

96.39 (a1)

HOPE INTERNATIONAL
96.39 (a1) ADOPTION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURE
TDFPS §749.357

(1) Procedures and Criteria for Qualifying, Screening, and Selecting Adoptive Parents

(A) Evaluation of Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) (PAP). PAP will meet the requirements for PAP set forth by TDFPS in §749.3623, the selected foreign country for intercountry adoptions, and USCIS.

- (i) Hope cannot approve a home study while a person is currently on probation or parole.
- (ii) PAP need not be infertile to adopt through Hope.
- (iii) There is no age, race, or religious requirement to adopt through Hope, and it is Hope's stated policy not to discriminate on the basis of age, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
- (iv) PAP must present copies of their current marriage certificate and divorce decree(s) from any previous marriage(s) at the time their adoptive home screening begins.
- (v) PAP must complete all questionnaires, forms, contracts, and agreements provided by Hope.
- (vi) PAP in an intercountry adoption must obtain at least 10 hours of pre-adoptive parent education. This may be obtained through on-line classes, attending seminars, and other verifiable sources.
- (vii) PAP must notify Hope immediately of any new circumstances that affect their adoptive home screening, including employment, address, pregnancy, illness, and criminal history.
- (viii) PAP should locate a pediatrician soon after completion of their adoptive home screening in preparation for placement of a child in their home.
- (ix) Hope will place children with single parents as long as they meet requirements set forth by TDFPS, USCIS, and the foreign country (if applicable).
- (x) Hope requires that PAP be screened and approved by an agency/social worker verified to meet requirements to conduct adoptive home screenings.
- (xi) Hope will notify the PAP if they have been approved for adoption within two weeks after the adoptive home screening is completed and written.
- (xii) The PAP will be required to sign a legal document releasing the Agency from liability relating to the child or the adoption (risks inherent in intercountry adoption will have been identified prior to contracting with the agency), such waiver going into effect upon completion of the adoption.
- (xiii) PAP should contact their insurance company regarding their coverage of an adoptive child. PAP must send the agency a written statement from the insurance company regarding its policy on coverage of medical expenses.

(B) Criteria Hope will use to make decisions about placing specific children with an adoptive family.

A prospective adoptive family must be approved and determined suitable to parent a child according to the child's age, gender, race, and any identified special needs. Hope will not make adoption placement decisions on the presumption that placing a child in a family of the same race or ethnicity as that of the child is in the best interest of the child. A family must have the ability and resources to meet a specific child's needs.

- (C) **Procedures Hope will use to implement the selection criteria.** Hope will conduct a thorough adoptive home screening to determine the PAP's eligibility to adopt. Hope will assess the child's needs by consulting with the child's pediatrician, Birth Family, and any other caregivers (if applicable). For intercountry adoptions, Hope will also review all information that is provided to Hope from the foreign country.

(2) Training and Programs for the PAP – Intercountry Adoption

- (A) Hope requires that PAP complete at least 10 hours of pre-adoptive education. The 10 hours can include a combination of lectures, seminars, book readings, and approved on-line classes.
 - (B) The Agency provides extensive information about the adoption process and common adoption issues during both the initial orientations and the adoptive home screening process. Issues that pre-adoptive education should cover include medical issues, child development, attachment, disruption, trauma, emotional needs of an adopted child, developmental delays and behavior issues an institutionalized child may suffer, available medical and social history for the children, and time delays associated with both domestic and intercountry adoption.
 - (C) PAPs are encouraged to enroll in parenting classes, CPR, and First Aid training.
- (3) Prior to commencing work with Hope, PAP will sign a contract that explains the rights and responsibilities of both the Agency and the PAP with respect to the "Agency–Adoptive Family relationship."
- (4) Hope will ensure the review of adoption service plans (if required by TDFPS) appropriate to the needs of children served in the adoption program.

(5) Preservation of Cultural Identity

- (A) Hope will assist PAP with how to best preserve the cultural identity of the children in their care.
- (B) Hope will provide cultural information during training and the pre-adoptive home screening process.
- (C) Hope will refer PAP to local support groups. Hope will recommend reading and seminars that will enhance the PAP's ability to support the cultural identity of their child.

(6) Domestic Adoption: Fees charged to Adoptive Parents and Reimbursements to Birth Mothers

- (A) All Adoptive families will be charged an agency fee, a legal fee, and a social work fee for services associated with the adoption of a child. They will also be responsible for certain out-of-pocket expenses and costs incurred by the Agency to facilitate an adoption, as well as certain home study/adoptive home screening and post placement/adoption supervision fees.
- (B) The expenses that Hope may require the Adoptive Parent(s) to pay to Hope for the benefit of the Birth Mother are as follows:
 - (i) Birth Mother medical expenses, which includes both pre-natal care and expenses incurred incident to the birth of the Child.
 - (ii) Reasonable living expenses of the Birth Mother, should the Birth Mother qualify for and desire payment of such expenses.

(7) Domestic Adoption: Services Offered to Birth Parents in United States for Domestic Adoptions

- (A) Hope will pay for necessary pre-natal care and medical expenses associated with a pregnancy for a Birth Mother who contracts with Hope to place her child for adoption and is matched with a family willing to cover such costs. The Birth Mother may choose the physician, or the Adoptive Parent(s) and Birth Mother may decide together which physician will administer pre-natal care and deliver the Child.
- (B) Reasonable living, medical, counseling, and/or legal expenses in connection with this adoption and in accordance with Texas laws and guidelines provided by TDFPS. Living expenses are available prior to birth and six to eight weeks following the birth, unless there are special circumstances such as a C-section birth, in which case expenses will be available for up to 12 weeks, or longer on a case by case basis. Any living assistance provided by Hope cannot be greater than what the Birth Mother would be able to provide on her own, should she be able to work and provide for herself.
- (C) Adoption counseling is available through the Agency both before and up to six to eight weeks after placement.
- (D) The Agency will provide only guidance, not money, to Birth Parents regarding educational, vocational, social services, and employment needs. This list is not exhaustive.
- (E) Policies Regarding Birth Fathers
 - (i) Texas law no longer requires that when a Birth Mother decides to relinquish her child for adoptive placement, that she name the birth father.
 - (ii) Hope requests that a Birth Mother give the Agency all known identifying information regarding the Birth Father, including, at a minimum, his name, current or last known address, telephone number, and place of employment. Hope will make diligent and reasonable efforts to contact the Birth Father.
 - (iii) If a Birth Mother decides to place her child for adoption with Hope, she will be requested not only to name the Birth Father, but to work with Hope to help locate him and obtain his relinquishment to facilitate the adoption. Should a Birth Mother truly be unable to locate or identify the Birth Father and publication on the identity or location of the birth father becomes necessary, Hope will pay the reasonable legal fees of an attorney ad litem to represent the Birth Father.

(8) Domestic Adoption: Degree to Which Birth Parents may be Involved in Planning for and Placing Their Child

- (A) Birth Parents are encouraged to participate but may be as involved as they would like in planning for and placing their child.
- (B) Birth Parents may see profiles of the potential adoptive families and may decide with which particular family they would like their child placed, as long as the prospective adoptive family has an approved adoptive home screening.

(9) Post-Adoption Requests and Services Offered to Adoptive Parent(s), Adopted Children, and Birth Parents

- (A) For a period of three years, the Adoptive Parent(s) will send biannual reports to Hope to inform Hope how their Child is developing and adjusting, including information on the child's emotional and physical development. During the initial 6-month post-place period, the Adoptive Parent(s) is required to inform Hope within five working days of any changes in their address and/or telephone number.
- (B) The Adoptive Parent(s) will send one picture of the Child to the Agency with each report of the Child. These pictures are to be clear and attractive, and one of the Child should be alone. These pictures will be kept in the Child's file.
- (C) The Adoptive Parent(s) will be given a copy of all medical history and current medical reports for both the Child and the Birth Mother, including those filed with the court. The identifying information shall be removed if that reflects the wishes of the Birth Parents. These medical records will be forwarded to the pediatrician designated by the Adoptive Parent(s).
- (D) At least five in-person post-placement contacts will be made with the Adoptive family during the period of post-placement supervision, which lasts six months. This must include at least two visits in the Adoptive family's home with all household members present, which will be prearranged with the social worker conducting the post-placement supervision.
- (E) The Adoptive Parent(s) will finalize the adoption as soon as possible after the Child has been in the home for six months. This will be determined by the attorney's schedule and the schedule of the courthouse. If the adoption is finalized by the ninth month after placement then quarterly post placement supervision must be continued.
- (F) Adoptive Parent(s) will be informed of the court date at least one week prior to finalization.
 - (i) Family and friends are welcome to attend the adoption hearing.
 - (ii) Adoptive Parent(s) are to bring their Child with them to the hearing.
 - (iii) Cameras and/or video equipment may be brought to the courthouse.

HOPE INTERNATIONAL
96.35 (a) and 96.36 (b) POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR
ETHICAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
AND PROHIBITIONS ON CHILD-BUYING

Policy

Hope International strictly forbids and discourages any practice or procedure related to the buying, selling, exploitation, abduction, or trafficking of children. Hope International acknowledges that compensation may be paid for legitimate adoption services, but strictly forbids any practice that consists of or is related to payment for a child or as inducement to release a child.

Hope International works to ensure that intercountry adoptions takes place only in the best interests of children. Hope International never supports or condones the abduction, exploitation, sale, or trafficking of children.

Approved by BOD: August 22, 2013

Procedure

1. Prohibited activities Hope International employees, agents, and partners are prohibited from giving money, gifts, bribes, or other consideration directly or indirectly to any person or entity -- including any biological relative of a child, any facilitator, or any agency -- as payment for a child or as an inducement to release a child for purposes of adoption.

2. Compensation allowed within the country of origin Compensation for any of the following adoption-related costs, services, and expenses within a child's country of origin is allowed, provided that three conditions are met:

1) The payment must be legal and permitted or required by adoption authorities in the child's country of origin.

2) The amount of payment must be reasonably related to the services provided. HI's in-country contact will assess local fees and salaries to determine the appropriate compensation.

3) An accounting of all monies spent is provided to HI by contacts in the country along with receipts whenever possible.

3) The payment is not to purchase a child or as inducement to release a child. Under such conditions, permissible compensation includes:

- a. Pre-birth and birth-related medical costs;
- b. Costs of care for the child;

- c. Costs of care for the birth mother while pregnant and for a reasonable period immediately following birth of the child;
- d. Legal, governmental, and other reasonable costs related to an adoption proceeding in the country of origin.
- e. Costs and expenses for providing child welfare and child protection services, including contributions to agencies, institutions, or orphanages in the country of origin and government administrative fees.

3. Providing information and training

- a. Prospective adoptive parents Prospective adopting parents will be informed of the prohibited activities in the written Adoption Service Contract.
- b. BOD, Employees and Agents All Hope International Board of Directors, employees and agents involved in the intercountry adoptive placement of children will be provided a copy of the adoption procedure manual, containing this procedure, and will be trained with regard to the prohibition of child-buying. As part of orientation, all new employees and Board members will be asked to indicate acceptance of this policy. Hope International's employees will receive a reminder annually when their personnel file is audited regarding this policy.
- c. U.S. partners and facilitators: As part of the Collaborative Provider Agreement between Hope International and the agency's partners, those third parties will be informed of the expectations of Hope International that those third parties fully comply with the provisions of this policy.
- d. Foreign partners and facilitators: As part of the Foreign Provider Agreement between Hope International and the agency's foreign partners and facilitators, those third parties will be informed of the expectations of Hope International that those third parties fully comply with the provisions of this policy.

4. Collaborative Providers Hope will periodically review the list of denied organization on the DOS website to ensure that its Collaborative Providers are not on the denied list. As a general rule Hope will not work with those who have been denied accreditation.

We, clients, acknowledge that we have read Hope International's policy and procedures for ethical practices and responsibilities and prohibitions on child-buying.

Client

Client



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www.hopeadoption.org

Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure

Policy:

It is the policy of Hope International that any client of the Agency has a right to complain or grieve any action taken by the Agency and/or its collaborative providers without fear or anticipation of any form of retaliatory or negative response by the Agency, its staff, or any agent of the Agency.

Hope International seeks to provide open, accountable, ethical, and supportive services to our clients. While every effort is taken to complete all work without error, sometimes mistakes are made. We aspire to learn from mistakes and we view the complaint process as a very important tool in the Agency's quality improvement effort.

Procedure:

If any individual is dissatisfied with a service, action, activity or decision concerning their involvement with Hope, they are first encouraged to talk directly to the person with whom they are having the issue. If the client is not satisfied with this discussion then they should request to speak to the person's supervisor.

If after talking directly with the person involved, any individual is still dissatisfied with a service, action, activity or decision concerning their involvement with Hope, they may lodge an official complaint by writing a dated letter to the Executive Director, or if the complaint involves the Executive Director, to a person who has not been involved in providing the direct services to the case (Independent Person).

Upon receiving a written complaint, the following steps should be taken:

1. When a written complaint is received, staff will forward complaint to the Executive Director within 24 hours no less than one day after complaint is received by staff member.
2. The Executive Director will respond in writing to the complaint within thirty (30) working days, unless such complaint is time-sensitive or involves allegations of fraud. Complaints such as this will be handled in an expedited manner by the Executive Director. If the complaint is regarding the Executive Director the Independent Person will review and respond to the complaint. All decisions are based on what is in the best interest of the child.
3. If the individual is dissatisfied with the response of the Executive Director, or Independent Person, they have the right to appeal that action/decision by writing a dated letter to the President of the Board of Directors within (7) working days of the relevant decision/action, requesting a review of that decision/action. The President of the Board of Directors will review the action/decision of the agency.

and announce the outcome of the client's appeal within fourteen (14) working days of receiving the letter of appeal from the client. The President of the Board of Directors will announce his or her decision via a letter addressed to the client (Appeal Decision Letter). The Appeal Decision Letter will not state the reasoning behind the decision, only whether or not the President of the Board of Directors supports the initial agency action/decision complained of.

4. The Executive Director, Independent Person, and President of the Board of Directors reserve the right to consult the Social Work Staff, Hope Board Members, and other professionals should it be deemed necessary.
5. If the President of the Board of Directors overrules the initial agency decision/action, then the President of the Board of Directors will take such steps as he or she deems necessary at his or her discretion to address the agency action/decision complained of.
6. Hope maintains a written record of each written complaint received and the steps taken to investigate and respond to it and makes this record available to the accrediting entity and the Secretary upon request.

All grievances and their outcomes are used for evaluation purposes as part of Hope's Quality Improvement Program which also includes sending out an annual survey to current clients. The Executive Director will consider the complaint and will use the information therein to address future policy and/or procedure issues.

The agency provides to the accrediting entity and the Secretary, on a semi-annual basis, a summary of all complaints received during the preceding six months and an assessment of any discernible patterns in complaints received against the agency, along with information about what systemic changes, if any, were made or are planned by the agency in response to such patterns.

The agency provides any information about complaints received pursuant to paragraph (b) of Section 96.41 of the Hague Accreditation Standards as may be requested by the accrediting entity or the Secretary.

Hope International is licensed by Texas Department of Family & Protective Services. Inquiries and concerns regarding licensing issues may be directed to:

Licensing Representative 1-800-252-5400
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Child Care Licensing (CCL)
1200 E. Copeland Road, Suite 400
Arlington, TX 76011

Inquiries and concerns regarding accreditation issues may be directed to:

Complaint Registry
Council On Accreditation 212-797-3000
45 Broadway, 29th Floor,
New York, NY 10006
http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/agency_accreditation/complaints.php

Please sign below to acknowledge your receipt of this information.

Client 1

Date

Client 2

Date