

# Families United Network, Inc.

## *Information Packet*

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### ***A Brief History of Families United Network, Inc.***

Families United Network, Inc. is a state licensed 501 (c) 3 non-profit social service agency. The agency was founded in 1996 and initially provided foster care services to children and families throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Today, Families United Network Inc., is a well-respected leader in child welfare and continues to provide quality foster care services, domestic and international adoption, and operates community residential facilities for adolescent boys and girls. Families United Network, Inc. is an accredited organization through the Council on Accreditation including Hague Accreditation.

### ***Mission Statement***

*Families United Network, Inc. is dedicated to strengthening families by providing children and youth with a safe, nurturing, community environment through a continuum of services, which focuses on reunification or permanency.*

### ***Council on Accreditation and Hague Accreditation:***

The Council on Accreditation (COA) is an independent accreditor of the full continuum of community-based behavioral health care and social service organizations in the United States and Canada, and is one of the three leading accreditors of such service providers. Over 1500 organizations – voluntary, public and proprietary, local and statewide, large and small have either successfully achieved COA accreditation or are currently engaged in the process.

COA is widely recognized by states and national organizations as an accrediting body with the capacity, scope, and ability to contribute significantly to the improvement of the behavioral health and social service delivery systems. Originally known as an accrediting body for family and children's agencies, COA has earned public recognition from mental health and substance abuse organizations.

Families United Network, Inc. received the initial full accreditation in April of 2007 and Hague accreditation in February of 2008. The process is completed and is renewed every four years to maintain compliance. In the process of preparing for accreditation the agency examined itself internally and each of the programs and practices offered to clients. Improvements and adjustments have been made to address the standards required by the Council on Accreditation. Specifically, the agency implemented a plan for Continuous Quality Improvement. Stakeholder involvement is very important in any CQI process. As parents, you are an active member of the team and your involvement is sought in many ways.

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### ***Notice of Privacy Practices for Protected Health Information:***

This notice describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

#### **How Families United Network, Inc. Uses and Discloses Your Health**

**Information:** Families United Network, Inc. provides a broad range of services through a wide variety of social services programs. If you receive services from a Families United Network, Inc. program, the Families United Network, Inc. program may use your protected health information and disclose it to other health and human services programs to:

- a) Plan and provide your care and treatment
- b) Communicate with health care professionals who care for you
- c) Describe the care you receive
- d) Obtain reimbursement from private insurers or other government programs
- e) Verify that services billed were actually provided
- f) Educate health professionals
- g) Inform public health officials charged with improving healthcare
- h) Administer Families United Network, Inc.'s programs which provide public benefits, and/or health or human services
- i) Assess and improve the services provided and the outcomes achieved
- j) Pay for services you receive
- k) Inform you about other public programs and services

Families United Network, Inc. and its programs will not use or disclose your protected health information except as described in this notice, or otherwise authorized by law.

**Your Health Information Rights:** You have the right to:

- a) Request a restriction on certain uses and disclosures of your protected health information
- b) Obtain a paper copy of this Notice of Privacy Practices upon request
- c) Inspect and copy your protected health information
- d) Request amendments to your protected health information
- e) Obtain an accounting of disclosures of your protected health information
- f) Request communications of your protected health information by alternative means or at an alternative address
- g) Revoke your consent to use or disclose protected health information to the extent that it has not already been relied upon
- h) File a complaint to Families United Network, Inc. and/or the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service if you believe your privacy rights have been violated.

**Families United Network, Inc. Program Duties:** Families United Network, Inc.

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social services programs each have a duty to:

- a) Maintain the privacy of your protected health information
- b) Provide you with a notice as to our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information we collect and maintain about you
- c) Abide by the terms of this notice
- d) Notify you if we are unable to agree to a requested restriction
- e) Accommodate reasonable requests you may have to communicate health information by alternative means or at an alternative address
- f) Provide an accounting of disclosures of your protected health information

Families United Network, Inc. or any of our social services programs may change its privacy practices and make the new privacy practices effective for all protected health information we maintain. Should our privacy practices change, we will mail a revised notice to the address you have supplied us.

**For More Information or to Report a Problem:** If you have questions and would like additional information, you may contact:

Thomas A. Neuhard, CEO at Families United Network, Inc.,  
276 Ashler Manor Drive, Muncy, PA 17756.  
Telephone: 1-800-326-8309  
Email: [tneuhard@families4kids.org](mailto:tneuhard@families4kids.org)

If you believe your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with (Privacy Officer) Thomas A. Neuhard, CEO or with the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. There will be no retaliation for filing a complaint.

### **Examples of Disclosures for Treatment, Payment and Health Operations:**

*We will use your health information for treatment.* For example: Information obtained by a nurse, physician, psychiatrist/psychologist, or other member of your healthcare team will be recorded in your file used to determine the course of treatment that will work best for you.

*We will use your health information for payment.* For example: A bill may be sent to a county Children and Youth Agency or any private or public source of health coverage you have identified. The information on or accompanying the bill may include information that identifies you, as well as your diagnosis, procedures, and supplies used.

*We will use your health information for regular child welfare operations.* For example: Members of a quality assurance team may use information in your file to assess the care and outcomes in your case and others like it. This information will then be used in an effort to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of

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the services we provide.

### **Others who may receive your health information**

*Business Associates.* There are some services provided in our organization through contracts with business associates. When these services are contracted, we may disclose your health information to our business associate so that they can perform the job we've asked them to do. However, we require the business associate to appropriately safeguard your information.

*Research.* We may disclose information to researchers when the information is de-identified or when their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your health information.

*Funeral Directors:* We may disclose health information to funeral directors to carry out their duties, as required by law.

*Public health.* We may disclose your health information to public health or legal authorities charged with preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability.

*Correctional institution:* Should you be an inmate of a correctional institution, we may disclose to the institution or agents thereof any health information necessary for your health and the health and safety of other individuals or for the administration of the institution.

*Law enforcement.* We may disclose health information for law enforcement purposes.

## ***Grievance Policy:***

**Policy –Adoption:** Any birth parent or prospective adoptive parent may file a grievance regarding treatment by agency staff and/or agency supervised providers when he or she believes that compliance with Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption (Convention), Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA), State Wide Permanency and Adoption Network, (SWAN), state or federal laws have been violated. A grievance may also be filed in regard to aspects of the program, privacy and/or confidentiality concerns, living conditions, violations of specific child rights, discipline, prejudice pertaining to race, religion or national origin, or any other matters that relate to the child or family's involvement with the agency or staff. Grievances may be filed without fear of retaliation.

### **Procedure**

- A. During the orientation process, every prospective adoptive family is given a copy of the grievance procedure and signs a statement acknowledging receipt of this procedure. A copy of this statement is maintained within the client case record.
- B. To file a grievance, an individual must complete the five sections of the Grievance or Appeal Notification form and submit it to one of the following: Families United Network employee, County Caseworker, Juvenile probation officer, mental health caseworker, Guardian ad Litem, attorney or court appointed special advocate (CASA worker). The party receiving the grievance notification form shall submit the grievance to the Families United Network program or office supervisor serving the family's child within 2 days of receipt. After initial review, the Families United Network designee will acknowledge receipt of the grievance on the Grievance or Appeal Receipt form and send it to the filing party within 2 business days of receiving it.
- C. The adoption program Supervisor and an assigned staff member review the complaint and investigate the incident within two (2) business days of receipt of the written grievance. A written summary of the data and events related to the grievance is prepared by the Supervisor during this process and documented in the family or child's file, as appropriate. Fact finding interviews will be conducted with any third parties who have firsthand knowledge of the event(s).
- D. Based on the investigation, written summaries and interviews with all relevant parties, the Supervisor will make a determination no later than 7 business days from date of receipt of the formal written grievance.

- E. The Supervisor will notify the filing party of the outcome by providing them with the completed Grievance or Appeal Decision form no later than seven business days after receipt of the formal grievance. A written copy of the decision will be placed in the family file and a copy will be forwarded to the Executive Director. A central file of all grievances, investigations and outcomes will be maintained in the office of the Executive Director. Copies of the completed decision form are provided to the individuals the filing party chose to receive a copy of their Grievance or Appeal Form.
- F. If the filing party is dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may complete a Grievance or Appeal Notification Form and submit it to the Executive Director. The Executive Director acknowledges receipt of the appeal in the Grievance or Appeal Receipt form completed and returned to the filing party within 2 business days of receiving it. The Executive Director will review the original written summaries and conduct further interviews, as indicated. Involved parties will be informed of the determination of the Executive Director via the "Grievance or Appeal Decision" form within seven business days of receipt of the appeal as submitted on the Grievance or Appeal Notification Form. A copy of the completed Grievance or Appeal Decision form is provided to all the individuals the family chose to receive a copy of their Grievance or Appeal Notification Form.
- G. If the filing party is dissatisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, they may submit a final appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) using the Grievance or Appeal Notification Form. The CEO acknowledges receipt of the appeal in the Grievance or Appeal Receipt form completed and returned to the filing party within 2 business days of receiving it. The Executive Director presents the case to the CEO. The CEO makes the final ruling and writes a final written determination in the Grievance or Appeal Decision form. That determination is provided to the filing party within seven business days of receipt of the formal appeal as submitted on the Grievance or Appeal Notification Form. A copy of the completed Grievance or Appeal Decision form is provided to all the individuals the family chose to receive a copy of their Grievance or Appeal Notification Form.
- H. If a family has a complaint about an accredited/approved agency or person providing adoption services in accordance with the Hague Convention and it involves the Hague Convention, the Inter-country Adoption Act, the Federal regulations (22 CFR 96, 97, 98), and or a Hague Convention adoption case; complaints can be made by accessing the U.S. Department of State website.  
<http://adoptionusca.state.gov/HCRWeb/WelcomeForm.aspx>. Download the available form and submit to the U.S. Central Authority, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20520; 202-736-9080.

### **A. *Grievance Policy:***

**Policy:** Families United Network, Inc. policy states that every client be informed of specific rights as outlined by the Department of Public Welfare and applicable state and federal laws. No client may be deprived of specific or civil rights. Rights may not be used as a reward or sanction. Client rights are reviewed and signed by each client, 7

years of age or older. Procedures to file grievances and properly report violations of a client's rights are included in our agency grievance policy which is reviewed by each client.

**Procedure:** Upon the initiation of services, the assigned Families United Network, Inc. staff will review the Child Rights and Responsibilities form with the client, if they are 7 years of age or older, and have him/her sign the form verifying that this information has been reviewed and that they understand their rights.

**A. Specific client rights include:**

1. A client may not be discriminated against because of race, color, religious creed, disability, handicap, ancestry, sexual orientation, national origin, age or sex.
2. A client may not be abused, mistreated, threatened, harassed or subjected to corporal punishment.
3. A client has the right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.
4. A client has the right to be informed of the rules of the agency.
5. A client has the right to communicate and visit privately with his attorney and clergy.
6. A client has the right to receive service in a manner that is non-coercive and protects the person's right to self-determination.
7. A client has the right to practice their religion or faith of choice, or not to practice any religion or faith.
8. A client has the right to participate in decisions regarding the services provided.
9. A client has the right to discuss any complaints following the Families United Network, Inc. Grievance Policy.
10. A client has the right to access a Families United Network employee 24-hours a day; 7 days a week.
11. A client has the right to refuse any service, treatment, or medication, unless mandated by law or court order. A child will be informed of the consequences of such refusal which could result in the termination or discharge from the program.
12. A client has the right to confidentiality and privacy except in cases where the proper authorities must be notified about any child abuse, criminal activity, or about any person's threat to harm themselves or others.

**B. Client Responsibilities & Expectations:**

1. Treat others with courtesy and respect.
2. Participate in services.
3. Call if you need to cancel an appointment.
4. Obey all court and agency rules.
5. Provide information to the agency including changes in the client's life, including address or telephone number, work, marital status, health, or changes in the household.
6. Inform the agency of any safety concerns or problems as they arise.
7. In the event a client is uncooperative or fails to meet the appropriate responsibilities and expectations, their need for further services will be re-evaluated. This may result in a discharge or termination of services with Families United Network, Inc.

**C. Families United Network, Inc. Responsibilities:**

1. Assess the client's needs
2. Plan for appropriate services
3. Make referrals for services as needed/recommended
4. Protect confidentiality
5. Report abuse to authorities
6. Keep, release, and destroy records as required by law
7. Testify in court and or prepare court documents as required
8. Ensure a child's safety at all times
9. Plan for a permanent home for children
10. Involve clients in the service plans and development