

ADOPTION OPTION INC.

PROGRAM STATEMENT & POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2009

Program Statement (R 400.12602)

Many children inside and outside of the State of Michigan are in need of families because their parents' rights have been terminated. The focus of our adoption agency is to recruit Christian families who are willing to adopt children from the foster care system. Adoption Option Inc. delivers adoption services directly through its own staff and through the purchase of services.

This agency will assist qualified prospective adoptive parents with Adoption Evaluation Services (also called a home study). Additional services can be obtained either from this agency or through referral. If assistance is needed to file the Adoption Petition, its attachments and subsequent legal documents, the law firm of DeLois T. Leapheart is available to provide that service, unless the adoptee is in foster care. If the adoptee is in foster care in the U. S. this agency is available to file the Adoption Petition in Michigan and its accompanying documents. If the adoptee is located outside the U.S., this agency does not provide assistance with the immigration requirements or the filing of the adoption petition in locations outside the State of Michigan; the prospective adoptive parents would be required to locate someone with appropriate expertise to accomplish both immigration and filing of the Adoption Petition. If additional services are needed above and beyond those provided by this agency, clients will be referred to alternate providers.

Prospective adoptive parents must be of a suitable age and have sufficiently good health in order to be considered. In other words, the factors such as age, life expectancy, health status, medical history, medical prognosis for the future, and all other relevant medical, social and psychological factors, when taken as a whole must indicate that the person is likely to be able to successfully parent a child. Although the final determination about these factors will be made after the completion of the home study, Adoption Option Inc is free to decline to provide adoption evaluation services (also referred to as a home study), if—in the sole discretion of Adoption Option Inc.—it is indicated that the person seeking an adoption is unlikely to qualify.

The 2009 Fees for services are as listed on the attached Fee Schedule. After payment of applicable fees, this agency will identify for the prospective adoptive family the documents needed to complete the home study. The Social Services Worker shall interview the prospective adoptive family after receipt of the requested documents needed to complete the home study and the family has registered for adoption training. After the conclusion of the interviews and receiving all of the requested documentation, the Social Services Worker or Social Services Aide under the supervision of the Social Services Worker shall complete the home study in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. The completed home study will be provided to the family and whomever they designate.

This agency will initially provide home study services in Midland, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, and Saginaw Counties. After a period of time of successfully providing home study services to families in these counties, we may elect to expand our geographic area to provide home study service to other counties.

Due to the fact that a great number of children in the United States are waiting for families, initially, this agency shall not make any effort to recruit families for international adoptions. If this agency is contacted by a family needing a home study for an inter-county adoption, an internal assessment will be conducted to determine whether we have the resources to assist the prospective Michigan adoptive family with the adoption of a child born outside the United States. If we conclude that we have such resources available, the prospective family will be sent an Adoption Application Agreement.

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Adoption Evaluation Policy and Procedures (R 400.12603)

A. Orientation (R 400.12604)

A social service worker shall provide an orientation for prospective applicants for adoption before an adoptive evaluation is conducted. This orientation can be completed in group setting or can be completed for an individual. The orientation shall include a review of all of the following:

- (a) Program statement, policies, and procedures.
- (b) Services and resources available.
- (c) Fees and charges for services.

B. Adoptive evaluation (R 400.12605)

This agency shall complete a written report of an adoptive evaluation that shall be conducted by a Social Service Worker. The report shall include the dates and places of contacts and persons interviewed or observed. The report shall be an assessment of all of the following:

- (a) Visits at the residence of the applicants for adoption to conduct observations of, and interviews with, each member of the household to determine all of the following:
 - (i) Marital and family status and history, including current and past level of family functioning and relationships and any incidents of domestic violence.
 - (ii) Educational history and any special skills and interests.
 - (iii) Employment history, current financial status, including property and income, money management skills and outstanding financial obligations.
 - (iv) Physical, mental, and emotional health of each member of the household.
 - (v) Any history of substance abuse of each member of the household.
 - (vi) Parenting skills and attitudes toward children.
 - (vii) Methods of discipline of children.
 - (viii) Adjustment and special needs of the applicant's own children.
 - (ix) Strengths and weaknesses of each member of the household.
 - (x) Experiences with own parents and any history of out-of-home care.
 - (xi) Reasons for adopting.
 - (xii) Previous experience in providing child foster care, child day care, or adult foster care.
 - (xiii) Attitude towards accepting an adoptive child.
 - (xiv) Willingness to parent cross-racially or cross-culturally and to create an atmosphere that fosters the racial identity and culture of an adopted child.
 - (xv) Capacity and disposition to give an adopted child guidance, love, and affection.
- (b) Previous adoption evaluations or placements.
- (c) Previous licenses, criminal convictions, and substantiated child abuse or neglect for any member of the household.
- (d) Three references from persons not related to the applicants.
- (e) A medical statement for each member of the household that indicates that the member has no known condition which would affect the care of an adoptive child. The statement shall be signed by a physician within the 12-month period before the adoptive evaluation.
- (f) Adequacy of the applicant's house, property, neighborhood, schools, and community for the purpose of adoption as determined by an on-site visit.
- (g) The age, number, sex, race, ethnic background, and special characteristics of children preferred by the applicants and the family's plan to discuss adoption with any child adopted.

The social services worker shall document the information above in a completed BRS-2285 Adoption Evaluation Review Worksheet or a similar type of document.

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C. Agency recommendation (R 400.12606)

This agency shall make a written recommendation based on the findings of the adoptive evaluation with respect to both of the following:

- (a) Approval or denial of the applicants for adoption by a social service supervisor.
- (b) If approved, the number, sex, age, race, ethnic background, and special characteristics of adoptive children who may be placed in the adoptive applicant home. A child's racial, ethnic, and cultural identity, heritage, and background may only be considered if an assessment of the individual child indicates that such consideration is in the best interests of the child.

If this agency concludes that an individual is not suitable to be approved, then the basis for the decision shall be specified in the recommendation. The social services worker shall include in her report the recommendation for or against adoption of a child by this family. This agency shall provide the applicants for adoption with a signed and dated copy of the evaluation and recommendation upon its completion.

The social services worker shall document the information above in a completed BRS-2285 Adoption Evaluation Review Worksheet or a similar type of document.

D. Intercountry services (R 400.12607)

Due to the fact that a great number of children in the United States are waiting for families, initially, this agency shall not make any effort to recruit families for international adoptions. If this agency is contacted by a family needing a home study for an intercountry adoption, an internal assessment will be conducted to determine whether we have the resources to assist the prospective Michigan adoptive family with the adoption of a child born outside the United States, then this agency shall comply with all of the following provisions:

- (a) The agency shall include in its program statement, under R 400.12602, a description of intercountry adoptive evaluation services provided.
- (b) The regulations issued by the United States federal government regarding the procedures for United States citizens adopting from a particular country and the regulations issued by that country for adoptions by foreigners shall be kept on file at the agency and shall be made available for review by persons considering adopting from the country.
- (c) If an agreement exists between a foreign government and this agency, an English language translation of verified written agreements with the foreign government shall be on file at the agency and available for review. The agreement shall conform to the laws and regulations of the United States, the state of Michigan, and the foreign country.
- (d) If this agency has persons working in the foreign country for purposes of assisting prospective adoptive families, then the persons are considered staff of the agency.

E. Adoptive evaluation record (R 400.12608)

This agency shall retain a case record for each applicant for adoption. This record shall contain all of the following:

- (a) Orientation documentation as required by R 400.12604.
- (b) Adoptive evaluation as required by R 400.12605.
- (c) Agency recommendation as required by R 400.12606.

This agency shall retain each record for not less than 3 years after the agency's termination of services to the applicant. If a branch or associate office of a child-placing agency ceases to operate, then the branch's or office's adoption records shall be forwarded to the central office of the branch or associate office.