



California Children's Services Due Process Toolkit

III. Right to File a Grievance with the CCS Program

III. Right to File a Grievance with the CCS Program

If a CCS beneficiary (with or without Medi-Cal) is dissatisfied with an action or inaction taken by the CCS program, they can file a grievance. A grievance is similar to a complaint. Filing a grievance helps to ensure that the CCS beneficiary has their concerns resolved. A CCS grievance can be either informal or formal.¹⁸

A CCS beneficiary can file a grievance for any concern, including:¹⁹

- Concerns with coordination of care, services, equipment, or appointments
- Poor customer service
- Discrimination against the CCS beneficiary or their family
- Health information privacy concerns
- Quality of care concerns
- Issues with referrals for services
- Issues with scheduling appointments
- Concerns with timeliness of service authorizations or CCS Program eligibility decisions

To file a formal grievance, a CCS beneficiary must complete a CCS Grievance Form. CCS families can ask DHCS or their county CCS program for assistance with filling out the form. This includes the right to receive translation assistance. Grievances can be submitted verbally, in-person, via telephone, by mail or email. Once the form is submitted, the formal grievance process begins.²⁰



Advocacy Tip: Whenever possible, CCS beneficiaries should request a formal CCS grievance instead of an informal one. Formal grievances require DHCS or the county CCS office to respond to a CCS beneficiary within a specific timeline and to include a grievance form and log. Informal CCS grievances do not have to follow these same standards, which means that an informal grievance can be easily forgotten or delayed. However, if a CCS beneficiary has an emergency, then an informal grievance can be filed if the beneficiary is unable to send a formal grievance.

CCS grievances must be addressed by the CCS program **within thirty (30) days**, but must also be expedited if the issue is urgent for a CCS beneficiary. For a standard grievance, the CCS program has **five (5) business days** to acknowledge receipt of the grievance and coordinate with the county CCS program if needed.

¹⁸ Dep't of Health Care Svcs, CCS Numbered Letter 06-1023, California Children's Services Program Grievances Process (April 12, 2024), <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/Documents/20240308-CCSNL-Grievance-Process.pdf>. In an informal grievance, a CCS beneficiary can send a complaint in person, by phone, or by email. Depending on the county, either DHCS or the county CCS program decides if the issue can be resolved immediately. If they can resolve the complaint promptly then no formal grievance is filed. Informal grievances are not formally tracked.

¹⁹ Dep't of Health Care Svcs, CCS Grievance, Appeal, and State Fair Hearing Fact Sheet, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/Documents/20240202-CCS-Grievance-Appeal-SH-Factsheet-Independent.pdf>.

²⁰ Dep't of Health Care Svcs, CCS Numbered Letter 06-1023 Attachment A, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/Documents/20230328-CCSNL-Grievance-Flowchart.pdf>.

Standard grievances must be resolved within **thirty (30) calendar days** from when the grievance was received. DHCS or the county CCS program must notify the CCS beneficiary in writing about the outcome and status of the grievance within **five (5) business days** of when the grievance is resolved.²¹

However, if an action taken by the CCS program would cause serious harm to a CCS beneficiary, then the beneficiary can file an urgent or “expedited grievance.” Expedited grievances are appropriate when a CCS beneficiary faces threats to their health including severe pain or potential loss of life, limb, or major bodily function. When an expedited grievance is filed, DHCS or the county CCS program must direct the CCS beneficiary to the appropriate entity and make a reasonable effort to confirm they received the grievance through a phone call **within one (1) business day** of receipt. Expedited grievances must also be resolved **within three (3) business days**. They must make a reasonable effort to verbally notify the CCS beneficiary about the status and follow up on the grievance in writing.²²

How to file a grievance depends on which county the CCS beneficiary lives in. Below are the steps to take for each county:²³

Counties	Phone	Email Contact	County CCS Office
<p>Independent Counties: County CCS programs are responsible for receiving, acknowledging, and resolving grievances²⁴</p>	(916) 713-8300	CCSMonitoring@DHCS.ca.gov	The addresses, emails, and phone numbers for all county offices are listed on the DHCS Webpage at: County Offices (ca.gov)
<p>Dependent Counties: DHCS is responsible for receiving, acknowledging, and resolving grievances²⁵</p>	(916) 713-8300	CCSMonitoring@DHCS.ca.gov	<p>Mail Address: DHCS Integrated Systems of Care Division Attn: County Compliance Unit, 1501 Capitol Ave, MS 4502, PO Box 997437, Sacramento, CA 95899-7437</p> <p>In Person, at the County Office: The addresses for all county offices are listed on the DHCS website: County Offices (ca.gov)</p>

²¹ Dep’t of Health Care Svcs, CCS Numbered Letter 06-1023, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/Documents/20240308-CCSNL-Grievance-Process.pdf>.

²² Dep’t of Health Care Svcs, CCS Numbered Letter 06-1023, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/Documents/20240308-CCSNL-Grievance-Process.pdf>.

²³ Dep’t of Health Care Svcs, California Children’s Services Program Grievance Intake, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs/Documents/20240328-CCSNL-Grievance-Form.pdf>.

²⁴ Independent Counties include: Alameda, Butte, Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Mendocino, Merced, Monterey, Napa, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tulare, Ventura, Yolo.

²⁵ Dependent Counties include: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Imperial, Inyo, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Plumas, San Benito, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yuba.