

Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center Steps to Waiting Child Services (WCS) Program Participation

Thank you for considering Adoption Programs at the Adoption Center of Illinois at Family Resource Center (ACI). To help guide you through the adoption process, we have outlined the steps that you will be taking.

- **Submit an Application for Phase I of the WCS Program**
 - Complete the agency Application Form and mail it to our office with the appropriate fees (see WCS Program Fees for more information).

- **Participate in an Initial Application Interview (IAI)**
 - Upon receiving your application, a member of our staff will contact you to schedule an Initial Application Interview (IAI). This interview is conducted at our office during regular working hours, and may last up to two and a half hours.
 - Most interviews are completed in one session, but additional interviews may be requested. For Illinois residents residing more than two hours from the ACI office, interviews may be conducted via Skype.
 - During the IAI you will learn more about the adoption process, training requirements, the DCFS Foster Family Home Licensing process, and the paperwork that you must submit prior to being assigned a Home Study Worker (HSW).

- **Participate in the Home Study Visit**
 - Upon your submission of all of the required documents, a HSW will contact you to schedule the home study visit. The visit is an interview/education session that is conducted in your home at a mutually convenient time for you and your HSW. Your HSW will interview you about your background, family life, adoption expectations and parenting philosophy. A brief safety inspection of your home will also be conducted.
 - Often home studies are completed in one interview lasting three to five hours, but additional follow-up visits and interviews may be required to finalize the home study.
 - Relevant Foster Family licensing procedures are reviewed as needed.
 - Within six weeks of conducting your home study visit(s), your HSW will prepare a written Home Study draft. This can be expedited if necessary under extenuating circumstances. However, the final version of the Home Study cannot be issued until PRIDE and 10 hours of adoption-specific training have been successfully completed.

- **Participate in Training**
 - You must complete 39 hours of PRIDE training through Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and an additional 10 hours of adoption training before ACI can finalize the home study or issue a Foster Family Home License.
 - We encourage families to continue taking training courses throughout their time in the and after adoption finalization.

- **Apply to the Phase II of the WCS Program**
 - Once you have an approved home study, you may proceed to the next stage of the process by submitting the WCS Program Agreement and mailing it to our office with the appropriate fees (see Fee Schedule for more information).

□ **Participate in Search for Child or Children**

- Initial Consultation with Waiting Child Services Program specialist: Initial review of participants' completed home study and consultation with participants to fully understand the types of potential adoption situations that would be considered a good 'fit.'
- Assistance Locating Eligible Children: ACI staff networks and develops relationships with resources in the Illinois foster care system as well as with case managers outside of Illinois. These relationships with adoption professionals help identify children who may be a good match for our program participants.
- Communication with Participants: Calls from participants will be returned within two business days. Additionally, ACI workers will notify participants within two business days when they receive updates regarding children that participants have inquired about. Communication between ACI staff and participants will also include regularly scheduled calls at mutually agreeable times to review activity.
- Communication with Placing Agencies: When requested, ACI staff will forward participants' home study and family profile to the caseworker of an identified child or children. Once a child is determined to be a potential match with the participants, ACI staff will serve as the primary liaison to support the child's caseworker to learn more about the adoptive family and to assist the participants to learn more about the child or children. ACI staff will serve as the point person in conference calls, group staffings, etc.

□ **Participate in Placement and Permanency Planning**

- Social Work Support and Placement Planning: After a match is confirmed, ACI will have ongoing communication with the family and the child's caseworker to monitor the process, provide support on a practical level, and be available as a sounding board to the family as they proceed in the process.
- Interstate Placement: Should participants' efforts lead to the successful placement of a child or children from outside of Illinois, ACI will assist with clearance through the Interstate Compact of the Placement of Children (ICPC). The ACI home study worker will provide post-placement supervision and monitoring visits until the adoption is finalized.
- Continuation of Efforts: If the potential adoption of a child or children does not occur, ACI will continue to assist participants in identifying and investigating other potential children waiting for adoption.
- Continuation of Support: Even after participants successfully adopt a child or children from the foster care system, they are always welcome to contact ACI for assistance identifying supportive services for the family and/or child or children. Additionally, ACI encourages families to continue to attend educational courses at ACI free of charge.