



Grievance Policy and Procedures

Policy: All complaints are reviewed and responded to within 30 days of receipt, and Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois provides expedited review of such complaints that are time-sensitive, that involve allegations of fraud, or allegations of violation of licensing standards. All registered complaints are utilized by Gateway Woods Family Services as quality assurance tools and a means of improving agency operation and delivery of service. Gateway Woods Family Services does not take any action to discourage nor to retaliate against birth parent(s), prospective adoptive parent(s), adoptive parents, or adoptees who wish to file a complaint, express a grievance or opinion, or provide information in writing or interviews to an accrediting entity on Gateway Woods Family Services' performance or question the conduct of the agency or staff.

Procedures:

1. The Illinois Child Welfare Supervisor (Adoption Program Manager) is responsible for ensuring that clients receive a copy of the complaint policy and procedures. The complaint procedure is available on the Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois Website and/or mailed to each prospective adoptive parent with application. The complaint procedure is also presented to each prospective adoptive family or birth parent at the initial interview session. Prospective adoptive families typically sign the Adoption Services Agreement at the initial meeting. The prospective adoptive parents or birth parents sign acknowledgment that they have received a copy of the complaint procedure, and a copy of the signed acknowledgement is kept in the client's file.
2. In the event that a family or individual has a complaint regarding the adoption services offered by Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois (including supervised providers which may be used in the future) there will be every effort made to work towards a mutual solution. Initially, complaints should be discussed with the primary worker or the Adoption Program Manager.
3. If a satisfactory agreement with the primary worker or the Adoption Program Manager cannot be reached or if a birth parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptive parent, or adoptee has a complaint about the services or activities of the agency or person that he or she believes raises an issue of compliance with federal or state regulations, the Convention, the IAA, UAA, or the regulations implementing the IAA, UAA, or any other dissatisfaction, he or she may submit a written signed and dated complaint to the agency Executive Director at 923 Detroit Court Suite 3, Morton, IL 61550. The written complaint may be submitted at any time. The written complaint should describe the situation in detail and in chronological order and include any initial responses to their complaint from the primary worker or Adoption Program Manager. A Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois staff person shall provide assistance to clients with special needs who request or need assistance putting their complaint/grievance into writing.
4. Any complaints alleging violations of licensing standards shall be reported immediately to the DCFS licensing representative or licensing supervisor by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will initiate an investigation of the complaints received within 2 business days. The adoption agency shall report the outcome of the complaint investigation, in writing, to the Department's regional licensing office or the DCFS licensing representative within 10 business days after the complaint is received. The Executive Director will also give a written response to the complainant within 10 business days. If the agency cannot resolve the complaint within 10 days due to extenuating circumstances, an interim report shall be sent to the complaining party and to the licensing representative at the conclusion of the 10-day period. The interim report shall state the reason for the delay and an estimated date of completion of the investigation and the final responses. The copy of the interim report shall include a copy of the written complaint.



A final report shall be sent to the complaining party and the DCFS licensing representative within 3 days after the conclusion of the investigation. The investigation will be expedited if it is time-sensitive or if it involves allegations of fraud. Expedited complaints will be investigated, and a written response will be given to the complainant by the Executive Director within five (5) business days or sooner. If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, it can be presented to the board of directors of Gateway Woods Family Services at the next scheduled board meeting or to the Illinois Committee within 5 business days at an ad hoc meeting or conference call, if it is an expedited complaint. The board of directors will send a written response to the complainant. A copy of each complaint and the agency's written response shall be presented to the agency Board of Directors at its next meeting. Each complaint and resolution reviewed by the Board of Directors shall be reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

5. Complaints that are made verbally to Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois shall be documented by the Executive Director in a record and made available for review by the Department's licensing representative. Documents of oral complaints shall include specific information regarding the nature of the complaint, the process to resolve the complaint, and the outcome of the complaint. Complaints received by Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois that do not allege a violation of licensing standards or the Child Care Act shall be documented and resolved internally by Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois Executive Director in collaboration with the other adoption staff, as applicable. Those complaints, misunderstandings, or personality differences resolved through internal discussion shall not be recorded as formal complaints for purposes of Hague accreditation, unless the client seeks to formally lodge a written complaint as listed above.
6. Families are informed that complaints regarding Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois can be reported to the State Central Register at 1-800-252-2873. Families adopting internationally are informed that they may report complaints to The U.S Department of State Hague Complaint Registry at: http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/agency_accreditation/complaints.php
7. The Adoption Program Manager maintains written record in a file (electronic or paper) of each complaint received, steps taken to investigate, and the response. The Adoption Program Manager provides the accrediting entity and the Secretary of State, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of all complaints received in the previous 6 months (including the number of complaints received and how each complaint was resolved) and an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois, along with information about systemic changes made or planned by Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois, if needed. The Adoption Program Manager will also provide any requested information regarding complaints to the Department of State of the accrediting entity upon request.
8. The Adoption Program Manager and the Executive Director ensure that no action is taken to discourage a client or prospective client from, or to retaliate against a client or prospective client for making a complaint, expressing a grievance or opinion, providing information to an accrediting entity about the agency's performance, or questioning the conduct of the agency or staff.
9. Families or individuals working with Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois also have an opportunity to express their opinions of Gateway Woods Family Services Illinois through adoption satisfaction surveys, in order to provide quality improvement of services. The Adoption Case Manager gives the satisfaction surveys to each adoptive family after the completion of the adoptive home study and final post placement report. The Adoption Program Manager reviews the results noting and addressing, as necessary, any dissatisfactory responses or comments. The results are recorded on a spreadsheet by the office secretary.

10. On a semi-annual basis (January and July), the Executive Director presents a summary of responses including dissatisfactory responses, complaints, and resolution of complaints along with an assessment of any discernible patterns and any systemic changes implemented or planned to the board of directors. The Executive Director ensures that Semi-annual reports of complaints are submitted to the accrediting entity, as required.

I have received a copy of the Gateway Woods Family Service Illinois Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Client Name _____

Date _____

Client Name _____

Date _____