



Adoptions Together International Adoption Policies

Mission

Adoptions Together builds healthy lifelong family connections for every child and advocates for continuous improvement of systems that promote the well being of children.

Vision

Every child will have lifelong connections to a caring, nurturing family.

Licensure and Accreditation

Adoptions Together shall seek and maintain accreditation or licensure as required in all jurisdictions in which it operates a child placement program. Adoptions Together shall seek and maintain accreditation as a primary provider of adoption services pursuant to the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption. Appropriate licensing, certifying and accrediting agencies shall be informed of changes at Adoptions Together that may affect a change in, or eligibility for, licensure.

To the extent that Adoptions Together provides any adoption services in jurisdictions in which it is not licensed, it shall do so only through agencies or individuals who are licensed or authorized under the laws of the foreign jurisdiction to provide such services and are exempt providers or acting as supervised providers or are public governmental agencies or authorities.

Serving as a Primary Provider of Adoption Services in Intercountry Adoption

When arranging for the adoption of any child residing in a foreign country, Adoptions Together shall bear primary responsibility for ensuring that the adoption services set forth below (defined pursuant to the Hague Convention and the Universal Accreditation Act) are provided in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Convention, the Inter-Country Adoption Act, the Universal Accreditation Act, and the implementing regulations of the U.S. Department of State. Adoptions Together may fulfill its responsibility through contracting with other individuals and entities or through reliance on the official acts of public authorities in the United States and elsewhere. When fulfilling its responsibilities through the use of subcontractors and public authorities, Adoptions Together shall make reasonable, good faith efforts to determine

that the subcontractor or public authority complies with the standards of the Convention, the Inter-Country Adoption Act, the Universal Accreditation Act, and the implementing regulations of the U.S. Department of State.

The adoption services for which Adoptions Together bears primary responsibility are:

1. Identifying a child for adoption and arranging an adoption;
2. Securing the necessary consent to termination of parental rights and to adoption;
3. Performing a background study on a child or a home study on a prospective adoptive parent and reporting on such a study;
4. Making non-judicial determinations of the best interests of a child and the appropriateness of an adoptive placement for the child;
5. Monitoring a case after a child has been placed with prospective adoptive parents until final adoption; or
6. When necessary, because of a disruption before final adoption, assuming custody and providing (including facilitating the provision of) childcare or any other social service pending an alternative placement.

Domestic Supervised Providers

When providing international adoption services, Adoptions Together may from time to time engage other domestic adoption agencies and individuals as contractors. In such situations, Adoptions Together shall work with contractors who are believed to be knowledgeable about adoption laws and experienced in best practices in child welfare. Adoptions Together shall exercise due diligence in selecting contractors. When adoption services are provided in countries that have implemented the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption, Adoptions Together shall utilize contractors within the United States in accordance with requirements of the Hague Convention, the Inter-Country Adoption Act, the Universal Accreditation Act, and the implementing Department of State regulations.

Foreign Supervised Providers

When providing adoption services to clients in foreign countries, Adoptions Together may from time to time engage foreign organizations and individuals as contractors. In such situations, Adoptions Together shall work with contractors who are believed to be knowledgeable about adoption laws and experienced in best practices in child welfare. Adoptions Together shall exercise due diligence in selecting contractors. When adoption services are provided in countries that have implemented the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption, Adoptions Together shall utilize foreign contractors in accordance with requirements of the Hague Convention, the Inter-Country Adoption Act, the Universal Accreditation Act, and the implementing Department of State regulations.

Foreign Non-Supervised Providers

When providing adoption services in foreign countries, Adoptions Together may rely upon information provided by and actions of foreign adoption providers that are not under its direct

supervision only when it takes reasonable steps to verify that the information provided is accurate and that the actions of the provider have been in compliance with the laws of the foreign country.

Prohibition of Child Buying and Child Trafficking

Adoptions Together prohibits its employees and agents from giving money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s), other individual(s) or any entity as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child.

Prohibition Against Preferential Treatment

Adoptions Together shall not give preferential treatment to its board members, contributors, volunteers, staff, consultants, interns, contractors or their immediate family members with respect to the placement of children for adoption. Adoptions Together shall not provide home study services or child placement services to current board members, staff, interns, contractors or members of their immediate families.

Charitable Donations

Adoptions Together shall deliver services in a manner that is not influenced by the ability of a client or a prospective client to donate to the organization or to influence others to donate to the organization.

Nondiscrimination

Adoptions Together will not discriminate in employment practices or service delivery on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, citizenship, marital status, creed, sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity.

Complaints

Adoptions Together shall maintain a procedure for receiving and responding to complaints. Any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, adoptive parent, or adoptee may file a formal written complaint about any of the services or activities of the agency (including its use of supervised providers) which raise an issue of non-compliance with the Convention, the IAA, or Hague regulations. The organization shall not take any action that would discourage the filing of a complaint or otherwise retaliate against any person who files a complaint.

Confidentiality and Release of Information

Adoptions Together shall strive to preserve the confidentiality of all clients who receive services from the organization and not release confidential information about any client without the client's or the client's legal guardian's consent except as required by law.

Retention, Preservation and Destruction of Records

Adoptions Together shall endeavor to maintain and safeguard all case records and the information contained therein. Adoption records shall be stored indefinitely. Foster care records in Maryland and the District of Columbia shall be maintained indefinitely. Foster care records in Virginia in which children were not reunited with their families shall be maintained indefinitely. Foster care records in Virginia in which children were reunified with their families shall be maintained for 1 year after the child who is the subject of the record attains the age of 21 and then shall be destroyed.

Transfer of Intercountry Adoption Records

In the event that Adoptions Together ceases operation in any foreign country, the organization shall transfer custody of its adoption records that are subject to retention or archival requirements to an appropriate custodian. Adoptions Together shall strive to ensure that the records remain accessible to the individuals whose records are subject to transfer.

Approval of Prospective Adoptive Parents

Adoptions Together shall strive to ensure that the children whom it serves are placed for adoption only with families that have met all local, state, and federal requirements for adoption. In international adoption, Adoptions Together shall strive to ensure that its approved adoptive families also meet the eligibility requirements of the child's country of origin.

Training of Prospective Adoptive Parents

Adoptions Together shall offer prospective adoptive parents training and education to help prepare them to parent their children. Adoptions Together shall endeavor to ensure that children are placed with adoptive families who have complied with all pre-placement adoption training requirements mandated by state, federal and international regulations, as applicable

Obtaining Medical and Social Information and Referral of Child for Adoption

Adoptions Together shall make good faith, reasonable efforts to obtain and provide to prospective adoptive parents with accurate, comprehensive medical, social, and developmental history and current information about any child it refers for adoption. Adoptions Together shall provide prospective parents all information available to the agency about the identified child. Adoptions Together shall disclose the source and known limitations of any information it provides to prospective adoptive parents about a referred child

Transfer of Physical Custody of a Child

Adoptions Together shall establish and maintain procedure for the transfer of children from one placement to another in a manner that is safe and considerate of the child's need for security and comfort.

Post Placement Services and Finalizations

Adoptions Together shall monitor and supervise each placement with the goal of assuring that the child remains safe, and that the placement remains in the best interest of the child.

International Post Adoption Supervision

Adoptions Together shall make reasonable, good faith efforts to provide families whose children's adoptions are finalized in the child's country of origin support and guidance during the transition period following their return to the United States and to inform authorities in the child's country of origin about the child's progress and adjustment. Adoptions Together shall not support the return of any adopted child to his or her country of origin if his or her adoption is dissolved in the United States without the written approval of the Central Authority in child's country of origin.

A complete copy of Adoptions Together's policies and procedures is available upon request