

CLIENT AND APPLICANT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A. APPLICANTS

1. Each FRLS applicant is entitled to file a complaint if he/she feels aggrieved as a result of a FRLS decision to deny legal assistance to that applicant.
2. Signs will be clearly displayed in every FRLS office informing applicants of the right to register a complaint. Staff members will also make applicants aware of this right at the time the applicant is interviewed for eligibility purposes.
3. The applicant grievance procedure shall be as follows:
 - a. The applicant shall request a complaint form from the Office Manager or her designee. It will be completed in writing and submitted to the Managing Attorney. If the applicant is unable to complete the complaint form, the Office Manager or her designee will assist in preparing the complaint (*Form I – Section V*).
 - b. The Managing Attorney will promptly review the applicant complaint and will discuss the matter with the applicant at the earliest opportunity. The Managing Attorney will attempt to resolve the complaint.
 - c. If the client is dissatisfied with the results of paragraph b above, he or she may request that the complaint be reviewed by the Executive Director. The Director will promptly review the applicant complaint and will discuss the matter with the applicant at the earliest opportunity. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the complaint.

B. CLIENTS

1. Each FRLS client is entitled to and expected to file a formal complaint if he/she feels aggrieved as a result of his/her representation by FRLS.
2. A sign will be clearly displayed in every FRLS office informing clients of their right to register a complaint, and of the procedure to be followed in filing a grievance and appeal. The client will also be made aware that a staff member will be available, if requested, at any step of the proceeding to assist in preparing and filing the formal complaint.
3. A Client Grievance Procedure shall be processed as follows:
 - a. The Client shall first request from the Office Manager a Client Complaint Form (*Form I – Section V*), to be completed in writing and submitted to the Managing Attorney or his/her designee who will promptly review the complaint, consult with his/her local designee, the client and others concerned, and attempt to resolve the problem.
 - b. If the client is dissatisfied with the results of paragraph “a,” he/she may appeal the disposition of the grievance by submitting within fourteen (14) days a written request for review of the complaint to the Executive Director. The Director will promptly consider the merits of the complaint, consult with the client, and issue his/her recommendation. If appropriate, the complaint shall be promptly considered by the Executive Director, and the Executive Director review the matter with the client and others concerned and attempt to resolve the grievance.
 - c. The Managing Attorney or his/her designee shall submit to the Executive Director a

written report on the disposition of each formal grievance, if such grievance is resolved by the Managing Attorney or designee.

- d. If the client wishes to appeal the decision of the Managing Attorney (or Executive Director), he/she may inform the Director, in writing, of his/her wish to have the matter reviewed by a special Client Grievance Committee. This request should be made within fourteen (14) days after receiving notice of the Director=s decision. The Client Grievance Committee must convene within twenty (20) working days of the client=s request for the Committee hearing.
- e. All members of the three (3) member Client Grievance committee shall be selected from the FRLS Board of Directors.
- f. The client has the right to be present at the grievance hearing for the purpose of presenting his/her grievance to the Grievance Committee. The complainant may be accompanied by another person. In the alternative, the complainant may elect, if desired, to participate in the grievance hearing by telephone/teleconference or through the submission of a written statement.
- g. The Client Grievance Committee shall settle the grievance by majority vote.
- h. Copies of the final determination by the Board Grievance Committee will be furnished to the Executive Director of FRLS and the client. Upon request of the client, FRLS will transcribe a brief written statement dictated by the complainant for inclusion in the claimant=s file.
- i. A permanent file of all grievances shall be maintained by the Executive Director.

C. NOTIFICATION OF CLIENTS AND APPLICANTS

All clients will be advised of this grievance procedure at the time of the initial interview. All persons denied legal assistance shall be again informed of their right to invoke the grievance procedure at the time of rejection.

Information regarding the availability of the grievance procedure shall appear on the retainer form. Clients will be given a copy of their retainer.

D. THIRD PARTIES

Third parties are defined under this policy as being persons who are neither applicants for FRLS services nor clients of FRLS. Third parties do not have the right to avail themselves of this grievance procedure.

Approved by FRLS Board of Directors on: 12/1/07.

Added to FRLS Policy Book on: 12/7/07.

CLIENT GRIEVANCE FORM

I hereby request that a Managing Attorney of Florida Rural Legal Services, Inc. review the following complaint I wish to file regarding my request for legal services.

Staff Person=s Name: _____
Office Location: _____
Complaint: _____

Please attach any additional pages necessary.

DATE	SIGNATURE
PRINT NAME CLEARLY	STREET ADDRESS
	CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE
ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBER	TELEPHONE

Please add additional sheets if more space is needed.