

## Department of State

## § 96.38

(3) Are supervised by an employee of the agency or person who meets the requirements in paragraph (d) of this section.

(g) *Child background studies.* The agency's or person's employees who prepare child background studies:

(1) Are authorized or licensed to complete a child background study under the laws of the States in which they practice; and

(2) Are supervised by an employee of the agency or person who meets the requirements in paragraph (d) of this section.

### § 96.38 Training requirements for social service personnel.

(a) The agency or person provides newly hired employees who have adoption-related responsibilities involving the application of clinical skills and judgment (home studies, child background studies, counseling services, parent preparation, post-placement and other similar services) with a comprehensive orientation to intercountry adoption that includes training on:

(1) The requirements of the Convention, the IAA, the regulations implementing the IAA, and other applicable Federal regulations;

(2) The INA regulations applicable to the immigration of children adopted from a Convention country;

(3) The adoption laws of any Convention country where the agency or person provides adoption services;

(4) Relevant State laws;

(5) Ethical considerations in intercountry adoption and prohibitions on child-buying;

(6) The agency's or person's goals, ethical and professional guidelines, organizational lines of accountability, policies, and procedures; and

(7) The cultural diversity of the population(s) served by the agency or person.

(b) In addition to the orientation training required under paragraph (a) of this section, the agency or person provides initial training to newly hired or current employees whose responsibilities include providing adoption-related social services that involve the application of clinical skills and judgment (home studies, child background studies, counseling services, parent

preparation, post-placement and other similar services) that addresses:

(1) The factors in the countries of origin that lead to children needing adoptive families;

(2) Feelings of separation, grief, and loss experienced by the child with respect to the family of origin;

(3) Attachment and post-traumatic stress disorders;

(4) Psychological issues facing children who have experienced abuse or neglect and/or whose parents' rights have been terminated because of abuse or neglect;

(5) The impact of institutionalization on child development;

(6) Outcomes for children placed for adoption internationally and the benefits of permanent family placements over other forms of government care;

(7) The most frequent medical and psychological problems experienced by children from the countries of origin served by the agency or person;

(8) The process of developing emotional ties to an adoptive family;

(9) Acculturation and assimilation issues, including those arising from factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, and culture and the impact of having been adopted internationally; and

(10) Child, adolescent, and adult development as affected by adoption.

(c) The agency or person ensures that employees who provide adoption-related social services that involve the application of clinical skills and judgment (home studies, child background studies, counseling services, parent preparation, post-placement and other similar services) also receive, in addition to the orientation and initial training described in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, no less than thirty hours of training every two years, or more if required by State law, on current and emerging adoption practice issues through participation in seminars, conferences, documented distance learning courses, and other similar programs. Continuing education hours required under State law may count toward the thirty hours of training as long as the training is related to current and emerging adoption practice issues.

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(d) The agency or person exempts newly hired and current employees from elements of the orientation and initial training required in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section only where the employee has demonstrated experience with intercountry adoption and knowledge of the Convention and the IAA.

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE, FEE PRACTICES, AND QUALITY CONTROL POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

**§ 96.39 Information disclosure and quality control practices.**

(a) The agency or person fully discloses in writing to the general public upon request and to prospective client(s) upon initial contact:

(1) Its adoption service policies and practices, including general eligibility criteria and fees;

(2) The supervised providers with whom the prospective client(s) can expect to work in the United States and in the child's country of origin and the usual costs associated with their services; and

(3) A sample written adoption services contract substantially like the one that the prospective client(s) will be expected to sign should they proceed.

(b) The agency or person discloses to client(s) and prospective client(s) that the following information is available upon request and makes such information available when requested:

(1) The number of its adoption placements per year for the prior three calendar years, and the number and percentage of those placements that remain intact, are disrupted, or have been dissolved as of the time the information is provided;

(2) The number of parents who apply to adopt on a yearly basis, based on data for the prior three calendar years; and

(3) The number of children eligible for adoption and awaiting an adoptive placement referral via the agency or person.

(c) The agency or person 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 and has a written policy to this effect.

(d) The agency or person requires a client to sign a waiver of liability as part of the adoption service contract only where that waiver complies with applicable State law. Any waiver required is limited and specific, based on risks that have been discussed and explained to the client in the adoption services contract.

(e) The agency or person cooperates with reviews, inspections, and audits by the accrediting entity or the Secretary.

(f) The agency or person uses the internet in the placement of individual children eligible for adoption only where:

(1) Such use is not prohibited by applicable State or Federal law or by the laws of the child's country of origin;

(2) Such use is subject to controls to avoid misuse and links to any sites that reflect practices that involve the sale, abduction, exploitation, or trafficking of children;

(3) Such use, if it includes photographs, is designed to identify children either who are currently waiting for adoption or who have already been adopted or placed for adoption (and who are clearly so identified); and

(4) Such use does not serve as a substitute for the direct provision of adoption services, including services to the child, the prospective adoptive parent(s), and/or the birth parent(s).

**§ 96.40 Fee policies and procedures.**

(a) The agency or person provides to all applicants, prior to application, a written schedule of expected total fees and estimated expenses and an explanation of the conditions under which fees or expenses may be charged, waived, reduced, or refunded and of when and how the fees and expenses must be paid.

(b) Before providing any adoption service to prospective adoptive parent(s), the agency or person itemizes and discloses in writing the following information for each separate category of fees and estimated expenses that the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be charged in connection with a Convention adoption: