

Resource Development	External Stakeholder Complaints	1-011
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POLICY STATEMENT

SCIO is a registered Canadian charity that is committed to high standards of conduct. We recognize that our public stakeholders have a right to provide any concerns or complaints they may have.

SCIO responds to complaints about the quality of service related to the organization's policies and procedures, the application of those policies and procedures or the conduct of the organization or its representatives.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to create a transparent and fair method of receiving and responding to external complaints.

SCOPE

This policy is for external stakeholders of the organization.

Internal non-employment complaints are reported through Management or under the SCIO's Whistleblower policy as appropriate. Employment-related complaints are reported through supervisors and the Human Resources department.

Examples of external complaints would include but not limited to:

- Repeated requests for tax receipts
- Repeated requests for removal from a mailing list and/or discontinuing any form of communication
- Repeated perceived errors made by an employee /volunteer
- Repeated unfair or discourteous actions/statements by employee/volunteer

RESPONSIBILITY

Director, Development is responsible for handling the management and reporting of external complaints.

Employees and volunteers are responsible for communicating any external complaints to the Director of Resource Development.

GUIDELINES

1. This policy applies to complaints from SCIO's public stakeholders, including donors, corporate partners, event and community volunteers who have complaints that the organization is not complying with its policies and procedures or as listed above.
2. The External Complaints policy will be accessed on our website through complaints@sciontario.org along with direction on how to submit a complaint.
3. SCIO will respond to a complaint and make every reasonable effort to investigate it within two (2) business days. Complaints will be addressed in a fair and consistent manner; however, some complaints may require more effort to conclude to the satisfaction of the external stakeholder.
4. Although a complainant is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, a complainant should be able to demonstrate that he or she has made a report in good faith.
5. Complaints will be recorded in a spreadsheet for yearly review in order to implement organizational improvements if a consistent pattern of complaint is seen.

PROCEEDURES

1. Initial complaints made to SCIO through complaints@sciontario.org, phone or mail will initially be handled by the Director, Resource Development. As determined by the organization, another employee may be assigned to handle the complaint.
2. The Director, Resource Development will investigate the complaint and may seek further information from another, director, employee, contractor, volunteer or stakeholder of the organization, as appropriate. The actions taken by SCIO with respect to a particular allegation will depend on the nature of the reported complaint.

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3. Each case is unique, but the organization will handle any complaint reported pursuant to this policy respectfully and with diplomacy. If the facts warrant it, the organization will take corrective action or disciplinary action equal to the severity of the complaint.
4. SCIO responds as soon as possible after the complaint has been reviewed and a determination has been reached. The complainant will be advised of the results of the review within two (2) business days.
5. A thorough investigation will depend on our ability to gather additional information. Complainants are encouraged to share their identity when they make a complaint so that further enquires can be made during the investigation. SCIO explores anonymous inquiries to the extent possible but weighs the prudence of continuing an investigation against the likelihood of confirming the alleged facts or circumstances from reliable sources.
6. SCIO keeps an excel spreadsheet of complaints received, including name of complainant (if available), type of complaint, date of complaint and resolution of the complaint. The data is reviewed by the Director, Development to determine whether there are frequently recurring complaints of a similar type. If there are, an investigation will be initiated to determine whether there are systemic process issues that need to be addressed to eliminate reoccurring incidences.
7. A complaints report is provided to the Board at least annually of the number, type and resolutions of complaints received.
8. Many complaints can be resolved easily and quickly, often at the time they arise, by speaking with the Director, Development. If a complaint cannot be resolved in this way, or if a public stakeholder wishes to make a further complaint, the complaint should be submitted in writing directly to the CEO. SCIO will acknowledge the receipt of a complaint within two (2) business days.
9. Complaints will be stored in electronic file to be used once a year for a report to the Board. The Director, Development and the Database Administrator will have access to these files and can provide updates and reports upon request by the CEO.

In the spirit of continuous improvement SCIO will work diligently to fix problems, correct mistakes and address concerns. We will always treat you with courtesy and respect, listen to what you say, keep you informed about our progress, and finally provide you with a response.

From time to time we receive complaints that do not relate directly to something that SCIO is responsible for. We are a charity with limited resources and we must use these in the best way possible.

There may be rare occasions when we choose not to respond to a complaint. These include:

- When a complaint is about something that SCIO has no direct connection to, we may choose to reply to clear our name but we are not obliged to.
- When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint that we have already responded to, they will be given escalation points, but we may choose not to reply again and we will always inform you of our decision to do this.
- When a complainant is being obviously abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner.
- When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
- When a complaint is illegible.
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to us and numerous other organizations as part of a bulk mailing or email. In this instance we can choose whether it is necessary for us to reply or not.
- SCIO will not respond to complaints made anonymously. However, we will investigate the complaint and use the information to improve in any way that we can.

TOOLS REQUIRED

Whistleblower Policy (Ref HR 4-011)

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