

International Adoption Net

Adoption Program Guide



www.internationaladoptionnet.org

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Non-profit, Hague Accredited Agency

Why Choose IAN?

You may be among the many adults who long for the joys of parenthood. If so, you know that life offers no substitute for fulfilling that need. International adoption is a beautiful way to become a parent. Your dreams are realized when you are united with a child from another country who needs your love.

Personal service to you is our priority...

Adoption – international or domestic – is your own personal journey. To travel that journey, you need and deserve very personalized service. Every couple, single adopting parent, or family has its own special needs, preferences and circumstances. After all, you are about to welcome a child *and* his or her culture and history into your home. At IAN, we are committed to learning about you so that you can be matched with a child that you will love forever.



We are easily accessible to you...

International adoption can be very confusing and there are almost always at least minor logistical obstacles to overcome. The adoption coordinator who begins the application process with you will learn your needs and continue to work with you throughout your adoption process.

We are here to...

- Make the adoption process understandable and answer your questions
- Ensure that your paperwork is completed properly and arrives in the country of adoption exactly to their specifications
- Work with you to meet education and training requirements
- Inform you of any new country requirements that arise in the course of your adoption
- Keep the process moving
- Unite you with a new member of your family – a child who deserves your love!

We communicate regularly with our in-country facilitators and attorneys on your behalf...

IAN has strong, dependable relationships in your child's country of origin. Our working relationship with those in your child's country helps us to minimize country regulatory delays and possible paperwork hassles. Our goal is to bring you and your child together as soon as possible.

How the Adoption Process Works

International Adoption Net (IAN) is an established, non-profit agency, licensed through the Colorado State Department of Human Services. Our goal is to serve people nationwide who want to adopt a child. IAN was created to link orphaned children born outside the United States with the opportunity to be adopted into a loving family that qualifies under state and country guidelines. We have helped families with successful adoptions since 1999.

The IAN Approach...

Our agency is small by design and dedicated to providing very personalized service to the families that we represent. Some of our staff members are adoptive parents. Others have years of experience in the adoption community. If you decide to work with IAN, you will find that you are not just one more family in a big system. We are committed to working with your specific and individual family needs.

Before you Adopt...

We encourage families to learn as much as they can about the adoption process, related issues and the variety of agencies and services available. There are advantages and disadvantages to the various types of adoption. We can help you identify programs that best meet your family's needs, but we also encourage you to question, investigate and pursue all resources available to you. We recommend you take the following steps:

1. Compare costs and services of various adoption agencies.
2. Learn about the Financial Assistance Resources available to facilitate adoption.
3. Check the records for any agency you are considering through the state in which the agency is licensed and through the Better Business Bureau. These records are public information.
4. Review the files of any agency you are considering. In Colorado, you can check with Child Placement Agencies (part of the Colorado Department of Human Services).
5. If you are considering working with a specific agency, ask that agency for recent clients who are willing to give you references and answer your questions about adoption from a family's perspective.

The Adoption Process...

IAN provides adoption education, assists with placement of children and provides post-placement support for families. Adopting a child from another country is a complex process as a significant amount of paperwork is required and adoption laws and procedure vary from country to country. Our goal is to simplify it as much as possible, freeing you to concentrate on the key to successful adoption – the emotional adjustment of the family and child.

Our offices are filled with personal photos provided by many families who have happily expanded as the result of our work. We want your family to become an international adoption success story.

Requirements for Adoptive Parents...

For international adoption, requirements vary, but following are some guidelines:

- Typically, parents must be over the age of 25
- At least one parent must be a U.S. Citizen

- Couples and single applicants are welcome (single males are accepted on a case-by-case basis. Some countries do not allow single applicants to adopt)
- We do not work with individuals who have been the perpetrators of domestic violence or child neglect or abuse

All other life experiences will be evaluated during your family assessment. You must be completely truthful with all IAN requests for background information. If you are concerned about your eligibility, please call and we will fully discuss your specific concerns.

Step One: Preliminary Application...

Your first step in getting started is to complete the Preliminary Application to initially determine whether your family qualifies to be matched with a child. If you decide to choose IAN to help your adoption process, complete the Preliminary Application form online and pay the \$250 non-refundable application fee. The Preliminary Application is available on our website, www.internationaladoptionnet.org and usually is approved within 48 hours after it arrives in our office.

Children are our main focus at IAN. Their needs dictate which families we can assist through the adoption process. Once your Preliminary Application has been approved, we will proceed to the next step, which is your Home Study; Family Assessment.

Where do you go from here?

The adoption application fee can be paid by check or credit card. IAN staff will review the application to determine whether you are eligible for the program you selected. Once you are approved, you will be assigned an adoption coordinator who will guide you through the entire adoption process.

Step Two: Home Study...

A *Home Study* is required to determine your eligibility to adopt. The goal of the home study is to accurately assess your readiness as an adoptive family to welcome a child into your home. It also is an opportunity to educate you on the international adoption process. One or more meetings with the Social Worker conducting the home study will take place in your home.

Certain documents are required along with the home study. You can expedite the process by having the following documents available when you first meet with the Social Worker:

- Birth Certificates for each household member (photocopies)
- Marriage license (photocopy)
- Divorce decrees for any previous marriages (photocopies)
- Financial Statement
- Medical letter or report from your family physician on official letterhead stating a positive medical condition for each family member in your house
- Reference letters

Step Three: Adoptive Parent Training...

Along with the home study, adoptive parents are required by state law to complete family trainings. Each state has different requirements for adoptive parent trainings. These trainings cover a variety of topics such as the legal issues that govern adoption, challenges faced by multi-cultural families, good parenting techniques for integrating your new family, child development, attachment and bonding issues, and other topics.

Step Four: USCIS Approval

It usually takes 3-4 months to complete the home study report. Once the report and your adoptive parent training are completed and you have been approved by our agency, we will submit this information for state level approval. Following state approval, your application will be forwarded to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

You will also need to complete USCIS Forms I-600A or I-800A to obtain a visa for your child to assure that he or she enters the U.S. as a lawful resident. In addition, each person over the age of 18 living in your home will need to be fingerprinted. Your local USCIS office will notify you regarding when and where the fingerprinting will take place.

If your application to USCIS is approved (which generally requires one to two months), you will receive from USCIS you I-171H or I-800A approval, signifying permission to bring a qualified orphan into the U.S.

Step Five: Foreign Government Approval...

During the Home Study process, you gathered documents for your application. Each foreign country has additional required documentation – all of which will be part of your Dossier to be submitted to that country. IAN will provide you with templates and step-by-step instructions and assist you with preparing your Dossier for foreign country approval.

In addition to the documents listed above for the home study, your Dossier may include:

- A Letter of Application to Adopt
- Your Home Study Report, a Copy of the Agency License and a Post-Adoption Agreement
- USCIS Approval
- Copies of Passports
- Employer Letter(s)
- Photos
- Passport Photos

Except where noted, these documents must be originals and must be notarized and state certified/apostilled. Some countries may have additional authentication requirements.

Step Six: Matching You With A Child...

If IAN is providing child placement services from the foreign country, then you may have a child referred to you for adoption anywhere from six months to three years. The timeline depends on the foreign country, its referral system and many other factors.

When a child is referred to you for adoption, you typically also will receive medical information, a brief background history if available and one or more photos of the child. When you accept the referral, your Dossier is sent to the foreign government to begin adoption proceedings. (If, for whatever reason, you choose to decline the referral, a new referral will be provided as soon as possible.)

Step Seven: Traveling to Meet You Adoptive Child...

Travel to your child's country of origin is required, but requirements vary by country. When the time arrives for you to travel to the adoptive country to pick up your child, IAN will assist you with your travel arrangements. Depending on the country, IAN may arrange for a group of adoptive parents or families to travel at the same time, which offers our families mutual support to one another before and after they meet their children. A bilingual IAN representative working in the adoptive country will meet you to help with language, customs, documents, medical needs and other requirements so that your adoption proceeds smoothly.

Step Eight: Family Post Placement Support...

Post-placement support is designed to offer your family assistance to successfully deal with ongoing challenges related to adoption. It is required by most states, including Colorado, in order to finalize the adoption, regardless of the requirements of the foreign government. IAN, in compliance with state law and the law of the child's birth country, requires its clients to continue to have periodic visits with a social worker after the adoption is final. The same social worker who completed your family assessment will usually work with you during post-placement.

In general, post-placement services have been shown to give families the kind of assistance necessary to deal successfully with ongoing challenges faced by adoptive families. For families in need of additional support with post-placement problems, referrals can be made to appropriate resources for help.

Step Nine: Validation of Foreign Adoption Decree or Re-Adoption...

As a final step to your adoption, IAN recommends that you re-adopt or receive validation of the foreign adoption, which will enable you to receive a State Birth Certificate for your child(ren).

Colorado Residents: The process is fairly simple, quick and affordable. Some families choose to complete this process on their own, but should you choose to hire IAN to provide the service, we charge a nominal fee. Once this step is complete, your child will receive a Colorado Birth Certificate.

Non-Colorado Residents: We encourage you to contact your social worker, agency, or state offices to pursue a State Birth Certificate for your child.

Tips for Selecting An Adoption Agency...

- Ask as many questions as possible. If an agency doesn't respond in a timely manner or won't answer your questions that may indicate it won't have time to speak with you during the adoption process
- Ask how long the agency has been in business, what the time frame is for the country you are considering adopting from and how long the agency has had a program in that country.
- Thoroughly check the reputation of the agency through outside sources, including the State licensing office and the Better Business Bureau.
- Do an internet search on the agency to see whether there are complaints against it. Talk with families who have used the agency.
- Question the agency about the qualifications and experience of any facilitators it might use in a foreign country and the degree to which the agency assumes responsibility for the actions of its agents or facilitators in other countries.
- Get a copy of all fees you will pay. Agencies licensed by the state or under Hague adoption guidelines are required to reveal all expected costs upfront.
- Get copies of all contracts you are asked to sign.

What is the Hague Convention?

The Hague Adoption Convention protects children and their families against the risks of unregulated adoptions abroad and ensures that intercountry adoptions are in the best interests of children. The Convention also serves to prevent the abduction, sale of, or traffic in children.

The convention sets up a network of participating countries, which to date numbers 100, that agree to adhere to its standards of practice. Adoption agencies in the United States that wish to work with the Convention countries must become Hague accredited and follow strict guidelines as well.

IAN fully supports the Hague Convention and is Hague accredited. Its governance over adoptions between the U.S. and other participating countries began officially on April 1, 2008. However, IAN has been working for many years toward the values defined in the Hague Convention.



Testimonials...

“Thank you to IAN for all of your hard work in helping us bring Noah home! Thank you for walking us through terrible tragedy, uncertainty, and ultimately redemption. For being so available and going back and forth to work out all the grants we received. For essentially helping us navigate TWO adoptions! We will be forever grateful for IAN and the role you all played in helping us grow our family.”

“We chose International Adoption Net for two reasons: we liked the idea of a smaller agency and our family, like IAN, is based in Colorado. It turns out that living in the same state as our adoption agency didn't matter a bit. But we are so glad we went with a smaller agency, and even more glad that our agency was International Adoption Net. The timely, ethical and personal way our adoption coordinator worked with us, the great relationships we developed with other IAN families, the smaller orphanages in Ethiopia where the children live while they wait for their forever families, and IAN's well-regarded and highly-qualified in-country staff—all of these factors reinforced for us time and again why we were grateful we chose International Adoption Net.”

“IAN is an exceptional agency. We brought home our second daughter from India through them. Katie was our family coordinator and I can't recommend her and the entire team enough! She made me feel like we were the only case she was handling; she advocated for us during hurdles, was professional, compassionate, efficient and prompt throughout our entire process.”

