

ADOPTION PROGRAM DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Effective October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010

This is a disclosure of the adoption services and service fees of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) as required by Minnesota Statutes, §245A.04, §259.37, §259.35; MN Rules, part 9545.0815; and Federal regulations.

INFANT / OPEN ADOPTION SERVICES		
Registration	A one time, nonrefundable registration fee for all programs (except Minnesota Special Needs Children). Due with completed registration form.	\$50
Application	Opening of the adoption file, processing application materials, securing references and processing background checks, etc. Non-refundable once application processing begins. Due with application.	\$500
Pre-Adoption Education	16 hours of pre-adoption group education (pre-adoption and cross-cultural) that meets state (PPAI) requirements. \$250 per person, due prior to attendance.	\$500
Adoption Study	Home study. Social work interviews, home visit(s) and study document preparation. Due at the start of the Adoption Study.	\$2,000
Outreach Program	8 hour training covering open adoption, profile preparation, birth parent outreach, and legal issues in domestic adoptions. Required prior to entering the Waiting Family program. Due prior to attendance.	\$1,000
Waiting Family Program	Placement in the Family Book for birth parent selection, on-going education, facilitation of match meetings/relationship with birth parents, cooperative adoption agreements and placement planning. Due prior to placement in Family Book.	\$5,000
Birth Parent Services *	Paid by the adoptive parents <i>if</i> the child's birth parent(s) received services through LSS and <i>was not</i> referred to LSS by the adoptive parents. Services to birth parents includes decision-making counseling, adoption education, anticipatory grief counseling, facilitation of matching process and meetings with adoptive parents, assistance with adoption consent, support, referral and post-placement counseling. Due at physical placement of child. Refundable if legal placement does not occur.	\$8,500
Foster Care Utilization	Paid by the adoptive parents <i>if</i> the child was cared for in an LSS foster home. Due when birth parent consent to the adoptive placement become irrevocable.	\$1,000
Court Filing Costs and Agency Attorney Costs	Paid by the adoptive parents <i>if</i> a court termination of parental rights is necessary. Due upon completion of court termination.	\$650
Post-Placement Supervision	Home visit(s), counseling, support and referral following placement of child (children). Includes report to court. Due at physical placement of child.	\$1,500
Adoption Study Annual Update	Annual maintenance of adoption study when an adoption has not been completed, including processing background checks and other requirements. Due at the start of the Adoption Study Update.	\$500
Adoption Study Update (for 2nd Adoption)	Updating an adoption study following the adoption of a child, including all application materials, adoption worker interviews, home visit and write-up. Due with application.	\$1,350

DESIGNATED INFANT ADOPTION SERVICES		
Registration	A one time, nonrefundable registration fee for all programs (except Minnesota Special Needs Children). Due with completed registration form.	\$50
Application	Opening of the adoption file, processing application materials, securing references and processing background checks. Non-refundable once application processing begins. Due with application.	\$500
Pre-Adoption Education	16 hours of pre-adoption group education (pre-adoption and cross-cultural) that meets state (PPAI) requirements. \$250 per person, due prior to attendance.	\$500
Adoption Study	Home study. Social work interviews, home visit(s) and study document preparation. Due at the start of the Adoption Study.	\$2,000
Coordination and Facilitation	Includes individual planning, coordination and facilitation of adoption between birthparents, agencies, attorneys and adoptive parents. Due when services are initiated.	\$1,000
Birth Parent Services (Designated Adoption) *	Paid by the adoptive parents <i>if</i> the child's birth parent(s) received services through LSS and <i>was</i> referred to LSS by the adoptive parents. Services include decision-making counseling including adoption education, anticipatory grief counseling, and facilitation meetings with adoptive parents, assistance with adoption consent, support, referral and post-placement counseling. Due when birth parent begins receiving services through LSS. Refundable if legal placement does not occur.	\$5,000
Foster Care Utilization	Paid by the adoptive parents <i>if</i> the child was cared for in an LSS foster home. Due when birth parent consent to the adoptive placement become irrevocable.	\$1,000
Court Filing Costs and Agency Attorney Costs	Paid by the adoptive parents <i>if</i> a court termination of parental rights is necessary. Due upon completion of court termination.	\$650
Post-Placement Supervision	Home visit(s), counseling, support and referral following placement of child (children). Includes report to court. Due at physical placement of child.	\$1,500
OTHER BIRTH PARENT SERVICES		
Birth Parent Consents Only	Referred by attorney, includes 1 hour of birth parent education/counseling and complete voluntary consent signing.	\$250 + travel at hourly rate
Birth Parent Consents & Social/Medical History	Referred by attorney, includes 1 hour of birth parent education/counseling and complete voluntary consent signing. Also collection and review of Social/Medical History (MN DHS 3205).	\$500 + travel at hourly rate
Other Birth Parent Services	May include hospital services, document collection, travel, etc... Covered by itemized contract. Per hour.	\$110

* The birth parent services are subject to increase on an annual basis. The fees to be assessed for birth parent services are those that are current at the time birth parent services are initiated in accordance with, and as documented in, the contract to be signed by the adoptive parents.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION SERVICES		
Registration (Minnesota Families)	A one time, nonrefundable registration fee for all programs (except Minnesota Special Needs Children). Due with completed registration form.	\$50
Registration (Non-Minnesota Families)	A one time, nonrefundable registration fee for all <i>Non-Minnesota</i> families interested in the Intercountry program. Due with completed registration form.	\$250
Application	Opening of the adoption file, processing application materials, securing references and processing background checks. Non-refundable once application processing begins. Due with application.	\$500
Pre-Adoption Education	16 hours of pre-adoption group education (including 10 hours of federally mandated, Hague-approved training). \$250 per person, due prior to attendance.	\$500
Adoption Study	Home study. Social work interviews, home visit(s) and study document preparation. Due at the start of the Adoption Study.	\$2,000
Agency Program Services (LSS child placement programs)	Includes personnel, administrative, operational, communications and publications costs and any other costs related to providing adoption services in the United States. <i>NOTE: For families who utilize the Intercountry program/placement services of a separate agency, the Intercountry Program Fee is \$1,000.</i>	\$5,000
Non-LSS Intercountry Fees	Varies by country and program. Please see our individual country information sheets for expenses incurred in specific country programs.	<i>Varies by country</i>
Other Non-LSS Intercountry Costs	Examples include, but are not limited to: travel, food & lodging, USCIS I-800, FBI fingerprints, child visa, child passport, etc.	<i>Varies by country</i>
Post-Placement Supervision	Home visit(s), counseling, support and referral following placement of child (children). Includes report to court. Due at physical placement of child.	\$1,500
Adoption Study Annual Update	Annual maintenance of adoption study when an adoption has not been completed, including processing background checks and other requirements.	\$500
Adoption Study Update (for subsequent Adoptions)	Updating an adoption study following the adoption of a child, including all application materials, adoption worker interviews, home visit and write-up. Due with application.	\$1,350

SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION – MINNESOTA CHILDREN		
Minnesota's Waiting Children (PPAI)	There are no fees for services to families adopting children who are under the guardianship of the state (state wards). Services include pre-adoption training, adoption study, listing on the State Adoption Exchange, child matching, pre-placement, placement support, post-placement support, post finalization support.	<i>No charge</i>
SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION – INTERSTATE CHILDREN		
Interstate Special Needs Facilitation (Non-Minnesota Children)	Includes assistance in identifying potential state programs, individual children, state requirements, communication with child's social worker, contracting with sending state and ICPC facilitation. Due when starting program.	\$1,500
Adoption Study Reimbursement	Reimburse MN DHS for adoption study when study was paid for by the state and a non-qualifying (non-Minnesota) child is adopted.	\$3,200
Placement & Post-Placement Supervision Only	Home visit(s) as required by sending state, counseling, support and referral following placement of child (children). Includes report to court. Due when service is contracted for.	<i>Sliding fee scale</i>
POST LEGAL ADOPTION SERVICES		
File Opening Initial Research	Brief Service; Review of adoption file; Respond to particular case questions; Intermediary service for Intercountry post adoption. There may be additional postage fees for expediting to other countries.	\$45
Non-Identifying Background Information	Non-identifying background report containing available background information of the adopted person's birth parents & families	\$150
Medical Background Information	Non-identifying report containing the birth family health history as provided to the agency at the time of placement.	\$60
Family of Origin Search Outreach	Locating and personal/confidential outreach to biological relative. Generally completed within six months of beginning search. Counseling is provided within the parameters of Outreach.	\$750
Family of Origin Search Outreach (if agency has current information)	If agency has current address/contact information for the person being located. Personal/confidential outreach to biological relative. Generally completed within six months of beginning search. Counseling is provided within the parameters of Outreach.	\$300
Updated Medical Information Search	Locating and personal/confidential outreach to biological relative and securing updated medical information – updating medical information but not seeking direct contact. Priority given with physician's request.	\$350
<i>Note: Post Legal Adoption Service fee adjustments available for qualifying individuals. Please call (612) 879-5248</i>		

Fees are charged for services provided, not for children. The payment of fees for services rendered does not guarantee the placement of a child. All fees, timelines and program requirements are subject to change. LSSMN fees will be honored at the rate current when the service contract is received by LSSMN. Fees are non-refundable once the service has been provided.

CLIENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

CLIENT RIGHTS

- To be treated with respect and courtesy by a qualified, competent professional.
- To be informed of the cost of service before rendering service.
- To participate with an adoption professional in defining a problem and determining how it will be addressed.
- To have respect given for the uniqueness of each person's religious faith, social philosophy and cultural background.
- To disagree with an adoption professional and to express concern openly about any part of the adoption process, verbally or in writing.
- To give written permission for sharing information in your file.
- To be free from exploitation for the benefit or advantage of the adoption professional.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To be an active participant in the adoption process.
- To give 24-hour notice if an appointment cannot be kept with an adoption professional.
- To fulfill the fee agreement.
- To respect the privacy rights of other persons served by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS)

DATA PRIVACY AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota maintains information about clients who receive services. Most of this information or data is protected by Minnesota state law and is classified as confidential. Under the provisions of the Minnesota Data Privacy Act,

You have a right to:

- Be told the purpose of collecting data from you and its intended use.
- Be told that you may refuse to give LSS information and whether or not it is legally required for you to do so.
- Be informed of what, if any, consequences might arise from your refusal to supply information sought.
- Have your records kept private, accessible only to appropriate program staff and (possibly) appropriate employees of governmental units if you are participating in a program which receives city, county, state, or federal funding.
- Have access to review, with an adoption professional, information pertaining to you in your file and to be told what it means.

You do not have a right to:

- Confidential adoption records.
- Information in your file regarding another person or from another person regarding you (e.g. reference letters).

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND LIFE-THREATENING BEHAVIOR

There may be times when we may not be able to protect information about you. Our employees must report suspected abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult. If suicide or other life-threatening behavior is suspected, we may have to notify appropriate persons without your permission.

ATTORNEY REFERRAL

USE OF AN ATTORNEY

Adoption is a legal process – adoptive parents and birth parents are strongly encouraged to utilize the services of an attorney to complete the legal requirements for an adoption. Upon request, LSS will assist you in locating an attorney.

NOTICE TO ADOPTIVE PARENTS

MINNESOTA STATUTES

§259.35 Notice to Adoptive parents.

Subdivision 1. Parental responsibilities. Prior to commencing an investigation of the suitability of proposed adoptive parents, a child-placing agency shall give the individuals the following written notice in all capital letters at least one-eighth inch high:

“MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 259.35, PROVIDES THAT UPON LEGALLY ADOPTING A CHILD, ADOPTIVE PARENTS ASSUME ALL THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BIRTH PARENTS. THE RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE PROVIDING FOR THE CHILD'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CARING FOR HEALTH, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS. EXCEPT FOR SUBSIDIZED ADOPTION UNDER MINNESOTA STATUTES, SECTION 259.40, OR ANY OTHER PROVISIONS OF LAW THAT EXPRESSLY APPLY TO ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND CHILDREN, ADOPTIVE PARENTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR STATE OR FEDERAL FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES BESIDES THOSE THAT A BIRTH PARENT WOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FOR A CHILD. ADOPTIVE PARENTS MAY NOT TERMINATE THEIR PARENTAL RIGHTS TO A LEGALLY ADOPTED CHILD FOR A REASON THAT WOULD NOT APPLY TO A BIRTH PARENT SEEKING TO TERMINATE RIGHTS TO A CHILD. AN INDIVIDUAL WHO TAKES GUARDIANSHIP OF A CHILD FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING THE CHILD, SHALL, UPON TAKING GUARDIANSHIP FROM THE CHILD'S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, ASSUME ALL THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BIRTH AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS AS STATED IN THIS PARAGRAPH.”

POLICIES

The following are policies of the Adoption Program of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota that may impact your adoption. The policies regard adoptive parents who become pregnant during their adoption process, the timing of the adoptive placements of children and the age differences of children placed who are not biologically related to one another. These policies do not cover the adoption of special needs children.

PURPOSE

The primary focus of these policies is to provide guidance to prospective adoptive parents and Adoption Counselors in making placement decisions that are in a child's best interests (adjustment, attachment, and development) and to consider as well the adoptive family's adjustment and well-being.

EXCEPTIONS

In recognition of the wide variety of individual circumstances and the need for flexibility, exceptions to policies are made. Exceptions are primarily granted when they are in the best interest of a child. To request consideration of an exception, contact your Adoption Counselor.

POLICIES

Adoptive couples must be married a minimum of one year at the time their adoptive child is placed in their family.

Adoptive couples who become pregnant during the adoption process:

Prospective adoptive parents who become pregnant while in the adoption process will have their adoption case placed on hold pending the outcome of the pregnancy. We ask that you inform your social worker of the pregnancy as soon as possible.

If the pregnancy is successful, your adoption case will be closed. If you elect to pursue adoption in the future, you may reapply. We ask that families wait approximately one year from time of the child's birth to initiate their reapplication process. We want to allow sufficient time for family adjustment and a focus upon the child's needs and development. This process is the same for those families returning to the agency for a second adoption. The agency considers you a "new" family whether a child came into your home by birth or adoption. The process includes an Adoption Study and supporting documentation required (references, questionnaires, updated physical exams, child physical exam, updated background checks, etc.). The Re-application Fee Schedule will apply.

If your pregnancy is not successful, you may resume your adoption process at the point in which your case was placed on hold. There is no specified time frame in which your case needs to be resumed. Your social worker will work with you as much as you would like to help you through your grief process and provide you with resources. The agency's primary concern is that you resolve your grief, individually and as a couple, prior to continuing your adoption process.

Families are not permitted to pursue concurrent adoptions.

Although families may dual list in two adoption programs within LSSMN (Infant and Open Adoption and Intercountry Adoption, for example), in which case a referral from one program would automatically remove them from the other program, families are not permitted to pursue two complete adoptions at the same time (for example, pursue a domestic adoption while remaining logged-in and waiting for a referral from China, even though that referral is not expected for a year or more).

With the exception of biological siblings, only one child will be placed with an adoptive family at the same time.

Families are not allowed to adopt two or more unrelated children at the same time. It is in a child's best interest to enter a family in such a way that his/her adjustment, attachment, development, and unique needs are the family's primary focus. It is also best for each child to be able to acquire their own niche within the family, allowing them to experience healthy, positive development.

With the exception of biological siblings, there will be a minimum of one year age difference between children placed in an adoptive home.

Each child in the family should be approximately one year apart in age.

With the exception of biological siblings, there will be a minimum of one year period of time between the placements of children.

Families must wait approximately one year before pursuing a second adoption through the agency. This will allow each child to have their unique needs met. It will also allow the family to experience a healthy, positive adjustment to a change in their structure. Families may begin the adoption process prior to the year wait.

The Agency may reduce, waive or refund fees when it is deemed by the agency to be in the best interest of the child; requested by clients due to hardship; or when paid-for services were not completed.

The refunds will be issued within 60 days of being granted by the agency.

ADOPTION GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Adoption Grievance Procedure is to establish means by which Adoptive Parents may resolve situations or incidents in which they believe they have received unfair treatment as the result of a specific action on the part of the Adoption Counselor and/or LSS staff.

ATTEMPT AT RESOLUTION

An Adoptive Parent should first take his or her question or concern to the Adoption Counselor. The Adoption Counselor's role is to listen, evaluate, investigate, and get back to the Adoptive Parent with a response.

FILING A GRIEVANCE

An Adoptive Parent shall file a grievance, in writing, with the Adoption Counselor within 30 days of the occurrence of the incident.

The Adoption Counselor shall take the Adoptive Parents' written grievance into consideration and shall respond to the Adoptive Parents, in writing, within five working days of receipt of the grievance.

If the Adoption Counselor is able to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the Adoptive Parent, no further action needs to be taken.

If the Adoption Counselor is unable or unwilling to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the Adoptive Parent, the Adoptive Parent has two options: (a) accept the decision of the Adoption Counselor and take no further action, or (b) appeal the decision of the Adoption Counselor to the Adoption Program Manager.

FILING AN APPEAL

An appeal must be filed with the Adoption Program Manager within five working days from receipt of the Adoption Counselor's written response to the grievance.

The Adoption Program Manager will conduct an investigation. The purpose of the investigation will be to determine and attempt to understand the point of view of the Adoptive Parent and that of the Adoption Counselor. Based on the results of the investigation, the Adoption Counselor will prepare a written recommendation for the Adoption Director.

The Adoption Director will consider all of the relevant information, including the supervisor's recommendation, and then will make a decision regarding the appeal. If the decision of the Adoption Director is to deny the appeal, the Adoptive Parent has two options: (a) accept the decision of the Adoption Director and take no further action, or (b) request a final review with the LSS Division Vice President.

REQUESTING A FINAL REVIEW

The Adoptive Parent must file a Request for Final Review within five working days from receipt of the Adoption Director's response to the appeal.

The Adoptive Parent should submit the appeal to the Adoption Counselor, Adoption Program Manager or the Adoption Director, who will then forward it to the Division Vice President.

The Division Vice President will make a final decision and notify the Adoptive Parent in writing of the decision. The decision of the Division Vice President will be final and binding.

WITHDRAWING AN APPEAL

An appeal may be withdrawn by the Adoptive Parent at any time during the procedure.

PROHIBITION ON CHILD BUYING

LSSMN prohibits the giving of money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s), other individual(s), or an entity as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child for adoption. Furthermore, LSSMN prohibits the abduction, exploitation, sale or trafficking of children and protects the rights of birth parent(s), children, and adoptive families.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this or any policy of Lutheran Social Service, please contact your Adoption Counselor or the Program Manager or Director of Adoption.



ADOPTION PROGRAM DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Please check

By signing this statement, you are acknowledging that you have received and have read the *Adoption Program Disclosure Statement: October 01, 2009 – September 30, 2010*, which includes a complete disclosure of all LSS adoption-related fees, the *Client Rights & Responsibilities* statement, the *Notice to Adoptive Parents*, the *Grievance Procedure*, the *Prohibition on Child Buying* and the *Attorney Referral* statement, and have been given the opportunity to ask questions about it, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, §259.37.

I hereby acknowledge that LSS may, from time to time, increase its fees for services and, that upon request, I will be provided with the then-current fee schedule.”

By signing this statement, you are acknowledging that you have reviewed the website www.dhs.state.mn.us, (DHS-3206-ENG) prepared by the Commissioner of Human Services entitled *Completing an Adoption in Minnesota: The Rights and Responsibilities of Birth Parents, Prospective Adoptive Parents and Adoption Agencies*, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, §259.39. (If you cannot review the website, please contact LSS)

If you have questions regarding any of the documents listed above, or you did not receive a listed document, please contact the Adoption Program at (612) 879-5230.

SIGNATURES:

NAME (please print)

NAME (please print)

SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE

DATE

DATE