns about county department of human services activity or non-action, it is suggested that those mechanisms be seriously considered before attempting to access the statutory Conflict Resolution Process which is limited in scope and advisory only. If the statutory resolution process is requested, the complaint or concerns must be brought to the attention of the involved Caseworker and Supervisor, as well as Department Director first, for attempted resolution in a 30 day time frame, including what issues are involved that may be within the scope of the statutory conflict resolution process.

County staff involved including DCDHS Director will communicate to Complainant the proposed resolution as to the stated complaint/concerns and whether any aspect of the particular situation is within the scope of the Conflict Resolution Process.

If any aspect of the stated complaint/concerns are within the scope of the Conflict Resolution Process, the issue(s) will be referred to the Conflict Resolution Process coordinator who will supply the two forms to the Complainant to complete in order to access the Human Services Citizen Review Panel (CRP) at the second level of the process and the third level of the process involving the BOCC review, if appropriate.

Complainant offers whatever information they wish to be considered. DCDHS to provide file to CRP, except identifying information about reporting party and any other legally protected information related to this context. The CRP can conduct evidentiary hearing with testimony by witnesses requested by Complainant and Department. Complainant, DCDHS, and employee involved can have attorney present to observe, but not participate. There is no cross-examination and no administration of oath to witnesses testifying.

The CRP reviews complaint and issues written recommendations within thirty (30) days of referral of Complaint to them.

CRP recommendations sent to DCHDS Director who issues written decision regarding implementing all of the CRP recommendations, some of said recommendations, or none of the recommendations and sends this written decision to Complainant, CRP, employee(s) involved.

If Complainant agrees with DCDHS Director's written decision as to CRP recommendations, the Complainant's agreement is reduced to writing and the matter is closed.

If the Complainant doesn't agree, the matter is referred to the Douglas County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) who must review the matter and issue written recommendations within thirty (30) days. The BOCC's written recommendations are provided to the DCDHS Director who determines whether to implement all, some, or none of the BOCC recommendations.

The DCDHS Director's written decision is sent to the Complainant, the CRP, the employee(s) involved, and the BOCC. The DCDHS Director's written decision is documented in the DCDHS file regarding the Complaint.

The process is complete and is advisory to the DCDHS Director only, except if disciplinary action against an employee is recommended by the Director, the employee subject to discipline may exercise there rights pursuant to the applicable personnel system and could possibly take legal action in court regarding the discipline recommended by the DCDHS Director.