

**Families United Network
Administrative Policy Manual**

Policy: Client Grievances

Date Issued: July 2005

Date Revised: December 2013, January 2019, June 2024

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(*This policy combined all prior policies presiding Dec 2018)

I. Policy

A client placed with Families United Network in the residential program, placed in foster care, a client's legal family member, a resource parent, an adoptive client, or a client of Peer Services, may file a grievance regarding treatment by staff, aspects of the treatment program, privacy and/or confidentiality concerns, living or environmental conditions, violations of specific client rights, discipline, nutritional meals, prejudice about race, religion or national origin, or any other matter that relates to the client's involvement with the agency or staff. Grievances may also be filed if they believe that compliance with any regulatory body or state or federal laws has been violated. Grievances may be filed without fear of retaliation.

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.

II. Procedure

- A. All participants in the programs with Families United Network are provided a handbook/information during the intake, placement, or application meeting, outlining the grievance procedure. All clients and legal family members age 5 and older within the residential program or foster care program and Peer Services and all guardians of clients served within Peer Services are asked to sign the appropriate documentation indicating receipt of the handbook/information indicating that they have received, reviewed and understand the grievance policy and procedure as explained. The signature acknowledging receipt of the grievance procedure is maintained in the client file. Grievance procedures are posted throughout all residential facilities and easily accessible for reference. The Grievance procedures are also posted on the agency website for access to all other clients and responsible parties.

- B. To file a grievance, an individual must complete the five sections of the Grievance or Appeal Notification Form and submit it to one a Families United Network employee. For those clients served within the residential or foster care program a notification form may also be submitted to one of the following: 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 agency level 1 designee serving the client, or program participant immediately. After initial review, the agency designee will acknowledge receipt of the

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grievance by completing the Grievance or Appeal Receipt form and providing it to the filing party within 2 business days of receiving the grievance.

- C. Within 2 business days, the agency level 1 designee who received the notification form will review the complaint and investigate the incident. Interviews will be conducted with any third-party persons who witnessed the event. A summary of findings will be documented in the case file. This level of review must also include at least one person whom the grievance is not about. In the event the grievance is against the level 1 designee, the notification is immediately moved up to the level 2 designee.
- D. Based on the written summaries and interviews with all involved parties, the agency designee will determine within seven business days of receipt of the formal grievance.
- E. No later than 7 business days after receipt of the formal grievance the agency designee will notify the filing party of the outcome by providing them with the completed Grievance or Appeal Decision form. A copy of the completed Grievance or Appeal Decision form is provided to all the individuals the person filing the grievance chose to receive a copy of their Grievance or Appeal Notification Form. A copy of the decision will be placed in the client's file at the time it is completed. A separate file of all grievances and their investigated outcome will be maintained in a separate file by the Director of Special Services.
- F. If the filing party is dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may complete and submit a Grievance or Appeal Form to the agency level 2 designee. The agency will again acknowledge receipt of the appeal using the Grievance or Appeal Receipt and provide the completed form to the filing party within 2 business days of receiving it. The agency-level 2 designee will review the original written summaries and conduct further interviews if indicated. The agency-level 2 designee will render a decision within seven business days of receipt of the appeal and notify the filing party via the Grievance or Appeal Decision form. A copy of the completed Grievance or Appeal Decision form is provided to all the individuals selected to receive a copy of their Grievance or Appeal Notification Form.
- G. If the filing party is dissatisfied with the decision of the agency level 2 designee, a final appeal may be made to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) level 3 designee using the Grievance or Appeal Form. All agency previous agency designees will present the case to the CEO. The CEO makes the final ruling and gives 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. 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.

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H. All Grievance decisions are reviewed quarterly by the agency administrative team (SAM).

I. The order of appeal for each program includes:

	Residential	Foster Care	SWAN Adoption	Private Adoption	Peer Services
Level 1	Assistant Director	Supervisor or Director	Supervisor or Director	Supervisor	Director
Level 2	Director	Executive Director	Executive Director	Executive Director	Executive Director
Level 3	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO	CEO

III. International Adoption Compliant Information:

If a family has a complaint about an accredited/approved agency or person providing adoption services by 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 US Department of State website (listed below). 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.

<http://adoptionusca.state.gov/HCRWeb/WelcomeForm.aspx>.

IV. Regulation

Foster Care, Adoption and Residential Services Act 119

V. Authorization

Janna Brubaker

Executive Director

6/24/24

Date

[Signature]

Chief Executive Officer

6/25/24

Date