

Complaint Process Summary Report for the 71st L.J. Compliance Report

During the reporting period of July 1, 2023 through December 31st, 2023 the Child Welfare Team received a total of seventeen L.J. class member complaints. This is a significant decrease from the previous reporting period when we received a total of twenty-eight complaints. Currently, all complaints, including those arising in situations involving a LJ Class member or non-class member, continue to be tracked by the Executive Assistant assigned to one of the Assistant Deputy Directors of Child Welfare.

No changes have occurred to the complaint process since our latest response. The Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Court Process Team, is currently meeting and engaged in conversations to improve the Process. One change occurring for the 72nd reporting period is that Christina Law, LJ Consent Decree Liaison, will be added to the complaint process team to assist in the handling of complaints.

For the 71st reporting period, all potential inquiries have been acknowledged by a member of the Child Welfare case team within one business day of receipt. We received inquiries from the provider community including BCDSS licensed foster homes, therapeutic foster homes, kin providers, Foster Parent Ombudsman, children's attorneys, biological parents and relatives.

The majority of inquiries received during this reporting period remain around payment issues, accounting for six of the seventeen Complaints. The majority of these complaints, similar to the last reporting period, involved a delay in day care payments. In a few of these instances, neither the day care provider or the child's placement understood the time frame for reimbursement. For these inquiries, either a Unit Manager or Program Manager directly reached out to the providers to explain the process and in one of these cases, emergency flex funds were issued to ensure that there were no interruptions to the day care services. Since these specific issues have arisen during multiple complaint periods, the LJ Team has spoken with the Program Managers to make sure that the time frames and process for reimbursement are shared with both the placement and the daycare provider. Many daycare providers believed they should be receiving payment upfront or more closely in time to the period when services were provided. There were also a handful of situations where other types of payments were delayed for various reasons.

During this reporting period, the agency received inquiries from two different families about being potential resources, however, they resided out of state. Both of these potential providers had been in touch with the case worker teams but were confused about the length time that the process would take and what the current status was at the time. In both of these cases, the Unit Manager reached out to answer all of their questions and gave them realistic timelines as well as the appropriate contact information to check in.

The remaining complaints received were under the umbrella of communications and customer service. Often these complaints involved issues around delays in communication to provide customer service and were usually remedied quickly, often caused by a staff member being on leave.

The time frames involved in resolving these complaints varies on a case by case basis but each inquiry resulted in an immediate interaction with the appropriate case management team and the setting of deadlines

to provide information or to take necessary actions in order to achieve a rapid resolution of the problem. If the complaint involved payment, the complaint was not marked as resolved or closed until payment had been received, and in the majority of cases the payment was hand delivered to prevent any further delays.

BCDSS will continue to track complaints as required in order to continue to improve all aspects of the services we provide to our children, youth and families.