

Grievance Policy & Procedures

Policy: Gateway Woods Family Services permits any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptive parent, or adoptee to lodge directly with the agency signed and dated complaints about any of the services or activities of the agency or person (including its use of supervised providers) that he or she believes raise an issue of compliance with the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, or the regulations implementing the IAA or UAA, and advises such individuals of the additional procedures available to them if they are dissatisfied with the agency's or person's response to their complaint.

All complaints are reviewed and responded to within 30 days of receipt, and Gateway Woods Family Services provides expedited review of such complaints that are time-sensitive or 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 Adoption Program Manager is responsible for ensuring that prospective adoptive parent(s) receive a copy of the complaint policy and procedures. The complaint policy and procedure is presented to each prospective adoptive family at the initial interview, which is when prospective families typically sign the Adoption Services Agreement. The prospective adoptive parents sign acknowledgment that they have received a copy of the complaint procedure, and a copy of the signed acknowledgement is kept in the prospective adoptive parent(s) file. The complaint procedure is also available for review on the Gateway Woods Family Services adoption website.
2. In the event that a family or individual has a complaint regarding the adoption services offered by Gateway Woods Family Services (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. Those complaints, misunderstandings, or personality differences that are resolved through discussion shall not be recorded as formal complaints, unless the client seeks to formally lodge a written complaint as listed below.
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 P.O. Box 125, Leo, IN 46765. 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.
4. The Executive Director will review the complaint and respond in writing to the family or individual within 30 days of receipt regarding resolution of the complaint. The review will be expedited by the Executive Director if it is time-sensitive or if it involves allegations of fraud. Expedited complaints will be reviewed, 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 still not resolved, it will be presented to the board of directors of Gateway Woods Family Services at the next scheduled board meeting or to the Executive/Personnel 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.

5. Families are informed that complaints regarding Gateway Woods Family Services can be reported to the Indiana State Licensing Agency (Indiana Department of Child Services). Families adopting internationally are also 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
6. 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, along with information about systemic changes made or planned by Gateway Woods Family Services, 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.
7. 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.
8. Families or individuals working with Gateway Woods Family Services also have an opportunity to express their opinions of Gateway Woods Family Services 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.
9. On a semi-annual basis (January and July), the Adoption Program Manager 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 Adoption Program Manager ensures that Semi-annual reports of complaints are submitted to the accrediting entity, as required.