

ADOPTION CENTER OF WASHINGTON **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Adoption Center of Washington (ACW) is a non-profit, Hague Accredited, child-placing agency licensed in the District of Columbia and Virginia. The agency's purpose is to educate and prepare families for the adoption of children who have resided in an orphanage or foster care and to provide valuable medical or supportive services to children in orphanages who cannot be adopted.

The director and staff have long term experience in infertility and adoption. Linda Brownlee, L.C.S.W., Executive Director, founded the agency in 1992. The Brownlees have adopted two children who are now adults. Eileen Rafferty, BSW, is a social worker who conducts home studies and post-adoptions. Nicholai Ivanitsky is the Russian coordinator and has worked in this program for over twelve years. Jun Li, our China coordinator, is a native of China, and has been with the program since 1993. Thao Pham, our Vietnam coordinator, lives in Ho Chi Minh City. Thao does humanitarian/charity work. Vietnam program is currently closed until Memorandum of Agreement is reached between our two countries on International Adoption.

AGENCY PHILOSOPHY

Children develop to their full potential when raised in a nurturing family. ACW is empathetic to couples and individuals whose quality of life would be improved by adding children to their family. Some of our Board of Directors and some staff members adoptive parents and understand on a personal level your concerns.

We support and educate families as they go through the adoption process. Adoption greatly benefits children and is a positive way to add to one's family. We acknowledge that the adoption is very stressful and encourage you to ask questions, join support groups, and gather as much information and support as you can.

ETHICAL PRACTICE

The Adoption Center of Washington aims to provide ethical adoption services and in accordance with the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption's principles of:

1. ensuring that intercountry adoptions take place in the best interests of children;
and
2. preventing the abduction, exploitation, sale, or trafficking of children.

The Adoption Center of Washington ensures that personal data gathered or transmitted in connection with an adoption is used only for the purposes for which the information was gathered, displaying due diligence to safeguard sensitive individual information.

CHILDREN AVAILABLE

The children from China, Russia, and Vietnam available for adoption, will have developmental delays as orphanages are not good for raising children and their situation varies according to the international situation in their country. The ages of the children are from under one year to approximately ten years of age. The children are Caucasian, Black, and Asian. Children range in health from delays due to institutionalization, or with correctable physical impairments, such as cleft palates, to more serious health issues. Sibling groups are sometimes available.

There are many children who are waiting for new families. After completion of all necessary documents, baby or toddler boys are generally placed with their adoptive families in less than eighteen months and more than 18 months for Caucasian girls. For a referral from China, you should check with the agency. Currently estimates are around 28+months from your log in date (LID).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Adoption Center of Washington accepts single and married applicants between the ages of 25 and 45 for the adoption of an infant from Russia, China, and Vietnam. If the youngest parent is between 45 and 50, an older child is likely to be referred. We are non-sectarian. Eligibility varies slightly depending on the program. See the Overview of International Adoption Programs for specific details.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

In addition to any training that may be included in the home study process, prospective adoptive parents are required to participate in at least ten (10) hours of training designed to promote a successful intercountry adoption. The Adoption Center of Washington provides the Adoption with Open Eyes Workshop and a Childcare Class to fulfill this training requirement. Exemption may be granted under the following circumstances:

ADOPTION WITH OPEN EYES WORKSHOP (or parallel on-line workshop):

This workshop counts as ten (10) hours of training covers the material listed below. Non-local clients or local clients who are unable to attend the Adoption with Open Eyes Workshop may substitute an on-line course. Suggested on-line workshops include With Eyes Wide Open, by Adoption Learning Partners, and courses by the National Council for Adoption. All other on-line workshops must be pre-approved by the agency to ensure that the information listed below is appropriately covered. Evidence of completion of on-line workshops must be provided to the Adoption Center of Washington. Fees for both the Adoption with Open Eyes Workshop and any on-line workshops are not included in the home study fee. Topics include:

- The intercountry adoption process
- Effects of institutionalization to include malnutrition, maternal substance abuse, and developmental risk factors in accordance with length of time spent in an institution

- Loss and mourning
- Attachment disorders and emotional problems
- Foreign adoption laws to include post-placement and/or post-adoption requirements
- Multicultural families

Pre-adoption training is mandatory.

CHILDCARE CLASS:

This class counts as four (4) hours of training and covers the information listed below:

- Child proofing
- Car seat safety
- Developmental stages
- Basic child care (bathing, soothing, bottles, feeding)
- Medical treatment (fever, dehydration, etc)
- Tips on traveling with a child

This training is optional, although clients who have never parented before are strongly encouraged to attend.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING:

After completing mandatory training as outlined above, clients may meet any remaining required hours through independent study. The Adoption Center of Washington provides information about print, internet, and other resources available for continuing to acquire information about common behavioral, medical, and other issues. Clients must complete an Independent Study Log to include the following information:

- Date of activity
- Hours completed
- Description of activity
- Author and/or provider
- Summary of information learned

For example:

Date:	Hours:	Activity:	Author/Provider:	Summary:
5.10.2008	1	<i>Risk and Promise: A Handbook for</i>	Ira Chasnoff	Medical risks including effects of Fetal

		<i>Parents Adopting a Child from Overseas</i>		Alcohol Syndrome
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ADOPTION CENTER OF WASHINGTON FEES

****FOR ALL CLIENTS****

1. Application fee \$300 (non-refundable*)
 - a. This fee is due upon submission of your application and photo of your family. Please send to:
Adoption Center of Washington
100 Daingerfield Road, Suite 101
Alexandria, VA 22314
 - b. This fee covers the processing of your application.
 - i. For ACW clients, the application fee is part of the agency fee.
 - ii. If you are receiving a placement through a different agency, this fee covers the cost of ACW documents for your dossier.

****FOR HOME STUDY & POST-ADOPTION CLIENTS****

The cost of a home study provided by ACW is \$1,500. Any additional visits to the home during the home study process, for any reason, are \$200 per visit.

2. Home study fee \$1,500 plus clearance fees (non refundable*)
 - a. To be paid at or before the first home study meeting with your social worker.
 - b. Clearances are for VA residents only and include:
 - i. VA Child Protective Clearance \$5/person
 - ii. FBI Fingerprint Clearance \$50/person
 - iii. Additional VA Police Clearance \$20/person (if needed for dossier)
 - iv. Each of the above clearances is necessary for all household members over the age of 18.
3. Post-adoption fee \$1,000 plus Consulate Registration deposits (for Russia only)
 - a. To be paid before the completion of the home study.
 - b. This money will be escrowed until you return home with your child.
 - c. This fee covers the cost of 3 visits; 2 at ACW's Alexandria office and 1 at your home. Any additional visits deemed necessary by the foreign country or ACW will cost \$200/visit.
 - d. Consulate Registration deposit is \$500 and will be returned once the Child's Russian passport has been registered in the Consulate, less the cost of registration.

- e. All post-adoption and Consulate Registration fees/deposits will be refunded if adoption is not completed*.
- 4. Training fees vary depending on means of training.

****FOR PLACEMENT CLIENTS****

The agency’s fee for adoption services from China, Russia, and Vietnam is \$6,000.00 to adopt one child. For siblings, adopted at the same time and location, the agency fee is an additional \$3,000.00 which is payable upon assignment of the second child. The adoption of one child at a time is preferred for attachment and attending to medical or developmental issues.

Agency fees are paid in stages in relation to the adoption process. For the Russia, China, and Vietnam programs, there is a non-refundable application fee of \$300.00. The remainder of the agency fee is paid in two stages: \$3,000.00 is due after acceptance of your approved home study; \$2,700.00 is due following the assignment of a child. These fees are non-refundable.

Other expected costs include: dossier preparation, foreign fees, US Citizenship and Immigration Services fees, passport, express mailing, visas, hotels, and other related travel expenses.

EXPECTED FEES

The Adoption Center of Washington does not customarily charge additional fees and expenses beyond those disclosed in the Schedule of Expected Fees. In the event that unforeseen additional fees and expenses are incurred in the Convention country, the Adoption Center of Washington charges such additional fees and expenses only under the following conditions:

1. The Adoption Center of Washington discloses those specific fees in writing to clients.
2. Prior to expending any funds in excess of \$1,000 for which the agency will hold clients responsible, the Adoption Center of Washington will obtain the specific consent of said clients.
3. The Adoption Center of Washington provides all clients with receipt ledgers of expenses they have paid during the adoption process.

Please note that the fees below are estimations and are subject to change at any time. An additional breakdown of expenses for each program is included in our *Overview of International Programs*.

	China	Russia	Vietnam
ACW Foreign Fee	\$12,000	\$18,900	\$12,900

ACW Agency Fee	\$6,000 for each program		
ACW Home study & Post-adoption	\$1,500 home study \$1,000 post-adoption		
Dossier expenses	\$800-1,000	\$1,000-\$1,200	\$1,000
Application to USCIS-I 600a	\$670 plus \$80 per adult in the home		
Visas	\$50	\$170-\$350	\$65
Air travel	Adult: \$2,000 Child: 10% of Adult total for under 2 yrs 60% of Adult total for 2-12 yrs	Adult: \$2,000 Child: \$750	Adult: \$2000 Child: 75% of Adult total for 2-12 yrs
In Country expenses	*Hotel: \$400-\$2000 *Child's Visa: \$380 *Medical Exam: \$100 *Medical Exam for Embassy: \$125 *In-country flight: \$200	*Child's Visa: \$380 *Medical Exam: \$125 *Pre Adoption Medical Exam: \$1,000 *In country flight: \$150 *Hotel (x 10 days): \$700 - \$1,000 *Driving/Interpreting (5 days): \$500.00 Travel Management package \$2,500 for certain areas includes hotel, driver, translations oral.	*Child's Visa: \$380 *In country flight: \$125 *Medical Exam: \$70 *Driving/translating: \$500 *Hotel: \$125-\$200 per day
Estimated Totals	\$25,225 - \$27,105	\$34,845 - \$38,185	\$26,000

REFUND PROCEDURES

The Adoption Center of Washington retains the right to terminate adoption services for good cause at any time, based solely upon the Adoption Center of Washington's licensed, professional assessment [See Adoption Services Agreement]. Clients may also terminate services at any time, and may receive refunds upon termination in accordance with these procedures.

Fees and expenses are refundable in the following circumstances:

- *Application Fee*: The application fee is non-refundable.
- *Home Study Fees*: If services are terminated by clients before the first home study interview, clients receive a full refund of all home study fees paid. If services are terminated by clients after one meeting, half of the home study fee will be refunded. If services are terminated by clients after two visits, one fourth of the fee will be refunded. If the services are terminated after three visits, none of the fees shall be refunded. Any additional visits to the home for any reason during the

home study process are non-refundable. Home study update fees are also non-refundable.

- *Clearance Fees:* Clearance fees for police and child abuse clearance costs are non-refundable after submission of fees to the clearance center.
- *Post-adoption Fees:* Post-adoption services fees are refundable if child placement does not occur or if post-adoption reports need to be performed in a state in which ACW is not licensed or if ACW does not complete your post-adoption services. If services are terminated during the post placement process by clients, these fees are non-refundable. If a US court appearance for re-finalization of your adoption is required, an additional fee will be assessed. Post placement services required by the foreign country require \$1,000 to be escrowed and returned to adopted family upon completion of all required post placement reports, if another agency writes the reports. Russia requires 4 post placement reports, and when the last report is submitted to Russia, the fees will be returned to the family.
- *Foreign Fees:* Foreign fees are non-refundable if an adoption occurs. If an adoption does not occur, fees for services and costs rendered are deducted from the total foreign fees. Any refunds of foreign fees are at the discretion of the Executive Director.
- *Agency Fees:* Agency fees are non-refundable, but may be applied to a different program in the event that clients elect to switch programs due to closure of a country for adoption.
- *Dossier Expenses:* Dossier expenses are non-refundable.
- *Application to USCIS:* Application fees are under the auspices of the USCIS.
- *Visa Fees:* Visa fees are non-refundable.
- *Air Travel:* Air travel may be refundable in accordance with airline policy. ACW is not responsible for fees or expenses associated with air travel.
- *In-Country Expenses:* ACW is not responsible for in-country fees or expenses and hotel and travel expenses are not refundable.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

The Adoption Center of Washington may solicit and/or accept charitable donations to be used at the agency's discretion. If donors indicate an intended use or direction for their donations, the Adoption Center of Washington adheres to such preferences.

No client, employee, agent, or affiliate of the Adoption Center of Washington is obligated to donate. Donations do not influence child placement decisions in any way.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The Adoption Center of Washington may use part of the fees charged to provide special services. Such services include, but are not limited to, the Annual Picnic, Asian New Year Celebration, humanitarian work in Vietnam and Russia, and Nanny Sponsorship in China. Further information about these services can be found on the Adoption Center of Washington's website: www.adoptioncenter.com If you do not have internet access and would like further information about any of these services, please contact the agency.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE

The following information is available upon request:

- The number of adoption placements per year for the previous three years, as well as the number and percentage that remain intact, are disrupted, or have been dissolved.
- The number of parents who apply to adopt per year for the previous three years.
- The number of children eligible for adoption and awaiting an adoptive placement referral from the Adoption Center of Washington.

COMPLAINTS

The following method has been established to create a responsible and accessible means of communicating and addressing complaints. The primary interest is to improve the quality of services provided by the Adoption Center of Washington through a formalized system of communication. The Adoption Center of Washington views complaints as a positive means for assessing and improving its services.

The Adoption Center of Washington does not and will not discourage complaints or retaliate when complaints are received. The Adoption Center of Washington encourages feedback and comments from clients in regards to service improvement and the quality of staff performance.

When lodging a complaint, submit detailed information and supporting documentation. The Complaint Form the Adoption Center of Washington provides for such purposes is attached to these General Policies. The form may be accessed on our website (www.adoptioncenter.com), or requested via e-mail or phone as well.

1. All complaints must be written, signed and dated. Any birth parent, prospective adoptive parent, adoptive parent, or adoptee may lodge a complaint.

When lodging a complaint, required details include:

- Statement of alleged complaint and references to the specific Standard of Practice in question.
- Timeline of events.

- References to the services described in the Adoption Center of Washington's written materials that have not been provided or have been provided inadequately.
 - Documentation demonstrating the results of the Adoption Center of Washington's practice that is alleged to have affected outcomes, caused delays, or instigated other detrimental changes in the adoption process.
 - If applicable, a summary and timeline of unsuccessful steps taken with the Adoption Center of Washington to resolve the issue.
 - Copies of any applicable correspondence with the Adoption Center of Washington.
 - Name, address, phone number, date, and signature.
2. All complaints will be reviewed by the Executive Director.
 3. A written acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint will be sent out within five (5) business days.
 4. All written reports will be placed in the Adoption Center of Washington's Complaint Log.
 5. Complaints will normally be processed within thirty (30) business days, during which time ACW will respond in writing to the complaint. In time-sensitive cases, processing may be expedited. If additional time is needed to process the complaint, ACW will notify complainants.
 6. If dissatisfied with the results obtained through the complaint process, complainant(s) may ask for a review by the Adoption Center of Washington's Board of Directors.
 7. At any point during the complaint process, resolution of the complaint will terminate the process. A written record of actions taken by all parties involved will be maintained in the Adoption Center of Washington's Complaint Log.
 8. The Adoption Center of Washington submits a summary of written complaints, including agency responses, to the Council of Accreditation and the State Department on a semi-annual basis. The agency also provides any information about complaints as may be requested by the Council on Accreditation or the State Department.
 9. Complainants may also log Hague-related complaints with the Adoption Tracking System Complaint Registry at any time throughout the process as well. Contact information will be provided for the Complaint Registry as it becomes available.

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

The Adoption Center of Washington does not give preferential treatment to its board members, contributors, volunteers, employees, agents, consultants, or independent contractors with respect to the placement of children for adoption. Active ACW clients may volunteer time or services, but must sign the Volunteer Acknowledgement Form attached to these General Policies and Procedures indicating their understanding that volunteering does not affect their adoption process in any way.

PROHIBITION ON CHILD BUYING

The Adoption Center of Washington prohibits its employees and agents from giving 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. Only if permitted or required by the child’s country of origin, ACW remits reasonable payments for activities related to the adoption proceedings, pre-birth and birth medical costs, the care of the child, the care of the birth mother while pregnant and immediately following birth of the child, or the provision of child welfare and child protection services generally.

We welcome your application, invite your questions, and look forward to helping you achieve your goal of adopting a child.

We (I) _____ and _____
acknowledge receipt of the Adoption Center of Washington’s policies and procedures. We (I) are aware that these are a formatted version of the Adoption Center of Washington’s policies and procedures and that we must adhere to and abide by only those policies included herein. We (I) understand that the unabridged policies and procedures are available upon request.

Applicant

Date

Co-Applicant

Date