

# Nightlight® Christian Adoptions

## Domestic Adoption Program Description



### GENERAL INFORMATION

A domestic adoption is the process of adopting a child born in the United States. In domestic adoptions, a child's birth parents voluntarily consent to the placement of their child with an adoptive family. Nightlight matches a family with a birth mother, provides counseling to the birth parents and case management to the adoptive family, assists with the relinquishments of parental rights for the birth parents, places the child in the home, provides post-placement supervision, and prepares any needed court reports.

### CHILDREN AVAILABLE

- Typically, newborn infants, but sometimes through age 10
- On occasion sibling groups are available for adoption
- Children with special needs are available for adoption

### ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

Applicants must be at least 21 years old and the youngest parent must not be more than 45 years older than the child they are adopting. Since most birth parents are looking for a two parent family, this program is best suited for married couples. Couples must be married for a minimum of three years. Adoptive families must complete a home study and Nightlight's required education. Before you begin the adoption process, you need to complete any infertility treatments so you can truly be ready to be the best parent for your adopted child.

### GENERAL PROCESS

This is a general overview of the process. Each state has its own adoption laws and the timing and amount of services required will vary depending on the applicable state laws.

1. Make application to Nightlight Christian Adoptions.
2. Attend an orientation meeting
3. Begin your adoption home study
4. Complete the required domestic education
5. Complete a profile book and online profile
6. Become matched with an expectant parent

7. Travel to state where child is born
8. Receive placement of the child
9. Return home, once ICPC approval is received
10. Complete post placement supervision
11. Finalize your adoption

### **MATCHING**

You can be matched with a birthmother anywhere from a few months to a few years after the completion of your home study. It depends on the criteria an adoptive family has established for a birth family, as well as the criteria for the adoptive family set by the expectant mothers currently in the program. On average, most families will wait 1-2 years upon completion of their home study. Your wait can be decreased significantly if you are open to a child of any race and if you are open to ongoing contact including visits with your child's birth mother.

### **TRAVEL**

If you are matched with a birth mother who is living in another state, you may not be required to travel to the birth mother's state prior to the birth. However, some birth mothers request a face-to-face meeting with the adoptive parents prior to placement, if possible. We also believe it is best practice for the adoptive family and the birth family to meet prior to birth in order to build a bond and reassure the birth mother that she has made the right choice. This will help her in following through in her adoption plan. You will be required to travel to your child's birth state for the placement, and must remain in your child's birth state until the interstate compact coordinators in both your state of residence and your child's birth state have approved the placement (**usually up to 14 business days**). After approval, you will then be allowed to take your child home with you and in most cases, finalize your adoption in your home state.

### **BIRTH PARENTS REVOCATION**

This time frame depends upon the state laws where your child is born and the birth mother resides. In most states once the birth mother/birth father has signed the voluntary petition to terminate parental rights, they can decide to parent the child/" change their mind" any time before those rights are officially terminated by a judge in court. This time period can vary depending upon the court system, but typically ranges from between one and four months. During this time period, if the birth parent decides to withdraw the petition to terminate their rights, our agency would consider the birth parents' situation and discuss with the adoptive parents before determining what is in the best interest of the child. In some cases, it may be appropriate to pursue an involuntary termination of parental rights. In the event that the decision is made to pursue an involuntary termination of parental rights, the additional legal costs are the responsibility of the adoptive family. In a situation where the birth parent decides to parent, and the agency and adoptive family are pursuing an involuntary termination of parental rights, it is the decision of the judge to determine what is in the best interest of the child.

### **OPEN ADOPTIONS**

The purpose of open adoption is to comfort and encourage the birth mother with the knowledge of her child's well-being. It also provides answers for your child, minimizing their loss of relationships by maintaining and celebrating the child's connections with *all* the important people in his or her life. Open adoption also empowers you in raising your child, by providing knowledge about your child's birth family including family medical history. During the home study, you will learn of the many positive aspects of open adoption and your adoption worker will discuss with you the contact arrangement you are most comfortable with. It is very important that you are honest and open with your adoption advisor about the type of relationship you envision with your child's birthparents before birth, after you bring your child home, and throughout your child's life.

Nightlight will only complete adoptions for adoptive families who are open to openness in adoption, as we believe it is usually the healthiest situation for all members of the adoption triad (i.e., birthparents, adoptee, and adoptive parents). We are open to creating a dialog and educating families who are apprehensive about open adoption. However, we understand that not every birth mother is interested in an open relationship and in some instances having a very open relationship may not be appropriate. If after discussing the possibility of open adoption, you strongly feel that you would like to have a closed adoption, you may want to work with another agency.

**COST**

The program fee for a domestic adoption is \$23,500. Additional estimated expenses of \$7,250 to \$26,225 will bring the total cost to approximately \$25,400-39,725. In addition, your out-of-pocket expenses may further be reduced if you receive grants or other employer-provided adoption benefits. For additional fee information, please see Attachment A.

## Getting Started CHECKLIST

1. Fill out Application Documents
  - Fill out the Online Application here:  
[https://nightlight.mysamdb.com/SAM/Fm/ApplicationFormPart1\\_Nightlight\\_Edt.aspx](https://nightlight.mysamdb.com/SAM/Fm/ApplicationFormPart1_Nightlight_Edt.aspx)
  - Upload your family photo
  - Pay the application fee
  
2. Upon application acceptance, you will receive a link to sign and read the following forms:
  - Agreement to Domestic Adoption Services
  - Eligibility Requirements and FAQs
  - Adoption Release and Consent Statement
  - Consent to Release Confidential Information
  - Complaint Procedure
  - Fee Schedule
  
2. Complete your Orientation
  - Once we receive all of the above you will receive an invoice for the orientation phase and then begin your orientation with your adoption advisor.
  
3. Obtain a Home Study
  - If you live in Nightlight's licensed area, we will perform your home study. Once your application is approved, your adoption advisor will notify you how to get started on your home study with one of our Nightlight offices.
  - If you are out of Nightlight's licensed area, we will help you find a local agency.

Please read our [FAQs](#) before submitting your application. If you have any questions, please call our office: at 502-423-5780 or send us an e-mail at [info@nightlight.org](mailto:info@nightlight.org).

ATTACHMENT A  
 NIGHTLIGHT® CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS  
 DOMESTIC ADOPTIONS – FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
<b>Application Phase</b>		\$500	<i>Due with application</i>
<b>Orientation fee</b>		\$2,000	<i>Due upon application acceptances</i>
<b>Match Ready Phase</b>		\$7,000	<i>Due upon home study and profile approval</i>
<b>At Match Phase</b>		\$7,000	<i>Due upon signing the match agreement</i>
<b>Placement Phase</b>		\$7,000	<i>Due 14 days prior to birth mother due date</i>
<b>Total Program Fee</b>		<b>\$23,500</b>	
OTHER COSTS (ESTIMATED)	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
<b>U.S.-Based Fees</b>		\$1,900 – \$15,375	
<i>Home Study</i>	<i>\$1,000-\$3,000</i>		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>Post Adoption Reports</i>	<i>\$300-\$2,000</i>		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>CORE Training</i>	<i>\$375</i>		<i>Colorado Only</i>
<i>Other Parent Education/Training</i>	<i>\$100-\$300</i>		<i>Estimated cost of online education courses</i>
<i>Birth family attorney fees</i>	<i>\$500-5,000</i>		<i>Costs vary by state</i>
<i>Finalization Attorney fees</i>	<i>\$0-\$5,000</i>		<i>Costs vary by state</i>
<i>Court Report</i>	<i>\$300</i>		<i>KY Only</i>
<b>Additional Expenses for Out of State Families</b>		\$850	
<i>Home Study Review Fee</i>	<i>\$350</i>		<i>Applies to families living outside NCA licensed area using other home study provider</i>
<i>ICPC Processing Fee</i>	<i>\$500</i>		<i>Applies only to interstate adoptions</i>
<b>Rare Additional Expenses</b>		\$4,500 – \$8,500	<i>Estimates are for 2 people and 1 trip</i>
<i>Emergency Home Study Expedite</i>		\$500	<i>Additional cost to expedite your home study completion due to an emergency situation. Only available in a true emergency.</i>
<i>Medical Expenses*</i>		\$4,000-\$8,000	<i>Insurance or Medicaid, then birth mother's medical expenses will need to be covered by the family</i>
<i>Re-match fee</i>		\$1,000-2,000	<i>In the event that you have a failed match, Nightlight will charge a discretionary rematch fee, amount to be determined by NCA on a case-by-case basis.</i>
<b>Total Other Costs (Est.)</b>		<b>\$7,250 – \$26,225</b>	<i>Varies based on location and law requirements</i>
<b>TOTAL FEES &amp; ESTIMATED EXPENSES</b>			
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>\$25,400 – \$39,725</b>	<i>Range depends on factors such as your home study fees, travel expenses, and legal fees-all of which can be higher than estimated. *Grand Total does not include rare expenses.</i>

Although we strive to maintain a predictable fee schedule, unexpected increase in our costs may necessitate an increase in fees. Therefore, fees may be increased upon 90-day notice.

Program fees are paid in phases and are non-refundable. Nightlight establishes a budget for costs each year based on the number of adoptions it estimates completing, as well as revenue from grants and donations. Based on these estimates, we establish program fees to cover the costs of attorneys, social workers, insurance, and other costs we incur. Of course it would be prohibitive to allocate all of the costs (payroll, rent, insurance, supplies, travel, etc) to one adoption in one program.

**A late fee of 12% annual (1% monthly) will be assessed for fees more than 30 days past due.**

**Please initial on both this page and the following page that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs.**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Adopting Parents:** \_\_\_\_\_