

**Wolastoqey Tribal Council (“WTCl”)**  
**Client Dispute Resolution Mechanism**

**1. Introduction**

The Wolastoqey Tribal Council is committed to creating and maintaining a relationship with all members of the Wolastoqey Nation that is characterized by constructive and productive dialogue and support. Such relationships are often subject to contrasting styles of understanding and acting, and to different points of view. It is essential that it is recognized that human interactions are complex, often difficult, and that we all can contribute to their success.

Everyone has an obligation to communicate openly and respectfully with one another and to provide reasons for particular decisions or actions. When disagreements, concerns, or complaints arise, greater understanding by all is needed. The presence of such, if dealt with effectively, offers an opportunity for individual and organizational learning, including the identification of policies and practices that need to be improved.

**2. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, efficiently and effectively.

The Policy provides high level guidance to all clients who wish to make a complaint to WTCl regarding the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (“ISET”) Program.

“Client” is defined as: The clientele who are eligible to apply for assistance under the programs and who are to be served by the Organization under its programs shall include:

All First Nations peoples of the 5 New Brunswick First Nations, Madawaska, Oromocto, Woodstock, Kingsclear, and St. Mary’s which are represented by this ISET Program agreement, regardless of whether they reside on reserve or off-reserve or in an urban community.

“Indigenous Skills and Employment Training, or ISET, Program” is defined as: The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program is designed to help Indigenous people improve their skills and find employment.

**Scope**

This Policy applies to all Employees, Employment and Training Officers, Contractors, Volunteers, Board of Directors (collectively, “Staff”), in the performance of their duties to WTCl in relation to the ISET Program.

**3. Commitment**

WTCl expect all Staff who receive or manage complaints received from clients of the ISET Program to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling. The following outlines the nature of the commitment expected from staff and the way that commitment should be implemented:

- The Senior Advisor to the ISET Program and Executive Director will promote a culture that values complaints and their effective solution. They will: report to the Board of Directors on complaint handling, provide adequate support for staff handling complaints, encourage all staff to be alert

to complaints and provide assistance to resolve them promptly, and encourage staff to make recommendations for complaint process improvements.

- Staff will demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices. They will: treat all people with respect (including people who make complaints), provide information on the complaint process to people who wish to make a complaint, comply with this Policy and associated procedures, provide regular feedback to management on ways to improve the complaint process.

#### **4. Guiding Principles**

a. *Commitment to Feedback*

WTCl is committed to seeking feedback.

b. *Reasonable Timeframe*

Any concerns or complaints received will be dealt with within a reasonable timeframe.

c. *No Detriment to People Making Complaints*

All steps will be taken to ensure clients making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

d. *Objectivity and Fairness*

WTCl will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.

e. *Conflicts of Interest*

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly.

f. *Flexibility*

WTCl will be empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible.

g. *Confidentiality*

Complaints shall be dealt with in a confidential manner. Where possible, meetings to resolve a complaint shall be open only to the parties of the complaint and those attempting to resolve the complaint.

#### **5. Complaint Process**

a. *Early Resolution*

Where possible, issues and concerns will be resolved informally through early resolution. Every effort should be made to resolve the problem as promptly as possible with open

communications and cooperation. This can be done by directly contacting the person or persons whose actions is the cause of the issue or concern to make it known to the person or persons that their actions have caused the Wolastoqey community member an issue or concern and attempting to resolve the problem.

b. Filing a Complaint

If the complaint has not been resolved via early resolution, the client may file a complaint using the online form on the WTCI website. The complaint should give an accurate account of the action(s) giving rise to the complaint including times, places and parties involved, and the names of any witnesses, if applicable. The information should be precise and describe any attempts to resolve the situation.

A complaint should be filed in a timely manner. If a complaint is not filed within 30 days of the alleged circumstances leading to the complaint, it is the discretion of WTCI as to whether or not to investigate the complaint.

c. Acknowledge

WTCI will acknowledge receipt of each complaint submitted through the online form on the WTCI website. The client submitting the complaint will be informed of the complaint process and their level of involvement in the complaint process.

d. Assessment and Investigation

After acknowledging receipt of the concern, WTCI will confirm whether the issue(s) raised are within the control of WTCI ISET Program or WTCI will also consider the outcome(s) sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed. When determining how a complaint will be managed, WTCI will consider:

- the seriousness, complexity and urgency of the complaint
- the basis on which the decision of the Employment and Training Officer was used
- How the person making the complaint is being affected, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations

After assessing the complaint, WTCI will consider how to manage it. WTCI may:

- provide the client who filed the complaint with additional information or an explanation as the circumstances that are related to the action(s) giving rise to the complaint.
- Gather additional information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about; or
- Conduct a formal investigate into the allegations in the complaint.

WTCI will keep the client who has filed the complaint informed of the progress of the complaint. WTCI will also communicate the outcome of the complaint using the most appropriate medium.

e. Determine Outcome and Provide Reasons for Decision

Following consideration of the complaint and any investigation into the issues raised, WTCI will contact the Wolastoqey Community member who filed the complaint and advise them:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action taken;
- The reason(s) for the decision;
- The remedy or resolution(s) that have been proposed or put in place;
- Any options for review that may be available to the client, such as an internal review, external review or appeal, and
- If the appeal process does not bring about a satisfactory conclusion, a mutually agreed upon adjudicator will be brought in. The decisions rendered by the adjudicator will be final.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Any person directly or indirectly involved in a complaint governed by this Policy must adhere to the principle of confidentiality. However, the obligation to maintain confidentiality is not absolute; individuals who deal with situations brought to their attention may disclose information if necessary, in the context of processing the complaint.

Information about a complaint, including the identities of the parties and witnesses, must be kept confidential by all parties, including those involved in the complaint process.

7. WTCI shall keep and maintain records of client disputes referred to in section 6 subsection (c) and make them available to Canada for review upon request.