

Responsibilities and Duties of Human Rights Officers

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Applies to: all Human Rights Officers

Policy number: 6.6.0.11

Regulatory reference: 115 CMR 3.08(3)(b)

S:\Agency Policy\6 - Program Related Policies and Procedures\6.6 - Program Systems\6.6.0.11 Responsibilities of Human Rights Officers

Communitas is committed to affirming, promoting and protecting the Human and Civil Rights of people supported by the agency. The Human Rights Officer is an advocate and trainer regarding the rights of those people. Each site providing Direct Support Services to people with developmental disabilities will have a Human Rights Officer assigned to assist people in understanding their human rights and to support them in exercising those rights to the fullest of their abilities and interests.

Appointment and Certification

1. Human Rights Officer must have successfully attended Basic Human Rights training and Human Rights Officer training through the Department of Developmental Services and must be certified by the Department as Human Rights Officers.
2. Human Rights Officer and Back-Up Human Rights Officer are appointed by the Division Heads (or designee) and serve until they are released from those duties.
3. The responsibilities of the Human Rights Officer become part of the appointee's job description.

Meetings

1. Human Rights Officers are required to attend quarterly meetings of the Human Rights Committee.
2. Human Rights Officers are required to attend Human Rights meetings as called by the Human Rights Coordinator or by senior management of the Agency.
3. Human Rights Officers are required to hold regular group meetings with the people supported at their assigned site to discuss human rights issues.
 - a. Meetings may be informal in nature, or more formal as needed.
 - b. Minutes of meetings, regardless of formality, should be kept by the HRO and copies give to the Human Rights Coordinator.
4. Human Rights Officers should discuss any on-going human rights issues during regularly rescheduled staff meetings.
5. Any concerning issues should be brought to the attention of the site supervisor and the Human Rights Coordinator without delay.

Training

1. The Human Rights Officer is responsible for the annual training of all employees at their assigned program site in Human Rights Review and Mandated Reporting.
 - a. Review the form Human Rights Training for Employees with all employees at work site
 - b. Utilize the PowerPoint presentation Rights and Wrongs: Human Rights, Abuse and Neglect and Mandated Reporting
 - c. Answer any questions (may consult with HR Coordinator if needed)
 - d. Have employees complete and sign form Human Rights training for Employees and return complete competency evaluation to the Learning and Development Manager
2. The Human Rights Officer is responsible for annual training of all people supported at their assigned site

- a. Utilize one or more of the following:
 - i. PowerPoint Presentation – My Human Rights for People Supported by Communitas
 - ii. Video – Yes You Can!
 - iii. An open discussion of various human rights and how they are exercised in daily life
 - iv. Any other materials which cover basic human rights
- b. Have the person-supported review and sign the form Human Rights Training and place the signed form in the person’s legal file
- 3. The HRO must arrange for, attend, and provide documentation of attendance to one or more of the following per year:
 - a. Human Rights Networking Group through DDS
 - b. Additional Human Rights training (beyond Basic and Officer) offered through DDS
 - c. Human Rights trainings or conferences offered by other agencies or organizations
 - d. Human Rights Trainings offered by the agency’s Human Rights Coordinator or otherwise arranged for by the agency

Human Rights Book/Binder

- 1. The Human Rights Officer for each program site should keep and maintain a binder or notebook pertaining to the completion of their duties as a Human Rights Officer.
- 2. When documenting issues, please use only initials of individuals
- 3. The book should be kept in a secure location, and should contain documentation of the following, using professional and neutral language:
 - a. Any Human Rights issues brought to the HRO by people supported, families, employees or other advocates for a person supported by the Agency, including
 - i. Resolution of those issues
 - ii. Reporting of those issues to supervisor, Human Rights Committee and Human Rights Coordinator
 - b. Notes from monthly meetings at which Human Rights issues are discussed with people supported
 - i. Issues discussed
 - ii. Persons present
 - c. Attendance at quarterly Human Rights Committee Meetings
 - d. Training completed for people supported and for employees
 - e. Documentation of trainings HRO attends

Problem Resolution

- 1. Human Rights Officers are responsible for assisting people supported to advocate for their own human rights, and to assist them in resolution of human rights issues.
- 2. People supported are encouraged to discuss human rights issues with their Human Rights Officer
- 3. Human Rights Officers are mandated to report human rights issues, abuses or violations to both their immediate supervisor and to the Human Rights Coordinator
- 4. Human Rights Officers, like all employees employed by the agency, are mandated reporters and must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the Disabled Persons Protection Committee, Child Protective Services or Elder Abuse Hotline.

Print HRO (or Backup HRO) name	Signature	Date