

Grievance and External Review Committee Process

At any time, you have the right to have an advocate come with you or speak for you. You can ask an advocacy organization to help you file your grievance. The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless will serve as a point of contact for those who want assistance in locating an advocate.

Grievance Timeline:

1. Grievance handled internally within an agency (Weeks 1-2)
2. If agency solution is unsatisfactory or there is no response, the grievance may be forwarded to the Office of Homelessness for referral to the External Review Committee (Weeks 3-4)

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is a Grievance?

A Grievance is a formal complaint or allegation against a person or organization based upon shelter assurances.

2. Who is on the External Review Committee?

The External Review Committee (ERC) has the final authority for grievances within the Rhode Island homeless system.

It is made up of three members appointed by the Chair of the RI Housing Resource Commission. Members will include:

- Two persons who are members of the Homeless Input Committee and are currently or formerly homeless;
- One person who is a member of the Office of Homelessness who is affiliated with a human service provider that that would not be subject to a grievance.

3. Do I have to appear before the External Review Committee?

Ideally you should appear before the ERC to state your case, but it is not required.

4. May I have witnesses?

You may have witnesses as appropriate and deemed necessary.

5. Can I have an advocate?

Yes. At any time during the process you may ask for an advocate.

6. Is there a time limit for bringing a grievance to the ERC?

Yes. All grievances should be filed with the ERC within one month of the incident.

What to do when you want to file a grievance or complaint?

1. Contact the agency and ask for a Grievance Form.
2. Fill out the form and turn it into the Agency. *(Two copies of the form will be made, one will be kept at the agency and one will be returned to you.)*
3. The agency will consider the grievance and may wish to speak with you. They will make decisions or take action (as necessary) to resolve the complaint.
4. After a decision has been made the agency will record the resolution on the Grievance Form and provide you with a copy.
5. If the grievance has not been solved to your satisfaction, contact the ERC at:

**Office of Homelessness, External Review Committee
Office of Housing and Community Development
One Capitol Hill
Providence, R1 02908
(401) 222-4892**

6. The Office of Homelessness will refer the grievance to the ERC.
7. The ERC will set up a meeting with you to collect your testimony and any additional information, and then will review the following records:
 - a. The Agency's Grievance/Complaint Form (Completed by you)
 - b. The Agency's response/resolution (Completed by the Agency)

Based on the information provided above, the ERC will consider the grievance and make a final decision on the course of action to be taken. The ERC may choose to uphold or override previous decisions. The ERC will notify you of the decision and ensure that their resolution is carried out.

8. The ERC will meet bi-monthly on regularly scheduled days and times. Every effort will be made to provide at least one week notice of the meeting to all who have filed grievances.
9. The ERC deliberations will be confidential with reports only to the person filing the grievance and the agency involved.
10. The ERC will report the aggregate number of grievances reviewed and any recommendations on policy and procedure as a result of grievances to the Office of Homelessness on a quarterly basis.
11. The ERC is the final authority for grievances within the homeless system.

Note: Failure to repeatedly provide essential information and/or generally pursue the Grievance will indicate that you no longer wish to follow-up on your grievance will be closed.

Complaint and Grievance Review Process

Office of Homelessness
State of Rhode Island
Office of Housing and Community Development
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
222-4892

