

COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY: New Horizons Adoption Agency, Inc. provides services that are meant to be in the best interest of the children we serve. New Horizons' goal is to provide efficient services to our clients and, while every effort is made, sometimes mistakes may happen. We aspire to learn from our mistakes and the complaint procedure is seen as very important in aiding in the improvement of our programs.

New Horizons strives to provide timely, consistent, and quality adoption services. It is our policy to provide any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, or adoptee with an opportunity to express concerns and complaints about services provided or denied to them by NHAA. The purpose of the complaint procedure is also to protect the rights of the individual in bringing their issues to the attention of NHAA as well as to better our services in the future. Our aim is to resolve issues efficiently and effectively and as close to the initial point of contact as possible.

Any birth parent, adoptive parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptee may file a complaint directly with NHAA, signed and dated about any of the services or activities provided by NHAA, its staff, Board of Directors, or its supervised providers that the Complainant believes to raise an issue of compliance with the Hague Convention, the IAA, or the regulations implementing the IAA or UAA. The Complaint Policies and Procedures must be signed and returned to NHAA with the signed Adoptive Service Agreement. (22 CFR 96.41(a)).

You may also file your complaint with the National Complaint Registry through the U.S. Department of State through this website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/about-adoption-service-providers/hague-complaint-registry.html>. The Hague Complaint Registry is a web-based system hosted and monitored by the Department of State that records complaints against accredited, temporarily accredited, or approved adoption service providers. Once a complaint is filed with the Hague Complaint Registry, it will be available to the accrediting entity for appropriate action.

PROCEDURE:

Applicants who have a complaint in the adoption process may address the complaint in the following manner:

1. Discuss the complaint with your social worker.
NHAA requests that the individual first discuss the matter with the NHAA staff member with whom he or she has been communicating, as the issue may be resolved more efficiently and timely to the satisfaction of the individual. If the individual prefers, they may go directly to the Assistant Director or Executive Director or request a meeting. If the complaint is regarding the Executive Director and the Complainant does not wish to go to the Executive Director, it is recommended that the Complainant contact a NHAA board member.
2. File a written statement on the attached "Complaint Form". This form requests the information needed to investigate the stated problem.
3. The Executive Director or designee will review all complaints. The complaint will be fully investigated and a written response will be given to the client within 30 days of NHAA receiving the complaint or grievance.

4. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the written response, a written request for a meeting with the Assistant/Executive Director may be requested. A meeting will be scheduled within 30 days.
5. If resolution is not obtained, the complainant may within 15 business days from the date that the decision was received by the Complainant, file a written Request for Review the NHAA's Board of Directors or Board Chairman. The Request for Review must state the reasons for disagreement of the resolution with the decision and the outcome desired by the Complainant.
6. If they desire, the Complainant may also file their complaint directly with the Board of Directors which is the highest level of authority in the agency.
7. The complaints and their outcome will be filed and available for review in the NHAA office in Blue Earth, Minnesota.
8. On request of the Accrediting Entity or a State Department designee—NHAA will provide a summary of all complaints received by any birth, adoptive, or prospective parent or adoptee about any of the services or activities of NHAA that raise an issue with compliance with the Hague Convention, IAA, or regulations related to either.
9. A written copy of the final decision will be placed in the client file. The final written documentation will be released to the client upon their request.
10. NHAA has a Quality Improvement plan and uses quality improvement methods such as reviewing complaint data and using client satisfaction surveys as part of our improvement program.

New Horizons will not take any action to discourage or retaliate against a client or prospective client from making a complaint; expressing a grievance; providing information in writing or interviews to an accrediting entity on the agency's or person's performance; or questioning the conduct of or expressing an opinion. While NHAA recognizes that some clients have more needs than others, it is the agency's goal to satisfy all clients best as possible. When a client files a complaint, it is assumed that it is because the client's problem was not adequately resolved at a level identified above. Complaints filed in good faith by a client will never result in any adverse consequences to the client. However, it is possible that the inability of the agency to resolve problems with a particular client may mean that the client would be better served with a different agency. NHAA will always attempt to resolve client complaints and successfully complete the services for which the client engaged the agency.

All decisions are based on what is in the best interests of the child.

We have reviewed the Complaint Policy and Procedure for New Horizons Adoption Agency. We agree to abide by the procedure listed above and ultimately the decision of NHAA Board of Directors if they should be called upon to determine the outcome of a complaint.