

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Date last updated: January 2021

Policy Statement We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve the organization and the client and volunteer experience. The complaint gives us the opportunity to put things right for the person that has made the complaint. Handling complaints effectively, objectively and efficiently is important to Patriot Service Dogs. All complaints will be heard by our Improvement Committee with suggestions and unresolved issues going to the Board of Directors.

Our commitment We will endeavor to:

- provide a fair and clear procedure for anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- publicize the existence of our Complaints Procedure so that people know how to make a complaint;
- make sure our staff and volunteers know what to do if a complaint is received;
- make sure complaints are investigated impartially and in a timely manner;
- make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired as required.

Who can complain? Anybody who is involved with Patriot Service Dogs in any aspect of our service or conduct. We would encourage complainants to invoke this Policy and Procedure as soon as they reasonably can after an incident whilst circumstances and details are more likely to be remembered by parties involved. This would aid us in our investigation and ensure a timely and comprehensive response. There is no expiry period for a complaint – we will investigate historical complaints. Internal complaints or issues should be raised through the Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Respect and confidentiality Anybody who complains will be treated with respect and all complaint information will be handled sensitively, with details disclosed only to those who need to know. We will follow any relevant data protection requirements.

We reserve the right to make a public statement in response to a complaint, respecting confidentiality at all times. Responsibility Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with Patriot Service Dogs Board of Directors. Operational implementation and compliance is delegated to the CEO.

Making a Complaint Anybody who wishes to make a formal complaint can do so by requesting, or accessing on our website (www.patriot servicedogs.com/plaints), a copy of the Complaint Form. The form should be completed, signed and posted to our main office, or completed and attached to an e-mail to our CEO (julie@patriot servicedogs.org).

Submitting a complaint by e-mail, or providing us with your e-mail address when complaining, will allow for swifter communication, potentially leading to earlier resolution – which is normally in the interest of all parties.

Complaints do not have to be submitted on our complaint form, but it will help greatly to fully understand the complaint and investigate it promptly. The form is also designed to make it easier to submit a formal complaint.

We reserve the right to investigate conduct which might be considered grounds for a formal complaint, taking into account any complaints or feedback received, and take whatever action we deem appropriate in the circumstances.

When a completed Complaint Form has been received, or a written complaint which provides sufficient information for us to act upon.

Verbal Complaints Complaints raised verbally, where the person is unwilling to put it in writing, will be regarded as negative feedback and will be noted. It may not necessarily be investigated and/or responded to.

Use of offensive language or rude, threatening, or intimidating behavior or language is not acceptable and may result in us terminating membership and refusing to deal with you. In some cases, we may report the matter to the police.

Resolution Policy All complaints will be handled in a professional and confidential manner. All help needed will be brought in to resolve the matter in a timely fashion. All details will be stored in a locked container and only coded information will be kept, all information will be destroyed or names redacted to protect the parties involved.

Resolution may involve mediation or professional help to make sure all parties are comfortable with the resolution.

Please know Patriot Service Dogs strives to be an open and welcoming organization where volunteers and staff come together to:

Honor those who served.
Help those still serving.

