



NORTHRIDGE

# Questions for Selecting an Adoption or Foster Care Agency

## Selecting an Adoption Agency for Domestic Adoption

- What are the agency's requirements for adoptive families (e.g., age, marital status, number of children in home, religious affiliation, criminal background, financial, health considerations)?
- How long has the agency been licensed in MI? How long has the agency been in operation?
- Will the agency provide contact with families who have recently used the agency to adopt (family references)?
- Are families allowed to specify gender of the child they wish to adopt?
- Who handles the agencies legal work? Is the attorney a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys?
- What fees and costs are charged by the agency in connection with the adoption process and when are they due?
- What costs and expenses will likely be incurred in addition to the agency's fees and costs (home study expenses, legal expenses)?  
Note: It is advisable that you request a total estimate for all fees, costs, and expenses that can be expected in connection with the adoption process—not just the agency's fees and costs.
- What is the current estimated wait time for families? How many families are currently waiting?  
Note: Wait time at most agencies is dependent on the adoptive family's parameters.
- What is the longest wait time for any of the families that are currently waiting?
- How often should I expect to hear from the agency workers during the waiting process?
- How many children has the agency placed in the last 3 years?
- What number of failed placements has the agency experienced in each of the past 3 years?
- How does the agency handle failed placements? Where on the wait list is a family that experienced a failed placement placed? Are there any additional fees or costs imposed?

- How does the agency define terms such as “open” adoption and “semi-open” adoption? What degree of ongoing contact and/or communication between birthparent(s) and adoptive family/child does the agency require, promote, or allow?
- How does the agency’s matching process work? How are birthparents and adoptive parents matched?
- If adopting a newborn, how involved is the adoptive family with the birthparent(s) prior to the baby being born?
- When is the baby generally placed with the adoptive family?
- What pre-placement training does the agency offer to adoptive families? What other support services does the agency provide (support groups, social events)?
- What post-placement services for the adoptive families are provided? What help or services are available for adoptive families experiencing post-placement challenges and difficulties relating to their adoption?
- What counseling and support services do the birthparents(s) receive both prior to and after the adoption?

**DISCLAIMER:** This document is not intended to constitute, nor does it represent, legal advice of any kind. A qualified attorney should be consulted with respect to any legal questions or issues.



**NORTHRIDGE**

# **Questions for Selecting an Adoption or Foster Care Agency**

## **Selecting an Adoption Agency for International Adoption**

- How long has the agency been licensed in MI? How long has the agency been in operation?
- Will the agency provide contact with families who have recently used the agency to adopt (family references)?
- In what countries does the agency have adoption programs? How long has the agency had an active adoption program in the country of interest?
- Is the agency Hague accredited?
- Has the agency's program in the country of interest ever been suspended or terminated (as a result of accreditation or otherwise)? If so, why and for how long?
- What are the agency's/country's requirements for adoptive families (e.g., age, marital status, number of children in home, religious affiliation, criminal background, financial, health considerations)?
- What is the current adoption climate in the country of interest? How stable has the country program been in recent months/years?
- In what regions/cities within the country of interest does the agency work? Can families specify a specific region/city within the country?
- How long has the director for the country of interest (country program director) been working with the adoptions from the country of interest?
- How are waiting children cared for in the country of interest (orphanages/institutions, foster homes)?
- Are families allowed to specify gender of the child they wish to adopt?
- Does the agency have any affiliations with orphanages, social service agencies, facilitators or others in the country of interest that will be significantly involved in the adoption process?
- Who handles the agency's legal work in the country of interest? In the United States?

- What fees and costs are charged by the agency in connection with the adoption process and when are they due?
- What costs and expenses will likely be incurred in addition to the agency's fees and costs (home study expenses, legal expenses,)?  
 Note: It is advisable that you request a total estimate for all fees, costs, and expenses that can be expected in connection with the adoption process—not just the agency's fees and costs.
- What is the current estimated wait time for families? How many families are currently waiting?  
 Note: Wait time at most agencies is dependent on the adoptive family's parameters.
- What is the longest wait time for any of the families that are currently waiting?
- How often should I expect to hear from the agency workers during the waiting process?
- How many children has the agency placed in the last 3 years?
- How does the agency's/countries matching process work? How are birthparents and adoptive parents matched?
- What children are available in the country of interest (what age, gender, sibling groups)?
- What background information (medical, social, family history) is generally available regarding the child and/or the child's biological family?
- Does the agency provide pictures and/or video of the referred child? After matched what information is received about the child?
- What are the travel requirements for the country of interest (both parents, number of trips, escort service available)? How long must they stay in the country?
- What pre-placement training does the agency offer to adoptive families? What other support services does the agency provide (support groups, social events)?
- What post-placement services for the adoptive families are provided? What help or services are available for adoptive families experiencing post-placement challenges and difficulties relating to their adoption?
- What post-placement services are available specifically relating to parenting children of a different racial, ethnic, and/or cultural background?
- What humanitarian aid/support does the agency provide to the countries in which it operates?

**DISCLAIMER:** This document is not intended to constitute, nor does it represent, legal advice of any kind. A qualified attorney should be consulted with respect to any legal questions or issues.