



Dear Prospective Adoptive Family:

Thank you for considering The Open Door Adoption Agency regarding the adoption of a child. We are a private, non-profit, Christian agency licensed by the State of Georgia. Our purpose is to provide permanent caring families for domestic infants, children in foster care, and foreign orphan children. We began in 1987 and have 36 years of experience helping people build their families through adoption. The agency has finalized over 2,700 adoptions, and we have been completing adoptions for hosting programs since 2002. We are a Hague accredited agency and received the maximum five-year accreditation. We are also a 501(c) 3 nonprofit agency, and families are eligible to receive grants and tax-deductible donations when working with us.

As an adoptive family, services which you can expect from The Open Door include: home studies for Georgia residents, home study guidance for out of state residents, adoption and parenting training, assistance with dossier preparation and Citizenship and Immigration Service applications, dossier legalization, submittal of dossier to the foreign country, obtaining referrals, travel orientation, assistance by our representative in the foreign country, counseling, information on the child, post placement services, and the care and concern of The Open Door staff. All of our staff, both here in the United States, as well as in the foreign country, have the highest of ethical standards, an excellent attitude of customer service, and are extremely knowledgeable about the adoption process. We will be your partners in this journey, from the beginning of the process, to after you bring your child or children home. Please review the information we provide below about our domestic and international adoption programs. Here you will learn more about our agency's policies and practices, general costs to expect, as well as our staff, both in the United States and in the foreign country.

We are not looking for "perfect" homes. We are looking for loving, secure Christian families who will offer a child an opportunity to develop to his/her fullest potential, emotionally, physically, educationally, and spiritually. Our primary means of getting to know you and helping to guide you in adoption is the Home Study. If you live in Georgia, it will include three interviews in your home where we talk about your backgrounds, marriage relationship, your strengths and weaknesses, your support system and your feelings about the child or children you wish to adopt. As part of the process, you will be given medical reports, a financial statement and other forms to complete. For out of state families, we will accept your state's home study accompanied with a copy of your home study agency's current license and also copies of your supporting home study documents.

The Open Door Adoption Agency's International Program works with foreign orphan children from Eastern Europe and Latin America. The agency receives no state or federal funds, and has no grants with which to defray the expenses of our agency. Therefore, it is necessary for

us to charge a fee for our services to all our prospective adoptive couples. To help manage these costs, we are offering our families a service at no charge called the Adoption Finance Coach. This resource puts you in touch with a coach who helps you strategize ways to raise funds for your adoption. Family and friends can make donations towards your adoption expenses that are fully tax deductible. We also have an extensive list of financial resources available, and we can guide you through the process of pursuing grants and financial aid to assist you with the adoption costs.

The Open Door Adoption Agency has a wonderfully successful international adoption program, having placed over 1,300 orphan children. Please complete our application if you would like for us to assist you with your adoption. You may apply and pay the \$300 application fee online at: [https://db.opendooradoption.org/SAM/Fm/ApplicationForm\\_Edt.aspx](https://db.opendooradoption.org/SAM/Fm/ApplicationForm_Edt.aspx) or contact the agency at 229-228-6339 if you prefer for the application to be emailed. The adoption process begins with approval of your application. You can begin immediately on your home study and application with the USCIS. We will give you access to an extensive country guidebook which has all the information you need to guide you through the process in making your adoption a reality. Our staff is dedicated to working closely with you throughout the entire process.

May the Lord lead you to the path by which to find your child or children. We would welcome the opportunity to assist you in this exciting journey.

Sincerely,



Walter E. Gilbert

The Open Door Adoption Agency, Inc.

Chief Executive Officer

229-228-6339

[www.opendooradoption.org](http://www.opendooradoption.org)



## **DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION PROGRAMS**

The Open Door has reached out in many directions to offer life and nurturing families to children around the world. We are seeking Christian families for precious domestic infants, children in foster care, as well as orphan children from foreign countries. Your love, nurture and Christian example would transform the lives of these children. The following briefly outlines The Open Door's domestic and international programs.

If you are considering the possibility of adding to your family through adoption, The Open Door Agency can help you fulfill that dream.



### **DOMESTIC ADOPTIONS**

Many families are now expectantly waiting to adopt domestic Caucasian, Hispanic, Biracial and African American children. Through a network of caseworkers across the state of Georgia, An Open Door finds, nurtures and counsels birthmothers who want to place their children for adoption. Families also network to find birthmothers themselves in order to speed their adoption process. Ultimately, each family is blessed with a precious child of their own.

Adoptive parents may enter the domestic program by first talking to an agency representative, then applying online. Once a family enters the program, a home study is begun along with a family profile. The agency also offers a full-day Informational Meeting.

When all documentation and training are completed, families enter the active 'pool' of adoptive parents from which agency-matched birthparents select the family for their child. The average waiting time for agency-matching is now under one year.

An Open Door is one of the largest and most reputable agencies in Georgia, in terms of placements, placing an average of twenty five domestic infants each year and an average of almost the same number of international placements. We have caseworkers conveniently located to serve you anywhere in the state of Georgia. We welcome the opportunity to help you find the child the Lord has prepared for you.



### **INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS**

International adoptions are now available in Eastern Europe and Latin America. The Agency has placed over 1,300 foreign orphan children. Over 900 children have been adopted from Eastern Europe, over 200 have been adopted successfully from Latin America, and the rest have been adopted from China. Many more international adoptions are in progress.

The Agency has wonderful facilitators trained to help families through the adoption process in each country. Our facilitators have everything prepared for our families to complete adoptions quickly. Most foreign adoptions are completed within four to twelve months after submission of all required documents and U.S.C.I.S. approvals. Children available for international adoption are fully and permanently released for adoption as the biological parental rights have already been fully terminated or in some cases the biological parents are deceased. Most foreign adoptions are finalized in the country before bringing the child to the United States.

## **EASTERN EUROPE**



Hundreds of thousands of children are abandoned in orphanages across Eastern Europe. Many children are abandoned because of their parents' poverty in the economically depressed post-communist countries. Others are truly orphans or have had parents' rights terminated for criminal activity, neglect or child abuse. Adoptive parents must realize that children coming from orphanages will almost certainly experience some degree of developmental delay due to institutionalization and trauma associated with probable neglect and/or possible abuse.

Each country offers a different age range for their youngest children. The younger the child requested, the longer the wait. Older children, sibling groups and special needs children may be adopted more quickly. Both relatively healthy children and those with minor to severe special needs are available. Many of the special needs are developmental in nature and others may require a much longer adjustment period. Adoptive parents must be committed for the long run and be willing to educate themselves on how to parent children from hard places.

The Open Door offers programs in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine. Through our foreign representatives, The Open Door presents families' documents to the foreign governments where, in most countries, families wait in the U.S. for referral of a child. Our representatives are then able to take the child's and adoptive family's documents through much of the adoption process before the family travels to the country.

For each of our country programs in Eastern Europe, you will be working closely with an experienced International Adoption Consultant in the United States. Your Adoption Consultant will be an expert on adoptions from that country and will advise you throughout each step of the adoption process. You will also have excellent service providers in the country from which you adopt. In Bulgaria, Open Door works with three Adoption Centers; Family National, Happy Child Association, and Rose of the Heart Association. These centers are indigenous to Bulgaria and Hague Accredited by their country. In Lithuania, Open Door works with a highly experienced and professional facilitator, Silva Savickaite. And finally, in Poland, we work with a wonderful facilitator, Joanna Berezanska, who so quickly becomes an expert on Polish adoptions as well as invaluable to our families.

Ukraine is an exception in the fact that families travel to Ukraine within a few months after sending documents, and there select a child from photos and descriptions offered by Ukraine's national adoption center (SDA). Families visit the child in the orphanage to begin the bonding

process and to make the final selection. Typically, 3 trips to the country are involved. Many children have been adopted from Ukraine. Open Door works with highly regarded facilitators in Ukraine for all adoptions: Alex Skorobogatov and Anastasia Ovsyanik, who have been successfully completing Ukrainian adoptions for well over ten years.

Another option available for Ukraine is the opportunity to host a child for a period of time and then later decide to pursue adoption of the child. This option allows families who are considering the adoption of an older child to make sure the child is a good fit for their family. For more information about these programs, speak with an Open Door representative.

## **LATIN AMERICA**



The Open Door currently offers programs in four Latin America countries; El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and Ecuador. Again, each of our adoptive families is paired with an expert International Adoption Consultant who is specifically knowledgeable about adoptions for that country. Our Peru program has been in place since 2009. Peru allows us to place single healthy children who are over seven years of age; however, children who are in a sibling group or who have special needs may be any age. There are often waiting children from Peru whose needs are fairly mild, or medically correctable. Our Peruvian facilitator, Karina Aguilar Bartens, is a child psychologist, and serves as both an excellent representative for Open Door families as well as a huge blessing for our families while in country as she can help to advise them as they first meet their children. Our El Salvador program reopened in 2021 and is an excellent program for families wanting to adopt relative children, older children, children with special needs, or sibling groups. We are working with Karla Lizette Calero who is very well-respected attorney experienced in international adoptions. Our Mexico program is working well and is growing. We are working with expert attorneys, Ricardo Gallego and Moises Aceves, who each have great experience with understanding the governmental agencies within the country and knowing how to navigate through the various offices which are all connected with international adoption. We are working with relative adoptions and Mexico also has children available ages nine and up, as well as sibling groups and younger special needs children. And finally, we thrilled to be newly licensed to complete adoptions in Ecuador. There are primarily children ages six and up in need of adoption, though there are also some younger children with more complex needs or who are part of a sibling group with older children. Families may be matched with a specific waiting child or submit their dossier and wait to receive a referral from the Ecuadorian Central Authority. While you're in Ecuador, our facilitator and Attorney, Manuel Rizzo, will lead you through each step of the adoption process. You will never have to worry about completing any of the complex steps required, as he will escort you to every appointment and court date, and he'll assist you with obtaining all adoption documents needed for your child.

Orphaned and abandoned children are typically the result of conditions such as extreme poverty, drug or alcohol abuse, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or neglect. These children urgently need families to love and care for them.

## **OPEN DOOR DISCLOSURE POLICY REGARDING ADOPTION STATISTICS**

The Open Door discloses, upon request, the following information:

- The number of its adoption placements per year for the prior three calendar years, and the number and percentage of those placements that remain intact, are disrupted, or have been dissolved as of the time the information is provided.
- The number of parents who apply to adopt on a yearly basis, based on data for the prior three calendar years.
- The number of children eligible for adoption and awaiting an adoptive placement referral via The Open Door.



## **ADOPTIVE COUPLE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE DOMESTIC PROGRAM:**

Couples wishing to adopt a child through An Open Door Adoption Agency, Inc. Domestic Program must meet the following criteria:

1. Be married at least three (3) years;
2. Be at least 25 years of age; and not over the age of 45;
3. Be free of communicable disease, in good physical and mental health, and have a normal life expectancy;
4. Have the capacity to meet the child's physical and emotional needs throughout his/her developmental stages of childhood and adolescence;
5. All couples applying to An Open Door must be of the Christian faith.

## **Eligibility Criteria by Country for the International Programs**

**Bulgaria:** The adoptive parents must:

1. Be a single female or married couple for at least 2 ½ years
2. Be at least 15 years older than the child they are adopting
3. No more than 50 years age difference between the adoptee and the younger spouse in a married couple, and there should not be more than 55 years age difference between the adoptee and the older of the spouses in a married couple. When a child is adopted by a single adopter, the lower age difference of 50 years should be considered
4. Adopters should be in good physical and mental health and should not suffer from diseases which could pose a threat to the child's life and health or diseases which would be an obstacle for taking care of the child's needs
5. The socioeconomic status of the candidates should correspond to the average socioeconomic status in the country of their habitual residence

**Ecuador:** The adoptive parents must:

1. Parents must be age 25-51 at time of child referral and can be no less than 14 years and no more than 45 years older than the child to be adopted. Single women are eligible to adopt.
2. Couples must be married 3 years. Previous divorce is acceptable.
3. Prospective adoptive parents must demonstrate that they are financially, morally, mentally,

and physically able to provide for the adopted child.

4. Ecuador has not set specific parameters around such history, they do evaluate these cases with strict scrutiny. An adoptive parent with a significant criminal history is unlikely to be approved in Ecuador.

**El Salvador:** The adoptive parents must:

1. Be married couple for at least 2 ½ years.
2. Must be over 25 and at least 15 years older than the adopted child and not more than 45 years older than the adopted child.
3. Prospective adoptive parents must demonstrate that they are financially, morally, mentally, and physically able to provide for the adopted child.
4. Have clean criminal records for the past 10 years

**Lithuania:** The adoptive parents must:

1. Be a married couple for at least 2 ½ years
2. Be at least 18 years older than the child
3. Adoptive parents can be registered only on the list of children with special needs unless one spouse is a Lithuanian citizen
4. No upper age limit at this time
5. Previous divorce is acceptable
6. Lithuanian Central Authority prefers the adopted child to be the youngest in the family but it is not a requirement
7. Certain medical conditions can disqualify prospective adoptive parents. Speak to program coordinator for more details

**Mexico:** The Adoptive parents must:

1. Prospective adoptive parents must be over 25 years of age and at least 17 years older than the child. If married, only one parent must meet the age requirement
2. Prospective adoptive parents may be married or single female
3. Income: Prospective adoptive parents must demonstrate the means to support the physical and educational needs of the child(ren)

**Peru:** The adoptive parents must:

1. Be married or single
2. Married parents need to be 25 - 50 years old. Married parents 51 to 55 years of age may adopt a child 7 years of age or older
3. Single parents between 35 and 50 years old may adopt children age five and older
4. Adoptive parents must be at least 18 years older than the child
5. Prospective parents must pass a psychological evaluation
6. Previous divorce is acceptable
7. Must look individually at cases with use of anti-depressants, or criminal history. Peru will look carefully at their situations individually

**Poland:** The adoptive parents must:

1. Be a married couple for at least 5 years or a single woman

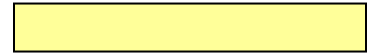


2. Parents should be over 25 years of age or older, with no more than a 40-year difference between the age of and the age of the prospective adoptive parents. Previous divorce is acceptable
3. Families in good physical and mental health as determined by a medical examination. If you take prescription medicine or have a medical condition, please contact our adoption consultant to determine your eligibility.
4. Families with health insurance and life insurance.
5. Families must have adequate income for the addition of an adopted child.

**Ukraine:** The adoptive parents must:

1. Be a married couple
2. Be at least 15 years older than the child
3. If only 1 parent is 15 years older than the child, then that parent may adopt singly and then the other parent must readopt in the US
4. Be a married couple for at least 2 ½ years
5. Previous divorce is acceptable
6. Certain medical issues are banned from adopting in Ukraine, particularly history of mental health issues. Check with your Open Door representative for specific information

Apply [online](#) or call (229)228-6339, if you prefer that we email the application to you.



## ADOPTIVE PARENT CRITERIA

<b>DOMESTIC</b>	Age Minimum / Maximum		Years Married	Age of Children	Estimated time till Placement
<b><u>UNITED STATES</u></b>	25	45	3	Newborn	12 – 18 months
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>	Age Minimum / Maximum		Years Married	Age of Children	Time from dossier till Placement
<b><u>EASTERN EUROPE</u></b> (Caucasian Children)					
Bulgaria	25	No more than 50 years older than adoptee and youngest spouse. No more than 55 years between adoptee and oldest spouse	2.5	1 – 15 years, healthy and special needs children	(older child is quicker) 4-5 years from dossier acceptance for relatively healthy child 3 years or < Wait varies for older children and special needs
Lithuania	25	No Upper Limit	2.5	2-15 years old, special needs only unless one spouse is a Lithuanian citizen, siblings also available	4-6 months
Poland	25	No more than 40 years older than adoptee	5	2-15 years old, special needs only, siblings and older children also available	9-12 months
Ukraine	25	No upper limit	2.5	Ages 7-15, some younger children available in sib groups and special needs	5-6 months *2-3 months from dossier to 1 <sup>st</sup> trip/match with child
<b><u>LATIN AMERICA</u></b> (Hispanic and Indian Children)					
Mexico	25	No upper limit	2.5	Relatives and children nine years of age and older, sibling groups available, younger special needs children	1-3 years

Peru	25 51	45 55	2.5	5Yrs. To 16 Yrs. 7 yrs. To 16 yrs.  *Sibling groups and special needs children may be younger than 5 years.	11-18 months  *Wait time for a healthy 5-8 year old is estimated to take an extra 1-2 years
El Salvador	25	No more than 45 years older than the adoptee	2.5	7-15 years Sibling groups and special needs children may be younger than 7 years.	Minimum of 2 years for a relative child. Adoptions have been known to take much longer than 2 years, and upwards of 5 years.
Ecuador	25	51	3	6 years to 16 years	TBD

\*Minimum age and length of marriage at time of placement. Couples may begin application earlier.



**COSTS FOR EACH INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM:**

**DOMESTIC PROGRAM**

<u>U.S.:</u>	<u>Agency Service Fees</u>	<u>Home study &amp; Post Placement</u>	<u>Total</u>
Domestic Georgia	Call agency for fees.	(if in Georgia - included)	Call agency for fees.

**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

<u>EASTERN EUROPE</u>	<u>Agency Service Fees</u>	<u>*Adoption Expenses in the U. S</u> (if in Georgia)	<u>In-country expenses &amp; Facilitator Fee</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bulgaria Special Needs Program (varies by NGO)	\$ 10,300	\$ 7,795	\$ 9,704-10,777	\$27,799-28,872 (Plus travel** Two trips, 17 days)
Bulgaria Traditional Program (varies by NGO)	\$11,300	\$ 7,795	\$11,201-11,368	\$30,296-\$30,463 (Plus travel** Two trips, 17 days)
Lithuania Special Needs	\$11,400	\$8,495	\$11,909	\$31,804 (Plus travel** One/Two trips, 21 days)
Lithuania Traditional	\$12,400	\$8,495	\$11,909	\$32,804 (Plus travel** One/Two trips, 21 days)
Poland Traditional	\$13,400	\$8,735	\$13,632	\$ 35,767 (Plus travel** one or two trips 5weeks/3week plus 1 week, varies by the child's region)
Ukraine Traditional/on hold	\$ 10,300	\$ 5,535	\$13,425	\$29,340 (Plus travel** 3 trips, 30-45 days)

Ukraine Special Needs/ on hold	\$ 8,800	\$ 5,535	\$12,425	\$26,340 (Plus travel**  3 trips, 30-45 days)
Ukraine Hosting /on hold	\$ 7,800	\$ 5,535	\$13,425	\$ 26,840 (Plus travel** 3 trips, 30-45 days)
<b><u>LATIN AMERICA:</u></b>				
Ecuador	\$13,300	\$9,770	\$14,255	\$37,325 (Plus travel, one trip, 50 days)**
El Salvador	\$13,400	\$ 9,295	\$14,239	\$36,934 (Plus travel** one trip, 30+days
Mexico	\$13,400	\$8,695	\$17,095	\$39,190 (Plus travel ** 3 trips)
Peru	\$12,300	\$10,745	\$8,530	\$31,575 (Plus travel, one trip, 50 days)**

**NOTE:** There are substantially reduced agency fees for placement of *sibling groups* in The Open Door International Program

\* A \$850 fee is charged per child by Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity for monitoring and oversight of adoption agencies. The above estimate includes this \$850 charge for one child. IAMEE will charge \$850 for each additional child accepted at the time of the referral.

\*\*Estimated travel costs ranges for 2 parents & adopted child: Bulgaria (\$7,400), Ecuador (\$10,550) El Salvador (\$5,000), Lithuania (\$8,000), Mexico (\$6,200) Ukraine (\$10,900), Peru (\$9,050)



## **CLIENT COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The Open Door Adoption Agency, Inc. recognizes the right of any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptive parent, or adoptee to lodge directly with the agency signed and dated complaints about any of the services or activities of the agency or its supervised providers that he or she believes are inconsistent with the Convention, the Inter-country Adoption Act (IAA), the Universal Accreditation Act (UAA) or the federal laws and regulations and standards of accreditation that apply to the agency. The agency does not take any action to discourage a client or prospective client from, or retaliate against a client or prospective client for, making a complaint, expressing a grievance, questioning the conduct of, or expressing an opinion about, the performance of the agency. This document shall provide information for lodging a complaint as well as additional steps available should the complainant be dissatisfied with the agency's response to the grievance.

The Open Door offers the following procedure by which clients may share grievances and request review of decisions that are unsatisfactory to them:

- a. A client grievance should first be brought to the attention of their adoption consultant. The adoption consult will review the complaint with the Director of International Social Services and a plan for resolving the issue will be discussed with the client.
- b. If the issue is not resolved to the client's satisfaction, the birth parent, prospective adoptive parent or adoptive parent, or adoptee may submit the grievance in writing, signed and dated, to the Chief Executive Officer, Walter Gilbert, at 218 East Jackson Street, Thomasville, GA 31792. Mention should be made if the complaint involves an alleged violation of the IAA, the UAA, The Hague Convention on International Adoption or international adoption practices in general. The Chief Executive Officer will promptly schedule a conference with the client. The client, any witnesses and staff members shall have equal opportunity to:
  1. Present and establish facts and evidence relevant to the grievance.
  2. Question and discuss or refute material presented.

A report of this conference and the decision regarding a plan of action of the Chief Executive Officer will be submitted to the client in writing within 30 days with a copy to the Board of Directors. Expedited review will be provided for time sensitive complaints or any complaint involving allegations of fraud.

- c. A client may request in writing a hearing before the Board of Directors.
- d. If the decision of the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors is not satisfactory to the client, the client may file a complaint with Elizabeth Vinyard, Director, Childcare Licensing Section, Office of Regulatory Services, Georgia Department of Human Resources, 2 Peachtree Street N.W., 32<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3167 or by calling DHR at 404-657-9644.
- e. At any time, grievances regarding international adoptions may also be registered with the U.S. Secretary of State at the Complaint Registry. Go to this link for forms to submit electronically: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/InterCountry-Adoption/about-adoption-service-providers/hague-complaint-registry.html>  
If you wish, you may print out the form and fax it along with any supporting documentation to the U.S. Central Authority at 202-736-9080. You may also mail a complaint to:  
U.S. Central Authority  
U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs  
Office of Children's Issues, Adoption Unit  
SA-17, Floor 09  
Washington, DC 20522-1709
- f. Alternately, complaints may be submitted to the Accrediting Entity responsible for the agency's monitoring and oversight, Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity (IAAME), at: <https://www.iaame.net/contact/>.

The Open Door Adoption Agency, Inc. maintains a written record of complaints that raise an issue of compliance with the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, or the regulations implementing the IAA or UAA. This record includes the actions taken to respond to the complaint. Complaints and their resolutions are reported to the Georgia Office of Regulatory Services each year prior to annual licensing inspections. The written record of complaints is also submitted to the Accrediting Entity at least semiannually through the Semi-Annual Report of Complaints (SARC). In reporting to the Accrediting Entity, the agency must include an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against the agency around compliance with the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, or the regulations implementing the IAA or UAA, along with information about what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by the agency or person in response to such patterns. A copy of the SARC is forwarded by the agency to the Secretary. The agency also provides information on complaints received upon request of the Accrediting Entity or the Secretary.

The agency strives to use client feedback to improve the provision of services. The agency utilizes quality improvement methods to include the review of complaint data, the use of client satisfaction surveys, and annual review of practice and performance in comparison to data contained in the Secretary's Annual Report to Congress on intercountry adoptions and according to the agency Quality Improvement Program.

**International Adoption Costs:  
Information for A Prospective Applicant  
The Open Door Adoption Agency, Inc.**

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**The kinds of costs to expect:**

The overall cost to you of adopting a child through our international program will include:

- Those fees you pay our agency directly for its adoption support services.
- Those fees and expenses you advance to our agency to pay out to others on your behalf for adoption-related services, in the U. S. and foreign countries.
- Costs you pay directly to others, not to or through our agency, such as out of state home studies and post placement reports, the cost of travel and of some independent services and documents.

All these types of payments should be taken into account when estimating the total cost of adopting a foreign child. All known costs and fees are included. Estimates are in Attachment B, Estimated Adoption Expenses.

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**The difference between fixed fees and variable and estimated costs:**

- Some of the costs you can expect are fixed and will not exceed the amount we tell you initially. Examples are our agency's application fee, commitment fee and placement fee. In- country facilitators fees are also fixed once quoted.
  - Many other costs are variable both in type and amount, however, depending upon what needs to be done in this and foreign countries to carry out your specific adoption and upon the fees charged by the people or organizations that provide the associated services.
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**Estimating specific costs to you:**

- **Before deciding whether to apply.** You will find in Exhibit B, Estimated Adoption Expenses, a more detailed description and estimate of typical costs that may be involved in adoption, set out generically, and we will be happy to discuss with you informally the scope of overall costs that quite likely would apply if you undertake to apply and adopt.
- **Specific estimates upon request.** If you are interested to know more detailed information regarding adoption costs for a specific country program, please request a copy and we will send you an itemized list, the same as what will be provided upon successful completion of our application. Once you have applied and been accepted into our program, we will request that you execute a formal Agreement for International Adoption Services. This Agreement will include an itemized schedule of fixed, variable and estimated fees and costs you can expect.
- Although we will not be able, in the Agreement schedule, to forecast with certainty the type and amount of variable and estimated costs you may incur, we will provide our best estimates for these as of the time of the Agreement, and will provide periodic updates if circumstances and costs change in the foreign country. We make every effort to ensure that you have a current estimate of in country costs you can expect at the time you travel.

The Agreement will have a provision requiring that we ask for your written consent before our agency makes or authorizes any cost under our control for which you will be accountable (a)



that was unforeseen and thereby not included in the Agreement schedule, or (b) that is more than \$1,000 over amounts itemized in the Agreement schedule. Of course, that consent requirement does not apply to any costs (even if estimated on the schedule) that you pay personally and directly to payees other than the agency, such as travel costs, since you will have first-hand opportunity to evaluate their reasonableness.

If you prefer, you may provide us a written blanket waiver of the consent requirement above.

We will provide no services and will not obligate you for any costs until you have had the opportunity to consider the fees set out and other terms and conditions of the Agreement for International Adoption Services, have signed the Agreement, and provided the signed copy back to us.

## What Is an Adoption Home Study?

The adoption home study is a detailed written report of your family compiled and prepared by a social worker. This can take two to three months to finish. The adoption home study requires the prospective adoptive family to gather different documents, answer many questions, and explore their reasons for adopting. Through a series of visits and interviews the social worker can get a complete picture of who you are and what life is like in your family. The adoption home study is a part of the decision making process for both the prospective family and the workers.

The adoption home study can include the following pieces of information. Keep in mind that each state may require different information.

- **Autobiography/Family Background** - Some states or agencies have a social worker working very closely with the family to finish this part of the home study, while others have a detailed list of questions that the agency wants answered. These questions are typically about your family, past and present; how you feel about discipline, your fondest childhood memory, or your greatest fears. We enjoyed this process as we learned so much about ourselves and each other.
- **Neighborhood/Community/Schools** - Be prepared to describe your environment. What is your school system like? Which schools will your child/ren attend? Do you have a relationship with your neighbors? What resources does your community offer to help you parent a special needs child?
- **Physical Health** - You may need a physical or health exam and/or a Tuberculosis(TB) test or chest x-ray. The social worker will also be interested in hearing how you have any health issues under control. Be prepared to explain how these issues will or will not affect your ability to care for a child. There shouldn't be an issue with you adopting unless you have a serious health problem that affects your life expectancy. health
- **Financial Statements** - You must be able to show that you can care for an additional person(s) with your current income. Be prepared to verify your income with paycheck stubs, W-4, or income tax forms 1040 or 1040 EZ. You may also need to show information on your savings, insurance coverage, investments, and debts. There may be a worksheet to fill out that covers your bills, such as mortgage or rent payments, car payments, and charge accounts.
- **Criminal Clearances** - Most states require by law criminal record and child abuse record checks. Misdemeanors from long ago along with a good explanation of your behavior are usually not held against you. Felony convictions of any charge involving children or illegal substances will most likely not be allowed.
- **References** - You will need the names, addresses, and phone numbers of three or four references. Some agencies will contact by phone, others will require that your references write a letter of recommendation. Choose people who have known you for several years and know your family. They should be familiar with you and have seen you in a variety of situations, with children, your spouse, etc. References will not keep you from adopting unless workers receive several negative comments, or a reference has brought up a questionable criminal record.
- **Interviews** - Interviews are a time for the workers to go over your paperwork, learn more about you, clarify anything in your autobiography and see that your home is a safe and healthy place for a child. The state of Georgia requires three interviews. You do NOT have to be a clean freak! The worker will tour your home and will want to see the room that you have planned for the child. If you haven't already discussed it, you may want to have a safety plan in place in case

of fires or other natural disasters. Be honest and show your personality, a sense of humor is always a good thing to have, especially when parenting.

- **If You Already Have Children** - Some agencies will have the children write a statement about their feelings toward adoption. If they are too young, they may be asked to draw a picture. Workers will want to know about your children's interests, hobbies, and grades. Your children will be involved in interviews and may meet with the social worker individually.
- **Cost of the Home Study** - The cost depends on the agency or the worker completing your study. With private adoptions the adoption home study can run anywhere from \$500 to \$3000. Our agency charges \$2,100 for a home study.

An adoption home study can be a stressful time, but if you go in prepared and knowing what to expect you will get through it just fine! As always, may the Lord bless you on your adoption journey.



## **Acknowledgement of Receipt of Agency Orientation Materials**

*I/We certify that we have read or been trained in and understand the following:*

- The Agency's adoption services (**Cover Letter**)
- The Agency's eligibility requirements for adoption (**Exhibit A**)
- A description of the procedures involved with adoption (**Cover Letter**)
- The Agency's fee schedule and refund policies (**Exhibit B & (Full Fee Schedule upon request per specific country)**)
- The approximate time the assessment and adoption process will take, and
- The types of children available for adoption (**Exhibit A & Cover Letter**)
- The minimum requirements for an adoptive home and the procedures for the home study (**Cover Letter/What is an Adoption Home Study?**)
- The selection and placement process (**Cover Letter**)
- The process children use to locate birth parents, and the process birth parents use to locate children (**Reunion Registry for domestic adoption, N/A for international adoption**)
- The Agency's grievance procedures (**Grievance Policy and Procedure**)

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Adoptive Father*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Adoptive Mother*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

► *Please sign and return this page with your application.*

## WHY DO ADOPTIONS COST SO MUCH?

So often we are asked this question, which seems to be a very valid one, especially since there are so many children in the world who desperately need loving homes. This is difficult to understand unless you are familiar with the domestic and international adoption process. Hopefully, the following information will help you to appreciate the costs of our endeavor to place children in good Christian homes.

While there is no cost for a child or children, the adoption process does involve a cost. Many individuals are involved with each adoption. Our office alone employs 10 full-time staff members and 18 part-time caseworkers. While each person here views his or her job as a mission and are very dedicated to the work, they do have to feed their families. In addition to salaries, there is the expense in office space, phones, computers, office supplies, ongoing training, along with capital expenditures of furniture, equipment, insurance, etc.

In our domestic program, our primary objective is to offer adoption as an alternative to abortion. In order to offer this alternative of life throughout the state of Georgia, we must advertise. We have a staff of caseworkers in every major city, provide free counseling for ten young women for every one who places for adoption, and provide housing and living expenses for birth mothers, many of whom never place. We are concerned for the lives of all children. We could reduce the cost of our adoption services if we offered services in only a few major cities, but, here in Georgia, no other agency reaches every small town. If we regarded adoptive parents as our primary client, we would eliminate these services and offer lower fees. However, our mission is to save the lives of children and change the lives of young women.

In our international program, our mission is to find homes for children, young and old, healthy or with special needs and to provide relief to the orphanages of the children left behind. Our international staff travels to each of the countries we work with and meets with government officials and directors of adoption as well as visits with the children in different orphanages. It is imperative that we go regularly or the officials will not work with us, resulting in many children never receiving a home. This requires not only staff here in the states, but staff overseas. Costs are incurred when facilitators travel to the orphanage, take videos of the children, arrange to have the documents translated and notarized and represent the agency in presenting the case to the Director of Adoptions. The courts and the judges must interview birth mothers and fathers, researching backgrounds to see if there is a family member in their country who will adopt the child. All of this requires money to pay expenses. When the parents travel to pick up their child or children, the facilitator who is TOD employee, picks up the couple and walks them through the entire legal process, arranges for medical examinations, carries them everywhere they need to go, interprets for them and assists with all paperwork necessary for their child's visa at the U.S. Consul. They stay with them until they are back on the plane headed for home.

Whether you have adopted internationally or domestically, our assistance does not stop with your adoption! We help you with post adoption questions about finalization, with new birth certificates, with sending progress notes and pictures of the child to the birth mother (if

domestic) or the orphanage and Adoption Center (if international). We help refer parents to professionals if needed and to other couples who have adopted children similar to their own.

Once you have worked with The Open Door, you have become part of our family. We share in your joy, your tears and frustration, and your successes. You and your children will always be special to us and hearing about the children's adjustments and accomplishments make it all worthwhile! You and your children will always have a special place in our hearts.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The Open Door Adoption Agency offers our families an amazing tool to help you raise the funds required for your adoption expenses. This resource is called The Adoption Finance Coaching System and is offered at **no cost to you.**

*The Adoption Finance Coaching System helps solve the money problem for adoption agencies and their families.*

This comprehensive system, which includes live coaching, on-demand training videos, budget and planning templates, and an online gift registry service, provides adoptive families with the tools they need to create a **customized financial plan to fund their adoption.**



Click on the link below to learn more about this valuable financial tool:

<http://opendooradoption.adoptionfinancecoaching.com/>



## FINANCING YOUR ADOPTION

► While the Adoption Finance Coaching System offered at no cost to you helps to compile a comprehensive and customized plan to fund your adoption, we have listed below some links to funding sources for your information. Please know that The Open Door Adoption Agency, Inc. is not endorsing or sponsoring any of these sites. This information is provided to you as just a resource. While we do our best to keep this information updated, links to websites are subject to change.

*And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19*

Many people thinking about adoption consider the financial aspect one of the greatest hurdles. Below we have listed several avenues God may use to provide for your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

### **FEDERAL & STATE ASSISTANCE**

- **Federal Adoption Tax Credit**

For adoptions finalized in 2023, there is a federal adoption tax credit of up to \$15,950 per child. The 2023 adoption tax credit is NOT refundable, which means taxpayers can only use the credit if they have federal income tax liability.

To be eligible for the credit, parents must:

- Have adopted a child other than a stepchild — A child must be either under 18 or be physically or mentally unable to take care of him or herself.
- Be within the income limits — Income affects how much of the credit parents can claim. In 2023, families with a modified adjusted gross income below \$239,230 can claim full credit. Those with incomes above \$279,230 cannot claim the credit.
- Families who finalize the adoption of a child with special needs in 2023 and fulfill the eligibility requirements, can claim the full credit of \$15,950 whether or not they had any expenses.

Claiming the credit is different from being able to receive a refund. You can find additional information by calling 1-800-829-1040 or by accessing the IRS website <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607>.



- **State Subsidy for Adoption**  
Some states provide a subsidy for special needs children. You may be able to qualify for financial assistance for nonrecurring expenses.  
<https://www.nacac.org/resource/international-adoption-assistance/>
- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/adoptive/expenses/grants-loans/>  
They have a list of links to adoption grants and loan information.
- **Network for Good** – Family and friends can make online tax-deductible donations towards a family’s adoption expenses  
<http://www.opendooradoption.org/give/>

## GRANTS & LOANS

- **JSC Foundation**  
<https://www.jscfoundation.org/>
- **Steven Curtis Chapman’s Grant/Shahannah’s Hope**  
<http://www.showhope.org>  
For Christian adoptive families already in the process of adopting.
- **Gift Of Adoption**  
<http://www.giftofadoption.org/>  
If you have a completed home study and need the last bit of funding to bring your child home, Gift of Adoption is here to help you.
- **Helpusadoption.org**  
<http://www.helpusadopt.org>  
Married couples and singles may apply for financial awards ranging from \$500 to \$15,000.
- **Ibsen Adoption Network**  
(Washington State residents only)  
Meets quarterly to award grants of \$1,000 for waiting children.  
Ibsen Adoption Network  
2730 French Road NW  
Olympia, WA 98502  
(360) 866-7036 Fax: (360) 866-7509
- **LifeSong for Orphans**  
Encourages Christian couples to adopt a child by relieving some of the financial burden of international and domestic adoption. They provide Adoption Matching Grants from \$1k-\$4k per child and Interest-Free Loans. For more information visit their website at [www.lifesongfororphans.org](http://www.lifesongfororphans.org).

- **National Adoption Foundation**

The National Adoption Foundation offers financial aid to families to help offset expenses directly associated with the adoption process and the formation of families. <https://www.fundyouradoption.org/>

- **Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption**

Many employers have adoption benefits. Be sure to ask. If they don't, you can get information from the Dave Thomas Foundation to give to your employer. <https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/>

- **Parenthood for Me**

Grants are available for parents building their families through adoption. <http://www.parenthoodforme.org>

- **Wide Smiles**

<http://www.widesmiles.org>

Resources and information on adopting children with cleft lip/palates.

- **Donations from Church's and Community Groups**

Families have sought out financial help from community organizations and local churches. Please contact your local church or town hall for such references.

- **Employee Adoption Assistance Benefit Programs**

Many corporations assist employees with adoption expenses. Contact your human resources department for more information. [https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/f\\_benefi.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/f_benefi.pdf)

- **A Child Waits Foundation**

<http://www.achildwaits.org>

Offers both grants and loans up to \$10,000.

- **ABBA Fund**

<http://www.abbafund.org/>

Provides assistance to Christian couples who are called by God to expand their families through adoption and who need help with the "cash flow crunch" posed by adoption expenses. Offers interest free loans and funds through their Christian Family Adoption Grant Fund.

- **The National Adoption Center in Philadelphia**

<http://www.adopt.org>

This organization has a program entitled "Adoption and The Workplace" which provides services and materials to employers desiring to address the work/life issues of employees who adopt. For a list of corporations who give grants for adoption-contact:

The National Adoption Center in Philadelphia

1500 Walnut Street, Suite 701  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
Email address: [nac@adopt.org](mailto:nac@adopt.org)

- **Banks**

Some financial institutions offer low-interest loans with special terms strictly for adoption expenses.

- **Military Adoption Reimbursement Program**

The military offers up to \$2,000 in financial aid to active members who are adopting one child, and \$5,000 for siblings.

<https://www.militaryfamily.org/info-resources/adoption/>

## **RAISING MONEY OTHER WAYS**

- Most banks give home equity loans for adoptions.
- Some families ask family members to give donations.
- Fund-raising activities like golf-tournaments, garage sales, etc. have been used to fund the adoptions.
- Borrow from a 401K
- Contact Airlines requesting a reduced rate for adoption
- Check with hotels for adoption rates

- **Both Hands Fundraising**

<https://bothhands.org/>

Serves widows, orphans, and adoptive families

- **MYREGISTRY.COM**

Register baby gifts and request monetary donations to fund your adoption.

<http://myregistry.com>

**\*Please contact a CPA for specific information relative to your individual situation as well as changes/updates to any tax laws.**