

HARVEST SHARE COMMUNITY FOOD PROGRAMS  
POLICY TITLE: COMPLAINTS POLICY

Effective Date	<u>April 25, 2024</u>
Date of Approval by Board Motion	April 25, 2024
Scheduled Review Date	<u>April 2025</u>



**POLICY:**

This policy applies to complaints received by Harvest Share Community Food Programs about our activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers from members of the public.

**Guiding Principles**

- It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- Review of complaints is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties.
- Complainants are advised of their options to escalate their complaint to a more senior staff person or Board of Directors if they are dissatisfied with treatment or outcome.
- Complainants are provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints.
- Updates are provided to complainants during review processes.
- Complaints are used to assist in improving services, policies and procedures.

**Types of Complaints**

*Definition:* A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by Harvest Share Community Food Programs as an organization or a staff member or volunteer acting on behalf of The Food Bank.

**Examples include but are not limited to:**

- Perceived failure to do something agreed upon;
- Failure to observe policy or procedures;

- Error made by a staff member/volunteer; or
- Unfair or discourteous actions/statements by a staff member/volunteer.

Anyone personally affected can complain and their complaint will be reviewed in accordance with this procedure.

## **Procedures**

### *Complaint Receipt and Handling*

A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail, fax, email). A staff member or volunteer who receives a complaint will direct the complaint to the Executive Director. Complaints can be placed anonymously if desired. Note: Harvest Share's staff and/or volunteers will not retaliate against individuals who make good-faith complaints.

The person who initially receives the complaint should acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on by the Executive Director. If a timeframe for action can be determined, that should be included in the acknowledgement. Basic contact information including name, phone number and email address should immediately be recorded.

### *Resolving the Complaint*

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion. When receiving a verbal complaint, staff will attempt to resolve it immediately. Complaints received in writing will be acknowledged within 2 business days and staff will attempt to resolve the matter within 10 business days.

If the complaint is about the Executive Director, it will be handled by the Chair of the Board of Directors. The chairperson of the Board can be reached at [Chairperson.harvestshare@gmail.com](mailto:Chairperson.harvestshare@gmail.com). Complainants will be kept informed of the status of their complaint.

Policies and procedures will be modified based on the outcome of the complaint, if applicable.

### *Documenting the Complaint*

The Food Bank will keep a record of information on all complaints received. Information includes a description of the complaint, the person who received it, what was done to resolve the complaint, timeframe, and a description of the resolution and any follow up required.

A summary of the complaints is provided annually to the Board of Directors for their awareness of the nature and number of complaints received by the Executive Director.

**If you feel your complaint against Harvest Share Community Food Programs, its staff or volunteers has been Unresolved after this process please note:**

**Food Banks Canada Customer Experience Hotline**, allows for unresolved complaints to be escalated to the provincial association, (Feed Ontario) and/or Food Banks Canada. **Contact Information for Customer Experience Hotline is (1-877-280-0329) and or [complaints@foodbankscanada.ca](mailto:complaints@foodbankscanada.ca)**). Generally, complaints placed through the hotline are moved through the following process:

1. Complaint is received through the confidential hotline
2. Food Banks Canada connects with the applicable food bank and/or provincial association regarding the complaint and resolution.
3. Food Banks Canada will stive to provide a response to the complaint within 10 business days
4. Upon receiving the response/determining resolution, Food Banks Canada will close the complaint
5. Food Banks Canada will provide Feed Ontario with an aggregate summary of complaints and their status(ie. Open or resolved)on a monthly basis.