



Regulated Industries Complaints Office

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cca.hawaii.gov/rico

The Complaints Review Process at RICO

RICO receives and acts on reports and complaints through a process that involves reviewing the information and evidence obtained to determine if a licensing law violation probably exists, can be proven, and warrants the taking of official enforcement action.

RICO relies on its three major sections to process complaints: Consumer Resource Center (Intake), Field Investigations, and Legal.

Consumer Resource Center (Intake). Thousands of inquiries, reports and complaints are received each year by the Consumer Resource Center (Center). The Center's staff and investigators screen each inquiry, report and complaint to determine if they involve a licensing law concern. Some complaints go beyond screening and are investigated fully by the Center's investigators, who may then forward the matter to the Legal section for review by an attorney if a licensing violation is probable. Other complaints are referred to the Field Investigations section for a more formal investigation. Many complaints do not involve a licensing law issue or do not support a possible licensing law violation so they do not make it beyond the Center.

Field Investigations. This unit of experienced, regulatory investigators conduct formal investigations of complaints that raise licensing law issues. They respond to tips of unlicensed activity too by following up and conducting site checks. They plan and initiate compliance checks also and will issue citations if they witness unlicensed conduct in the field. The Field investigators also interact the most with complainants and licensees during the course of an investigation. Many complaints are closed in this section because the evidentiary threshold for proving a violation do not exist.

Legal. This unit consists of attorneys and support staff who review hundreds of completed investigations every year to determine whether there is good evidence to proceed with enforcement action. Every year the section attorneys file lawsuits against persons engaging in unlicensed work, and they initiate administrative proceedings before the governing board, commission or program within the DCCA for disciplinary action against noncompliant licensees.

This illustration demonstrates how numerous complaints, inquiries and concerns are received and processed by RICO each year.

