

## **Beltway Vaad Grievance Procedure**

The ethical conduct of our religious leaders is of vital importance to the Jewish community because it is these individuals to whom we look for ethical, moral and halakhic guidance and spiritual inspiration. It is the policy of the Vaad that all of its members are to maintain the integrity of their ecclesiastical and professional functions and relationships at all times. Members are required to submit to this Procedure with respect to any Complaint within its scope. We provide a brief summary of key provisions of the Procedure below, but we encourage you to consult the complete procedure, which is available [here](#). In the event of a conflict between the summary and the full version, the full version will control.

### Summary of Grievance Procedure

- Participation in the grievance procedure is entirely voluntary. You may decide to end your participation at any time.
- By contrast, members of the Vaad are required to participate if a complaint is filed and face dismissal from the Vaad and reporting to the member's synagogue leadership if she or he refuses.
- Upon receipt of a complaint, a three-person investigative committee, comprised of members of the Lay Advisory Council ("LAC"), will investigate your allegations. You will be asked to set out the bases for your grievance in writing, including all facts and witnesses that you think relevant and are comfortable identifying.
- If your complaint passes that committee's initial inquiry, all decisions concerning how your complaint is resolved will be made by the entire LAC.
- To the maximum extent permitted by law, the LAC will treat your complaint confidentially. The LAC will not disclose your identity to the Vaad member against whom you are lodging a complaint without your consent.
- You do not waive any rights or remedies by choosing to participate in our grievance procedure; however, if you already are pursuing or decide to pursue alternative channels (such as a Bet Din or the courts), the LAC may defer or dismiss your complaint until those other proceedings have concluded.
- By choosing to participate in the grievance procedure you do agree to comply with its requirements, including most notably to respect the confidentiality of the proceeding and to waive any claims against the LAC in connection with how it handles the investigation.
- The LAC is not a board and possesses no disciplinary authority over the Vaad or its members. In the event the LAC believes a complaint to be well-founded, it may choose from a range of potential measures, including but not limited to:
  - A proposal for formal mediation with the member or submission to an independent Bet Din;
  - Notification of its findings to the entire Vaad board, to the member's synagogue leadership and to other professional organizations (such as the International Rabbinic Fellowship, Rabbinical Council of America, Washington Board of Rabbis or other similar bodies) to which the member belongs; or
  - A recommendation of expulsion from the Vaad.
- The LAC also may encourage you to report the grievance to criminal or other governmental authorities, or it may choose to make such a report itself.
- In addition, the LAC may choose to disclose a matter publicly, where it deems public disclosure to be beneficial or where it is dissatisfied with the steps that the Vaad or the Vaad member's synagogue of employment have taken to address its findings. In that event, the LAC will not publicly identify you without your consent.