

An attorney may speak for CFSA. You may bring an attorney, too. Neither the court nor CFSA will provide one for you.

The Fair Hearing Examiner makes a decision about your issue. If you don't like the decision, you can appeal it. However, if the Fair Hearing Examiner agreed with CFSA, we can act on your issue while you continue to appeal.

### How do I ask for a Service Appeal?

If you get a notice from CFSA about a decision or action and you don't agree with it, you must **ask for a Service Appeal in writing within 30 days**. Be sure your Fair Hearing Request form includes:

- Your name, address, and telephone number.
- Your request for a Service Appeal.
- Information about the issue you want to appeal.
- Your opinion about the issue and how you hope to settle it.

If you have a hearing impairment or do not speak English, ask for an interpreter on your form.



Mail your Fair Hearing Request form to:

**D.C. Child and Family Services Agency  
Office of Fair Hearings & Appeals  
955 L'Enfant Plaza Suite P-101  
Washington, D.C. 20024-2119**

Or fax your letter to 202-727-5600.

If you cannot submit a written request, call 202-724-7100 for help.

### Do I have to ask for a Service Appeal myself?

No. You can have someone else ask for a Service Appeal for you. Good choices are an attorney, relative, friend, or court-appointed person. Throughout the Service Appeal process, you may speak for yourself or have someone else speak for you. ■



**D.C. Child and Family Services Agency**  
400 6th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20024-2753  
[www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov)



### What is a Service Appeal?

The Child and Family Services Agency works to offer the best possible services to District children, teens, and families who need them. CFSA seeks your ideas in planning services for you. We want to know what kinds of help you think you need. You can always talk

to your social worker. You can also give your ideas at Administrative Case Reviews twice a year.

Still, you may not agree with every CFSA decision or action on your case. When you are dissatisfied with services, you have the right to work out your differences through a Service Appeal.

### Who can appeal?

You must be:

- A parent or guardian who has an active case with CFSA
- or
- A young person age 14 or older in CFSA care.

### What can I appeal?

You can ask for a Service Appeal if CFSA or the provider agency managing your child welfare case:

- Won't give you some or any child welfare services.
- Doesn't decide within 30 days after you ask for services if you can have the services.
- Cuts back, postpones, or stops services.
- Sets a permanency goal you don't agree with or won't change a permanency goal.
- Doesn't give you a family or child case plan or an Individual Transitional Independent Living Plan (ITILP) within 30 days of opening your case.
- Doesn't review your plan within legal time frames.
- Doesn't give you services listed in your plan.
- Doesn't give you regular or long enough visits with your child or with your brothers/sisters not living with you.
- Makes you accept services or conditions under your plan that you think you don't need.



- Won't give you services that a court-appointed person requests for you.

### Are there situations I can't appeal?

Yes. Service Appeals cannot be about:

- Changes to services that stem from changes in laws.
- Issues you appealed and resolved before.
- Actions or decisions not defined as a service under CFSA policy.
- Services that another District Government or Federal agency provides.
- Court orders.



### How does a Service Appeal work?

The Service Appeal process has two steps.

#### **Step 1: Program Administrator's Review**

This is an informal meeting. You and the staff who made the decision talk over your differences with a neutral person. This neutral person is the "Administrator." The Administrator leads the meeting because he/she did not take part in the decision.

This meeting gives you a chance to voice your opinion and be part of the final decision. If we come to agreement on your issue, we update your plan to reflect the agreement. If we don't come to agreement, you have the right to a Fair Hearing.

A Program Administrator's Review can be very helpful, but you don't have to have one. If you choose not to have this meeting, you go directly a Fair Hearing.

#### **Step 2: Fair Hearing**

Federal law gives you the right to a Fair Hearing about services open to appeal. In this meeting, you state your opinion and reasons to a Fair Hearing Examiner. CFSA staff who made the decision also give their opinions and reasons. Both you and CFSA may present witnesses and evidence. You may look at parts of the case record that aren't private under law.