

AGENCY POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTees

- ❖ Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. is committed to providing quality services to all Adoptees with whom it works.
- ❖ Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. is sensitive to the unique needs of Adoptees and provides services to address these needs.
- ❖ Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. keeps the best interest of the Adoptee in mind when making decisions regarding plans and services.
- ❖ Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. keeps records of the post-placement services provided.
- ❖ Confidentiality is of utmost importance. All information remains confidential unless otherwise stated.
 - Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. will not intentionally exchange identifying information about you unless you agree otherwise. In working with you, however, it may be necessary to coordinate with other service providers. During this process, information about you will be shared on a “need to know” basis. You hereby authorize us to release non-identifying information about you with others as necessary.
 - Your identity may become known to numerous persons and institutions, including, but not limited to, medical providers, hospitals, courts, social workers, and to counsel. Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. cannot control the actions of these persons and institutions. Information about you may be obtained through accidental disclosure by us, or through many other sources. You should also understand that there are legal methods of tracing a child placed for adoption through adoption registries, vital statistic records, school and medical records, and the work of confidential intermediaries. Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. cannot and does not guarantee confidentiality now or in the future.
- ❖ All services are provided with recognition of each individual’s right to dignity, integrity and privacy.
 - Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. provides adoption services ethically to ensure that all adoptions take place in the best interests of children and preventing the abduction, exploitation, sale, or trafficking of children. The agency prohibits anyone from giving money as payment for a child or as inducement to release a child.
 - Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. is committed to treating all persons with respect, dignity, and compassion and welcomes all persons regardless of race,

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religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, nationality, or disability. Pursuant to 18 NYCRR 421.3 (d), Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. prohibits discrimination and harassment against applicants for adoption services on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, religion, or disability. Forever Families Through Adoption Inc. shall take reasonable steps to prevent such discrimination or harassment by staff and volunteers, promptly investigate incidents of discrimination and harassment, and take reasonable and appropriate corrective disciplinary action if such incidents occur.

- ❖ Clients are informed of the policies and procedures of the agency as set forth in this document.
- ❖ Individual case file and records are maintained by Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. and kept confidential.
- ❖ Post-Placement Services offered by Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. for the Adoptee include:
 - Supervision of the placement to ensure that it remains in the best interest of the Adoptee and provision of home visits, as required by state law or the child's country of origin.
 - Provision of services, including individual and group interviews, to support the adjustment of the family and child. Additional services, such as counseling, are available to help with the adjustment process. This process begins on the date on which the child is placed in a home and concludes on the day on which the adoption decree is granted, unless requested to be continued.
- ❖ On-going Support Services offered by Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. may include:
 - Counseling by Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. offered on a group or individual basis.
 - Should a referral be necessary, Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. makes efforts to locate effective services within the Adoptee's community.
 - Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. attempts to locate local support groups for adoptive families and Adoptees and encourages participation.
 - Reports are conducted by the caseworker or social worker and maintained in the client's confidential file.
- ❖ Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. makes readily available to the adult Adoptee upon request, non-identifying information in its custody about the Adoptee's health history and background.
- ❖ If the child is twelve years of age or older Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. will give due consideration to the child's wishes or opinions before determining the placement in the best interest of the child.

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- ❖ Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. can assist an Adoptee who wishes to learn more about their birth family using a state Adoption Information Registry if applicable. In New York State, the Adoption Information Registry accepts a registration for identifying information from an adoptee eighteen years of age or older and who was adopted in the state of New York. An Adoptee under the age of eighteen may register to receive medical information updates if their Adoptive Parent signs the application.

Complaint Resolution Process

Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. wants to ensure that you are completely satisfied with the adoption process when you work with Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. As a prospective client, you are receiving this policy so that you are aware of the complaint procedures prior to retaining our services. If at any time throughout the process, you believe that any of the services or activities of Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. raise an issue of compliance with applicable regulations, policies, laws, the Hague Convention, the UAA, the Intercountry Adoption Act (IAA) or the regulations implementing the IAA, you should communicate your concerns directly to the employee of Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. with whom you have the complaint.

If, after your initial verbal communication, you are still not satisfied, please contact the Executive Director, Joy S. Goldstein. If still not resolved within five (5) business days, you must submit a written complaint, signed and dated, to the Executive Director and provide a copy to the President of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director will have thirty (30) days to respond in writing to your request. An expedited review in ten (10) days will be provided for complaints that are time-sensitive or involve allegations of fraud.

If you remain dissatisfied after receiving a response from the Executive Director, you may continue the process through Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc.'s Board of Directors or with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Where applicable, you may also contact the U.S. Department of State and/or the New York State Office of Children and Family Services by filling out a complaint form or writing a letter that fully explains your complaint.

Submit copies of all letters and papers that explain your complaint to:

The Department of State
Attention U.S. Central Authority
U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs,
Office of Children's Issues
Adoption Unit (SA-29)
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

New York State Office of Children and Family Services
Capital View Office Park
52 Washington Street
Rensselaer, New York 12144-2796
Phone: (518) 473-7793
Fax: (518) 486-7550

To submit a complaint, if applicable, you may also use the Hague Complaint Registry web site, <http://adoptionusca.state.gov/HCRWeb/WelcomeForm.aspx>. You may submit the complaint electronically or print out the form and fax it to the US Central Authority at (202) – 736-9080. The forms may also be requested by calling the Department of State at (888) 407-4747.

Please be advised that, as required by the State Department, in order to maintain compliance with The Hague Convention Regulations and the UAA, your complaint may only be filed with the Department of State after you have presented the problem to the agency.

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Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. permits any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, or adoptive parent, or adoptee to lodge a signed and dated complaint about any of Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc.'s services or activities (including its use of supervised providers) that he or she believes raises an issue of compliance with the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, the regulations implementing the IAA or UAA, or State Law directly with Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc.. Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. advises such individuals of the additional procedures available to them if they are dissatisfied with Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc.'s response to their complaint.

Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. maintains a written record of each complaint received and the steps taken to investigate and respond to said complaint. This record is made available to the accrediting entity, IAAME, CEAS, or the Secretary upon request.

Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. provides the accrediting entity, IAAME, CEAS, and the Secretary, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of all complaints received, if any, during the preceding six months (including the number of complaints received and how each complaint was resolved) and an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against FFTA, along with information about what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by the agency in response to such patterns (if any exist).

Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. provides any information about complaints received as may be requested by the accrediting entity, IAAME, CEAS, or the Secretary.

No person may be discouraged from, nor retaliated against in any way, for: voicing or filing a written complaint; expressing a grievance; providing information in writing or interviews to an accrediting entity on Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc.'s performance; or questioning the conduct of or expressing an opinion about the performance of Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. This topic is part of all employees' training.

Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. utilizes a quality improvement program in order to improve its adoption services as needed. The Executive Director and Senior Agency Counsel are responsible for this program, and they will review all complaints and Client Satisfaction Survey results with staff during scheduled Quality improvement meetings in order to address any issues and to improve operations.

Forever Families Through Adoption, Inc. looks forward to working with you and we encourage you to ask any questions or express any concerns you may have at any time.

I have received and reviewed this document.

Adoptee Signature

Date