Managing Volunteer Conflicts and Complaints

Note: This procedure is intended to encourage open communication and to provide volunteers with an avenue for resolving conflicts and complaints. They are based on the assumption that the CCE Association involved has followed the recommended procedures for selecting, orienting, training, and supervising the volunteer involved in the conflict or other concern. These procedures are not intended to create a contract between CCE and its volunteers and may be altered to meet the needs of different situations and contingencies. All information received will be handled with as much discretion as possible. The issue/concern will be discussed only with those directly involved or necessary to assist in resolving the matter.

Document each step in writing as the process progresses.

Informal Resolution – recommended for use when a volunteer is involved in a conflict with other volunteers, program participants or staff, and when it is determined by CCE, and all parties involved, that informal resolution is appropriate for the conflict at issue. Prior to selection of informal resolution, CCE must familiarize the parties with the formal review option. CCE may determine the need to use a Formal Review in serious situations (for e.g. allegations of harassment or misuse of funds).

1. The parties involved should meet face to face to discuss the conflict.
2. The parties can ask the appropriate supervisor (if the supervisor is one of the parties involved, the next level supervisor should be approached) to attend if they are not comfortable meeting on their own.
3. Summarize the resolution in writing.

Formal Review – recommended for use when a volunteer is the subject of a complaint by another volunteer or a staff member or when Informal Resolution has failed.

1. The written complaint is made to the supervisor who may seek input from others in reaching a written decision (which outlines corrective action) in a fair and timely manner.
2. The written decision is discussed with the Executive Director and appropriate action taken.

If the complaint relates to an equal program or other Civil Rights issue except for one of equal employment (as it does not apply to volunteers) use the process outlined in the Financial, Human & Administrative Resources publication: Affirmative Action Policy, section VII – Resolving Equal Opportunity Concerns.