

Shore Legal Access Client Grievance Policy

Shore Legal Access (SLA) is committed to providing quality legal services in civil legal matters to those who might otherwise be denied. SLA is a nonprofit with limited funds, staffing, and volunteers, and unfortunately, we cannot take every case that is presented to us. If a problem is not covered by SLA's priorities, SLA may not be able to provide legal representation, but will connect that person with other agencies or individuals who may be able to assist.

The grievance policy set forth below is designed to provide a fair and transparent way for someone who has a grievance for certain concerns to have their issue heard, addressed, and resolved in a timely manner.

Grievances may be filed with SLA for the following concerns:

Applicants for legal services that were not accepted

If you were an applicant for SLA services and disagree with an action or decision made by SLA, you may submit a grievance in writing not later than 30 days after the action or decision was made.

A grievance under this part of SLA's policy may be made for these reasons:

- a. SLA rejected your case or limited services based on your case being outside of SLA's current priorities and you believe your case is within SLA's priorities;
- b. SLA rejected your case based on SLA program eligibility criteria and you believe you meet the program's eligibility criteria;
- c. Clients of SLA with a grievance about the effectiveness of the services provided by an attorney on SLA's staff;
- d. Clients of SLA with a grievance about the effectiveness of the services provided by a volunteer attorney;

e. Clients of SLA with a grievance based on a violation of professional responsibility or ethical considerations.

Grievance Procedure

A. Submitting a Grievance

1. Grievances must be initiated in writing. This can be accomplished by filling out and submitting the SLA Grievance Form (provided at the end of this policy), or by sending a letter or email describing the grievance to the administrative director, Cheryl Lee:

clee@shorelegal.org.

2. If you have a disability or language limitations, you may request that SLA help you find a disinterested third party that can help you initiate a grievance.

3. SLA will provide a written decision and explanation within 30 business days of receipt of the written grievance.

B. Grievance Review

1. The written grievance and other information/documents collected will be reviewed by the SLA Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee.

2. The reviewer will communicate with the person who submitted the grievance directly about their concerns. The reviewer may also obtain additional information if the reviewer decides that would be appropriate.

3. The Reviewer will tell you the decision within 30 business days of receiving the written grievance

C. Review by the Board

1. If you disagree with the Reviewer's response or proposed action, you may within 15 calendar days of receiving the Reviewer's decision submit to the Executive Director a written explanation of your disagreement, including a request for what you believe the result should be. The Executive Director will share your grievance with the President of the Board of Directors. You can ask SLA's help with writing out your disagreement and request if you need help due to a disability or limited English.

2. The President must issue a written decision within 30 days of your submitting the written disagreement and request.

D. Confidentiality

Grievances received by SLA will be treated as confidential and will only be shared internally as is necessary to implement this policy. *Policy Adopted 2/28/2025*