

## Grievance Procedures and Policies

The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) recognizes the value of a formalized and written grievance procedure. To that end, each Sub-Grantee providing Program Staff Support for funding received through the Region Ten Emergency Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) is expected to have its own grievance policy and procedure approved by its governing board. An overarching procedure for all complaints and formal grievances that affect the TJPDC is contained in this manual. It is in no way intended to replace or supplant any funded Sub-Grantee's policy, or any Sub-Grantee's responsibility to maintain such policies.

### Definitions

**Complaint** is defined as a verbal expression of dissatisfaction by the Sub-Grantee, participant, or community member regarding services provided by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission which can be resolved at the point at which it occurs by the staff present. Complaints are considered resolved when Sub-Grantee, participant, or community member is satisfied with the action taken by the agency in question.

**Grievance** is defined as a written expression of dissatisfaction with some aspect of the TJPDC's service that has not been resolved despite attempts to do so by Sub-Grantees, participants, or community members at the point of service. Any such written expression sent to the TJPDC will be considered a grievance.

### Types of Grievances

**Participant/Community Member Grievances:** If a participant or community member has a complaint or grievance regarding a Sub-Grantee providing Program Staff Support, it is recommended that they follow the Sub-Grantee's procedures for collecting and resolving complaints or grievances.

An effort to resolve complaints locally should be made before filing a formal grievance with the TJPDC.

**Sub-Grantee Grievances:** It is the responsibility of all boards, staff, and volunteers of the Sub-Grantees to comply with the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program Funding Guidelines. Anyone filing a grievance against the TJPDC concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program Funding Guidelines must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the TJPDC is violating such guidelines.

An effort to resolve complaints against the TJPDC should be made before filing a formal grievance with the TJPDC. This can be done by contacting the Chief Operating Officer of the TJPDC. If this does not resolve the issue, the Sub-Grantee, participant, or community member may begin the grievance procedure as stated in the policy below.

### Policy: Grievance

It is the policy of the TJPDC that its Sub-Grantees, participants, and community members will have a fair and efficient process to present and resolve grievances.

### Procedure for complaints regarding the TJPDC

1. Any person wishing to file a grievance should submit a written statement to the TJPDC Executive Director describing the alleged violation and any actions taken on behalf of the person or agency

to resolve the issue. The statement should be as specific as possible and contain the name and location of the agency, date and time of incident, and any other details that may be helpful to the TJPDC staff as they investigate the incident. Grievance paperwork filed with the TJPDC Executive Director must provide the name and contact information of the individual(s)/agency filing the grievance so that TJPDC staff can contact them to discuss the grievance. Identifiable information of the reporting person will be considered confidential and is only collected to enable further investigation of the grievance. Grievances that do not contain contact information of the person filing the grievances, or grievances filed by a third party, will not be considered and no further action will be taken.

2. Grievances must be filed with the TJPDC Executive Director within 30 calendar days from the date of the incident.
3. The Executive Director will notify the Region Ten Emergency Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP) Advisory Committee of the grievance within 7 calendar days of its receipt.
4. The Executive Director will review all information, conduct interviews with the reporting person/agency stated in the grievance, and gather relevant information about the situation. The review process will be completed with 14 calendar days from the date the Executive Director provided notification to the RMRP Advisory Committee.
5. Following the grievance review, the TJPDC Executive Director will provide to the individual/agency, as well as to the RMRP Advisory Committee, a written statement summarizing the outcome of the grievance review, including the corrective action required and a timeline to complete corrective actions. Proceedings should be conducted honestly, fairly, and without bias. All efforts should be made to resolve grievances in a timely manner. The time frames provided indicate a maximum number of days for each step in the process.

#### Grievance Appeal Procedure

If the proposed resolution is not satisfactory to the individual/agency filing the grievance, s/he will be advised to file an appeal with the RMRP Advisory Committee.

1. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 7 calendar days from the date marked on the determination letter from the Executive Director. Appeals received after 7 calendar days from the date of the letter will not be reviewed.
2. The RMRP Advisory Committee will notify the TJPDC Executive Committee within 7 days of receiving a written appeal.
3. The RMRP Advisory Committee will review the appeal and may designate one or more committee members or other assigned members to review the appeal, supporting documentation, and collect additional information necessary to consider the appeal. After gathering relevant information, the RMRP Advisory Committee will review all collected information and make a determination as to whether the TJPDC Executive Director followed the grievance procedure and the corrective action was reasonable based on the evidence presented. An RMRP Advisory committee member or designated member(s) will inform the appealing party in writing of their determination within 14 calendar days from the date of the appeal letter. The decision of the RMRP Advisory Committee is final.

All complaints or grievances involving vulnerable adults or youth under age 18 will be immediately turned over to the appropriate local office.

## Grievance Timeline

### Step 1: Incident Occurs

- A written grievance can be filed within 30 calendar days from the date of the incident.

### Step 2: Grievance Filed

- TJPDC Executive Director will notify the RMRP Advisory Committee of the grievance within 7 calendar days from receipt.

### Step 3: Agency Response and Outcome

- TJPDC Executive Director will review the grievance and provide a written determination letter to the individual/agency filing the complaint and the RMRP Advisory Committee within 14 days of receiving the written grievance.

### Step 4: Appeal

- An individual/agency can submit an appeal to the RMRP Advisory Committee within 7 calendar days of the date marked on the determination letter.

### Step 5: Response to Appeal

- The RMRP Advisory Committee shall review and make a final decision within 14 days from the date on the appeal letter.

*This policy and current members of the RMRP Advisory Committee shall be posted on the TJPDC and each Sub-Grantee web site and program documents.*