

**Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging (i4a)**  
**Complaint Policy and Procedures**  
**Regarding Providers in the *Search for Services* Database**

**Policy**

**Disclaimer of Responsibility**

i4a makes it clear to clients and providers that the ESP referral database is a referral source, not an endorsement or rating of providers. Referrals are made to clients who contact i4a or the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) directly and are also available to users of our on-line *Search for Services* database available at [www.i4a.org](http://www.i4a.org) and [www.iowafamilycaregiver.org](http://www.iowafamilycaregiver.org) (same web-site; two addresses). In making these referrals, clients are presented with a list of organizations which purport to provide certain services. Care is taken neither to recommend a particular agency nor to make any promises regarding an organization's services. Clients who contact i4a or an AAA directly and receive a printed list of providers are informed in writing of the following: *"All of the information provided to you is intended for referral purposes only. [AAA or i4a] does not license, endorse, or recommend any resource to which you may be referred. All information is provided by the service providers themselves. [AAA or i4a] does not verify or warrant its accuracy or completeness or guarantee quality service from any listed resource. [AAA or i4a] recommends that you contact the provider in person before making your decision."* If referrals are provided verbally rather than in print, staff members make it clear in their conversation that they are providing referrals NOT endorsements or recommendations, reminding the client of the client's responsibility in making the final decision.

**Potential grounds for removal from the ESP database:**

Non-delivery of service, fraud, misrepresentation, discrimination, elder abuse, un-safe practices, or other reasons to be determined on a case by case basis.

**Confidentiality:**

The identity of the person making the complaint will be protected, unless they give written permission for their identity to be revealed.

**Appeal Process**

Any provider or complainant who is not satisfied with the Executive Committee's decision should appeal that decision in a letter addressed to the Executive Committee of the i4a Board.

## **Procedures**

### **How complaints about a provider listed in the database should be filed:**

1. The complainant can fill out the attached complaint form and return it to i4a. Complaints about statewide or nationwide service providers are within the jurisdiction of the i4a Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Complaints about local and regional service providers are within the jurisdiction of the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). Complaints about local and regional service providers will be referred to the appropriate AAA.
2. If a complaint is made by telephone, the staff member taking the call will fill out the attached complaint form.
3. A complaint may also be within the jurisdiction of another organization, such as the Department of Human Services or the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals in the case of potential elder abuse, for example. In addition to following the i4a complaint policy and procedures, i4a will refer complainants to other organizations who may need to investigate the complaint.

### **Procedures for responding to complaints within the jurisdiction of i4a:**

1. The Executive Committee of the i4a Board may decide that the provider in question should be temporarily removed from the referral database until the Board has had time to investigate the issue and make a determination. Otherwise, the provider will remain in the referral database until the complaint procedures have been completed and a final decision made.
2. A letter will be sent to the provider in question, outlining the nature of the complaint and asking for a written response from the provider about the complaint.
3. The i4a Executive Committee of the Board will review the provider's response and make a determination.
4. The entire process must be completed within 30 days.
5. Once the determination has been made, a letter will be sent to both the complainant and the provider, informing them of the Executive Committee's decision. All documentation, including a copy of all correspondence, will be kept on file at the i4a office.



Date Received:\_\_\_\_\_ Time Received:\_\_\_\_\_

Received By (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Complaint made by: \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_Telephone

Action Taken: