

# **P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA INC**

A 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

## **CLIENT RIGHTS POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

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### **PURPOSE**

The Client Rights and Grievance Procedure policy is designed to protect and improve the rights of individuals who are applying for or receiving services. It outlines the specific rights of clients and sets up fair procedures for addressing and resolving client complaints in a responsive and unbiased manner.

### **POLICY**

We recognize that in any environment in which people interact regularly, conflicts, complaints and concerns may arise. These issues may be between individuals, with staff or regarding specific policies or rules. This grievance procedure is in place to ensure the Clients have a process to formally log a complaint or concern, be heard and have an opportunity for resolution.

It is the policy of P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA Inc., to provide all clients that receive services with a copy of the Client's Rights Policy and Grievance Procedure upon request. The policy and procedure document provides the process to be followed and the name and title of the Organization's Officer responsible for handling the grievance procedure.

P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA Inc., will look into all complaints, including claims of neglect and/or abuse by staff or volunteers towards a Client.

P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA Inc., shall keep documentation of the findings of the investigation and of actions taken as a result of the investigation.

In situations that involve child abuse or elder adult abuse, any notification required by law shall be made to the appropriate authorities.

At P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA Inc., the Executive Director will be responsible for receiving the grievance, and making a recommendation to the Board of Directors on how the grievance will be resolved. The final decision will be communicated back to the Client both verbally and in writing.

# **P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA, INC**

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### **PROCEDURE**

The Client has the right to begin a Grievance Procedure if they believe that any policy has been unfairly applied to them, their children or immediate family, or a concern that they have been mistreated by anyone associated with the organization.

The Client can initiate a Grievance Procedure by contacting any Corporate Officer, Director or Program Coordinator. The individual receiving the initial grievance will listen to the Client's concern and gather the initial facts of the issue.

When listening to the Client's concerns, the individual receiving the initial grievance, is serving as an Advocate for the Client. The following point must be kept in mind during the initial meeting:

1. Recognize the interests of the client as a primary responsibility.
2. Respect and protect the client's civil and legal rights.
3. Respect the client's rights to privacy and confidentiality, subject only to laws or regulations requiring disclosure of information to appropriate other sources.
4. Respond compassionately to each client with personalized services.
5. Accept the client's statement of events as it is told, withholding opinion or judgment, whether or not a suspected offender has been identified.
6. Provide services to every client without attributing blame, no matter what the client's conduct was at the time of the victimization or at another stage of the client's life.
7. Foster maximum self-determination on the part of the client.
8. Serve as a victim advocate when requested and, in that capacity, act on behalf of the client's stated needs without regard to personal convictions.
9. Should one client's need conflict with another client's, then advocate for one client only after promptly referring the other to another qualified Officer, Director, Program Director or the Executive Director.
10. Observe the ethical imperative to have no personal relations with clients, current or past, in recognition that to do so puts the Organization at risk and also risks exploitation of the knowledge and trust derived from the professional relationship.
11. Make client referrals to other resources or services only in the client's best interest, avoiding any conflict of interest in the process.

# **P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA, INC**

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Once the Client's concerns or grievance has been heard, the Client shall then be requested to summarize their grievance in writing. If the Client requests assistance in preparing a written statement, then the individual receiving the initial grievance may do so and the client will sign the statement. If the Client cannot sign the statement, then the Client can make a mark, representing their signature, witnessed by another individual. The statement will also contain the Client's contact information.

Upon completion of the Client's interview, the individual receiving the initial grievance procedure will inform the Client that the grievance statement will be delivered to the Executive Director, who then will assume responsibility for investigating the grievance.

The grievance statement is then immediately forwarded to the Executive Director for further action.

Upon receipt of the grievance either from an associate of the organization, Officer, Director, Program Director or Volunteer, the Executive Director will then contact the Client and discuss the Client's concerns. Upon confirming all the facts, the Executive Director will assure the Client their concerns will be investigated, and a written response provided to them within thirty (30) days.

Upon completion of the investigation the Executive Director will make a full presentation to the Board of Directors on the issue, and the results of the investigation. The Board of Directors must be informed prior to any results of the investigation being relayed back to the Client. If a Board meeting is not scheduled within the 30-day resolution period, then an extraordinary meeting must be held.

The report to the Board of Directors may result in:

- A recommendation acting against a member of the nonprofit organization, such as an Officer, Director, or Volunteer.
- A recommendation for changing policies or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
- A recommendation for the re-training staff or volunteers to prevent the same issue from happening again.
- A finding that the grievance was not valid.

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The Board of Directors will then ratify the decision of the Executive Director and approve the written communication to be provided to the client.

The Executive Director's report shall be made part of the board minutes.

In both cases, the decision will be relayed back to the Client both verbally and in writing.

The person responsible for the oversight and administration of the Client Rights Policy and Grievance Procedure is:

Ms. Adrienne Gates, Executive Director  
P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA INC  
A Nonprofit Organization in the State of Georgia  
1024 Avon Ave SW  
Atlanta, GA 30310  
Tel: (404) 301-9989  
Cell: (404)901-1295  
[www.PowerAtl.org](http://www.PowerAtl.org)

All clients may have a copy and explanation of the Client Rights Policy and Grievance Procedure upon request.

The Client Rights Policy and Grievance Procedure are posted in the office lobby and on the P.O.W.E.R ATLANTA website and available from staff at the office during regular business hours.