

# COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

96.41

## a. Informal Resolution of a Complaint or Grievance

CHAC encourages any organization or individual with concerns regarding services offered by CHAC to bring these concerns to the attention of a staff member. CHAC will work to resolve concerns informally. For individuals or organizations that feel their concerns have not been resolved informally, a formal complaint procedure is available.

## b. Who Can File a Complaint

Birth parents, prospective adoptive parents, adoptive parents, or adoptees may file a complaint. All clients will receive a copy of this policy when signing their Adoption Services Agreement.

CHAC will not take any action to discourage a client or prospective client from filing a complaint. CHAC will take no action to retaliate against a client or prospective client for making a complaint, expressing a grievance, providing information in writing or by interview to the accrediting body, or questioning the conduct of, or expressing an opinion about, the performance of CHAC.

## c. Types of Complaints

Complaints may be filed regarding any services and/or activities of CHAC which raise an issue of non-compliance with the Convention, the IAA, or Hague regulations. All formal complaints/grievances must:

- Be in writing, signed and dated by the complainant;
- Describe with specificity the actions/services upon which the complaint is based, and when they occurred.
- Be addressed to CHAC's Director of Social Services
- Be sent in a manner that allows the complainant to demonstrate receipt by CHAC. Complaints sent by email are acceptable.

## d. CHAC Response to Formal Complaint/Grievance

CHAC's Executive Director or Director of Social Services will respond to the complaint in writing within 30 days of receipt. For complaints that are time sensitive, or involve allegations of fraud, the review process will be expedited accordingly. The Director of Social Services will review the complaint and may contact the complainant with additional questions. As appropriate to the specific complaint, the Director of Social Services will then conduct an internal review to determine an appropriate response to the complaint. This review may include, but is not limited to:

- Discussions with staff members involved with the provision of the services in question.
- Discussions with the complainant to gather additional information. Cooperation from the complainant is critical to the review process.

- Review of client files and documentation related to the complaint
- Review of agency policies and procedures related to the complaint.

**e. Complaint Resolution**

Once the review process is complete, CHAC's Executive Director or Director of Social Services will respond in writing to the complainant regarding the findings of the review process, and what action (if any) is or was taken to address the concerns raised. Possible resolutions include, but are not limited to:

- No action, if no convention policy or procedure has been violated.
- Corrective action to ensure compliance with convention policy and procedures

CHAC has in place a quality improvement program overseen by the Executive Director, which works to assess areas for systemic change in an effort to continually improve services offered by the agency. Strategies used as part of this program include a review of complaint data, use of client satisfaction surveys, as well as ongoing review of legislative and convention guidelines for best practices.

**f. Documentation and Reporting of Complaints/Grievances**

CHAC's Executive Director will maintain a written record of the filing and resolution of all complaints. This record, entitled "Complaint Registry" will be made available to the accrediting entity and/or the Secretary upon request.

At least twice per year CHAC's Executive Director will send to the accrediting agency or to the Secretary a summary of the complaints filed during the previous six months which includes:

- Number of complaints received
- Resolution of each complaint
- Assessment of discernible patterns in complaints
- What systemic changes, if any, have been made (or are planned) to address complaints.

CHAC's Executive Director will provide further information to the Secretary or accrediting agency as requested or required.

**g. Right to Appeal to CHAC**

All complainants have the right to appeal the determination of the Director of Social Services to the Executive Director, and if unsatisfied to the Board of Directors. Appeals to the Executive Director and Board of Directors must be filed in the same manner as outlined above.

**h. Provision of Policy and Procedures to Clients**

A copy of CHAC's complaint policy and procedures shall be provided to each client at the time they execute our Adoption Services Agreement. It shall be the responsibility of the adoption assistant working with the family to provide this document to the family.

**i. Additional Avenues for Grievances or Complaints**

If, after exhausting the avenues for complaint outlined within this policy, the client/individual is still unsatisfied with the agency response the following avenues are available for additional recourse:

**For concerns related to Hague Convention Compliance:**

Clients can file a Hague-related complaint directly with the US State Department's Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoptions Complaint Registry at <http://adoptionusca.state.gov/HCRWeb/WelcomeForm.aspx>

**For concerns related to compliance with state regulations for adoption:**

Social Services Administration  
311 West Saratoga Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201-3521

Virginia Department of Social Services  
Division of Licensing Program  
7 N. Eighth Street  
Richmond, VA 23219-1849

DC Health Regulation and Licensing Administration  
899 North Capitol St. NE 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20002

**For concerns related to the professional conduct of an individual social worker:**

**In Maryland:** Directions for filing a complaint: [www.dhmmh.state.md.us/bswe](http://www.dhmmh.state.md.us/bswe)  
Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners  
4201 Patterson Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21215

**In Virginia:** Directions for filing a complaint: [www.dhp.state.va.us/social](http://www.dhp.state.va.us/social)  
Board of Social Work  
6603 West Broad St., 5th Floor  
Richmond, VA 23230-1712

**In DC:** A complaint form can be found at:  
[https://doh.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/publication/attachments/complaint\\_form\\_health\\_prof.pdf](https://doh.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doh/publication/attachments/complaint_form_health_prof.pdf)

**Formal Complaint/Grievance Form**

Date of Filing: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Individual(s) Filing: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to CHAC (please describe briefly): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Name (if applicable) : \_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously expressed this concern to any staff member at CHAC?    Yes    No

**Please describe the specific details of your complaint. Please include dates and the individuals involved. If you have attempted to resolve this concern previously, please outline to whom the concern was expressed, the date, and the response received. Feel free to attach additional pages as needed.**

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Signature

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Date

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Signature

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Date

Send certified mail or FedEx to:

Director of Social Services  
Cradle of Hope Adoption Center  
8630 Fenton Street, Suite 310  
Silver Spring, MD 20910