

### **Complaints Policy and Procedure:**

Pawsitive Perspectives Assistance Dogs (PawPADs) aims to provide an open, accountable and safe organization for our employees, volunteers, program participants and clients.

PawPADs does not discriminate against any employee, volunteer, program participant or client on the basis of race, color, cultural heritage, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status or any other status protected under local, state, or federal law.

No one has the right to harass anyone else, at work or in any situation related to PawPADs' programming. Harassment is any behavior that degrades, demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person, and that a reasonable person should have known would be unwelcome. It includes actions (e.g., touching, pushing), comments (e.g., jokes, name-calling) or displays (e.g., posters, cartoons).

Additionally, PawPADs prioritizes the well-being of all the dogs – placed and in-training. We feel it is everyone's duty to be the voice of our dogs and will address any complaints related to the care, training and handling of the dogs.

We will endeavor to fix problems, correct mistakes and address concerns when these are identified as we want to reach the best possible outcome for everyone involved.

Complaints about a specific incident should usually be made within 4 weeks of the incident taking place. This offers the best chance of staff members being able to remember the incident, should they need to be interviewed as part of the investigation process. Also, if a complaint relates to any potential ongoing harm, it is important that we are able to respond to this as soon as possible.

There may be occasions when we chose not to investigate a complaint, or on rare occasions we may not respond to a complaint at all. These include:

- When a complaint is about something that PawPADs has no direct connection to. We may choose to reply to clear our name but we are not obliged to.
- When someone pursues a complaint that we have already responded to. In this event we will inform you of our decision.
- When a complainant is being obviously abusive, prejudiced, or offensive in their manner.
- When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
- When a complaint is incoherent or illegible.
- When the passage of time between a reported incident and the report being made makes an effective investigation impossible or impractical.
- When a complaint has clearly been sent to us and numerous other organizations as part of a bulk mailing or email. In this instance we will chose whether it is necessary for us to reply or not.

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- When a complaint is made anonymously this may limit our ability to investigate fully, but we will seek to use the information to improve in any way that we can.
- When the complaint is about a difficult or disappointing decision the PawPADs team needed to make about releasing a dog that doesn't meet the standards for placement. Any disagreement with the training team's professional opinion will be reviewed but will not normally be considered grounds for a complaint.

### Complaint Procedure:

1. Please use the PawPADs Complaint Form to provide all relevant information regarding the issue.
2. The completed Complaint Form should be submitted, mailed, or emailed to the Executive Director.
3. Within five (5) business days, the Executive Director will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and may request additional information as needed.
4. The Executive Director will review the complaint and work toward a resolution. If the matter cannot be resolved at the level of the Executive Director, **or if the complaint involves the Executive Director**, the complaint will be escalated to the Board of Directors.
5. If necessary, the Executive Director or the Board President will initiate an investigation into the complaint. PawPADs will make reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint within one (1) month from the date of acknowledgement.
6. If, following investigation, the complaint is determined to be unsubstantiated, the complainant will be notified of this finding.
7. If the investigation substantiates the complaint, appropriate corrective action will be implemented and the complainant will be notified.
8. **If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a written request for appeal to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors, or a committee designated by the Board, will review the complaint, findings, and actions taken, and may request additional information. The Board's determination shall be final.**

All complaints will be taken seriously and are important to us.

We will work with you to attempt to resolve any concerns in a way where we can continue to work together towards satisfactory outcomes for all involved.

Policy approved by the Board of Directors on \_\_\_\_\_(date)

**Note: signed copy is on file in the office**

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### Complaint Form

**Complainant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Best Time to Call You:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship to the Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Others Involved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please describe the nature of the issue (attach additional sheets if necessary):**

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**Please explain how you have tried to resolve this issue:**

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**How would you like to see your complaint resolved?**

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**List any corroborating witnesses and attach any supporting documents:**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Turn this form in to the Executive Director, or Board President, at PawPADs. You will receive acknowledgment of your complaint within 5 business days.**

For office use only: Acknowledgement date: \_\_\_\_\_ Investigation dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Response and Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach all investigation reports, corrective action and communications with complainant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Closed