



Adoption

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA

INTERSTATE WAITING CHILDREN ADOPTION PROGRAM

Special Needs

ADOPTION PROGRAM

WAITING CHILDREN IN THE U.S.

In the United States, over 118,000 children wait for their *forever families*. Most of these children tend to be school age, in sibling groups, and are culturally diverse. These children have become wards of the state due to the inability of their birth family to provide them with a safe and nurturing family.

THE PROGRAM

Through this program, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) can offer you comprehensive adoption services that fully support the placement of children who are under the guardianship of the commissioner in states other than Minnesota. This includes initial education, resources to help locate a child, assistance with facilitating the interstate placement, post-placement support and help finalizing your child's adoption.

If you feel that you could provide a loving home for these children, please contact us.

INFORMATION MEETINGS

LSS offers comprehensive services to prepare, facilitate, and support families in all aspects of Interstate Special Needs adoption. The goal in our Information Meetings is to provide prospective adoptive parents with information about the process of adopting a child with Special Needs from another state, the fees involved, and the complex ways that these adoptions come together.

Please call **612.879.5230** or toll-free **1.888.205.3769** for the schedule and location of an Information Meeting near you, or visit us online at **www.minnesotaadoption.org**.



PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

CHILDREN AVAILABLE: Boys and girls, Individuals and sibling groups, some children with medical special needs, generally 6-8 years of age and older (up to 18 yrs)

PARENT AGES: Must be over 21 years

ADOPTIVE FAMILY: May be single, married, or in a significant relationship. Male or female parents accepted.

LENGTH OF MARRIAGE: 1 year minimum if applicable

CHILDREN IN FAMILY: No restrictions

TRAVEL: May need to travel on a limited basis within MN to meet with potential matches.

FEES: Adoption fees for Minnesota families adopting Minnesota's Waiting Children are paid by the State of MN. Families may pay limited fees to third parties for items like travel and MN Criminal Background Checks.

TIMELINE: Varies; the process takes 1-2 years on average.

REGISTRATION

The registration form, which is provided on request, begins your adoption process. Upon receiving it, we will send information and an invitation to attend the Adoption Education.

ADOPTION EDUCATION

To begin the process for an Interstate Special Needs adoption you are required to attend a 16-hour, two-day Adoption Education workshop at the agency. The workshops provide information about children with special needs and the challenges to the family that they may present. You may register for an upcoming training by calling the Minneapolis office at (612) 879-5230 or toll-free at (888) 205-3769.

APPLICATION

The application collects information from you to meet the requirements of the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the agency. It includes items such as health reports, criminal background checks, reference letters and autobiographical information. Your adoption file is officially opened at the agency once the completed application materials are received.

ADOPTION STUDY (HOMESTUDY)

➤ \$3,200 (*due at start of adoption study*)*

You must complete an adoption study and meet foster care licensing requirements from your state of residence prior to a child being placed into your home. The Adoption Study builds on the information generated in the application. The study consists primarily of interviews with your adoption worker which are conducted in the adoption office as well as in your home. The goal of the interviews is to both assess your readiness to parent a special needs child and to offer you more information that may be helpful to you as a parent. At the conclusion, the written Adoption Study is used by your social worker to facilitate the child-matching process.

** Please Note: The State of Minnesota requires annual maintenance to keep an adoption study current. If applicable (meaning an adoption has not yet been completed), a \$1,200 Adoption Study Annual Update fee will be due prior to beginning an annual update.*

INTERSTATE SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION PROGRAM

➤ \$1,500 Program Fee (*due when entering program*)

Many internet sites are available to waiting families who are looking for the children to complete their family. LSS will then forward your completed Adoption Study to state and county workers across the country at your request to assist the child's social worker in matching you with the child. Should the state or county worker be interested in your family, they will contact your LSS worker and begin the process of determining if your family would meet the special needs that the child presents. You will also be provided more information about the child/children at this point and be encouraged to consider whether this child/children would fit with your family.

PRE-PLACEMENT AND PLACEMENT SERVICES

➤ Sliding Fee Scale (*due at physical placement of child*)

Should the state or county worker determine that you are their first choice family, and should your family wish to proceed with the adoption of the child/children, a plan will be made for the child's transition. This will provide you with an opportunity for collateral meetings with those who may know the child, i.e. therapist, foster parents, social workers, guardian ad-litem, etc., and with actual visits with the child. Once the child has joined your family, placement support available through LSS includes assistance with your family's adjustment to the new family dynamics, crisis management and support, referral to needed services, and help applying for adoption assistance and with the adoption finalization. As there is no uniform national system available to financially provide for services on behalf of special needs children, each Interstate Special Needs case is reviewed on an individual basis to determine the appropriate fees. Each state has structured its financial resources differently for children who are wards of their state, and some states are able to contract directly with LSS to pay for placement services. If a state is unable to contract with LSS, the family has the option to contract with LSS for these services according to the sliding fee scale below. A third option includes that the sending state may contract with the State of Minnesota to provide you with placement support through your county of residence.

| PLACEMENT/POST-PLACEMENT SLIDING FEE SCALE | |
|--|------------------------------|
| INCOME * | PLACEMENT/POST-PLACEMENT FEE |
| UNDER \$29,999 | \$1,000 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | \$1,500 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | \$2,000 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | \$2,500 |
| \$60,000 - \$69,999 | \$3,000 |
| OVER \$70,000 | \$3,500 |

COMBINATION OF PROGRAMS

It is possible to combine pursuit of a special needs adoption in both the State of Minnesota and other states concurrently. Should you decide to combine these programs, your adoption counselor will meet with you to discuss the applicable fees and reimbursements that might become necessary dependent on the manner in which your actual adoption materializes.

All fees, timelines and program requirements are subject to change. Clients are responsible for non-LSS fees billed at the rate that is current when service is provided. LSS fees will be honored at the contracted rate.