

## **Policy and Procedure for Responding to Client Complaints and Improving Service Delivery in Intercountry Adoption Cases**

1. Advocates for Children and Families (ACF) provides a copy of this Procedure for Responding to Client Complaints to clients on our website and at the commencement of services.
2. Any client may lodge a signed and dated complaint with ACF about any of the services or activities of the agency (including its use of supervised providers) that he or she believes raises an issue of compliance with the Hague Convention, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA), or the regulations implementing the IAA. If not satisfied with the agency's response, a client may forward the complaint to the US Department of State Hague Complaint Registry.

### **The U.S. Department of State Hague Complaint Registry (HCR) will:**

1. Record complaints about accredited agencies, temporarily accredited agencies and approved persons;
2. Make complaint information available to the accrediting entity that has oversight and the U.S. Department of State;
3. Record information about action taken to resolve each complaint;
4. Track compliance with any deadlines applicable to the resolution of complaints;
5. Generate reports to show possible patterns of complaints; and,
6. Perform any other functions the Secretary of State assigns.

The contact information for the Hague Complaint Registry for the US DOS is:

[http://adoption.state.gov/hague\\_convention/agency\\_accreditation/complaints.php](http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/agency_accreditation/complaints.php)

3. ACF's Executive Director will respond in writing to the complaint within 30 days of receipt, and will expedite review of complaints that are time-sensitive or involve allegations of fraud.
4. ACF will maintain a written record of each complaint received and the steps taken to investigate and respond to it, and will make this record available to the Council on Accreditation (COA) or the Secretary of State upon request. Each complaint will be reported by the Executive Director or designee during the agency's quarterly risk management review with the Board of Directors. Each complaint will also be reported to the PQI committee by the Executive Director or designee at the next meeting of the committee.
5. It is ACF's explicit policy to take no action to discourage a client or prospective client from, or retaliate against a client or prospective client for, making a complaint; expressing a grievance; providing information in writing or interviews to COA on the agency's performance; or questioning the conduct of or expressing an opinion about the performance of the agency.
6. ACF will provide to COA and the Secretary, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of all complaints received pursuant to paragraph 2. during the preceding 6 months, including the number of complaints and how each complaint was resolved, and an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against the agency, and information about what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by the agency or person in response to such patterns.
7. ACF will provide any information about complaints received pursuant to paragraph 2. as may be requested by COA or the Secretary of State.

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Received by (Print Name, Sign and date)

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Received by (Print name, Sign, and date)