

**CHILDREN’S HOPE INTERNATIONAL – OHIO BRANCH  
ADDENDUM A  
AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Table of Contents**

Adoption Services Policy	Section 1
Inquiry and Training	Section 2
Application and Home Study Process	Section 3
Adoptive Placements	Section 4
Religious Participation, Socialization and Education	Section 5
Adoption Case Records	Section 6
Pre-/ Post-Finalization	Section 7
Adoption Subsidies	Section 8
Review of Grievances/Complaints	Section 9
Home Study Fee Schedule	Exhibit A
Non-Discrimination Requirements (JFS 01611)	Exhibit B

**Geographic Area Served.** Children's Hope International's Ohio Regional Office (hereinafter also referred to as "Children's Hope" or "CHI") aims to assist all qualified Ohio residents with the international adoption process, including conducting home study assessments throughout the state of Ohio. While CHI does not assist with domestic adoption or foster care placement, we would be happy to refer those interested to an agency licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services ("ODJFS") who does provide such services, or to a Public Children Services Agency ("PCSA").

**Children in Custody. (International)** Most of the children available for adoption internationally do come from orphanages. These children have often been abandoned as infants due to poverty and inability of the birth parent to care for the child. Some of these children may have been removed from their homes due to some sort of abuse or neglect. **(Ohio/US)** Ohio public agencies generally have custody of children (in the county and state) who have been removed from their home due to some sort of abuse or neglect. The extent of actual abuse or neglect varies, but all of these children are experiencing the trauma of being removed from their family and the life they have always known. Many of the children available for adoption are dealing with issues that may need ongoing medical or mental health care. These children will vary in age, gender, race, culture, ethnicity, and needs (physical, emotional and developmental) and are all in need of loving and committed families.

**Matching Criteria.** Children's Hope is an international adoption agency, thus, matching a child with his or her prospective adoptive parents is completed in the country of adoption by those government officials responsible for international adoptions. Matching is, for the most part, unsystematic, though most governments will take heed to the parents request for a certain age (or range of ages), sex and health status. Children's Hope does not have control over matching a family with a particular child; if more than one family is considering a particular child, the foreign government will generally match the child with the first family to complete all required paperwork. Known sibling groups are almost always kept together. Please Note: Matching in international adoption is quite different than in domestic adoption, where preference is given first to adult relatives of the child, next to foster parents and then to approved adoptive parents, and may also depend on the desires of the child's birth parent.

CHI will work with families to be sure they have the training and support necessary to care for a child and meet their special needs. CHI always seeks to ascertain whether it is in the best interest of the child to place him or her in a certain home or setting.

**Policy on Adopting More Than One Child.** CHI will assist qualified families in the international adoption of sibling groups, where such is available in the country of adoption. However, because of concerns for the best interest of the child and research supporting this policy, CHI does not permit the adoption of two unrelated children at the same time. In addition, CHI does not permit singles to adopt siblings. We will, however, work with parents to complete a separate adoption after some adjustment time has been taken (CHI requires that families be home with their adopted child for a minimum of 6 months before submitting their application to adopt again, and families

may not submit their dossier sooner than one year after the completion of their first adoption (specific program guidelines apply).

**Dual Approval (Foster Care and Adoption).** Please note that individuals/families interested in applying for certification as a foster caregiver can also be dually studied for approval as an adoptive parent. At this time, CHI works with qualified families to complete their home assessment for children that are available for international adoption only. However, we would be happy to assist families interested in adopting domestically or those interested in becoming a foster caregiver/foster-to-adopt caregiver by referring them to an ODJFS licensed agency or a PCSA qualified to conduct a joint Home Study, which can result in the simultaneous approval of the applicant for foster care placement and adoptive placement.

**Home Study Fees.** CHI-Ohio's Home Study fees, as well as a schedule of when said fees are due, are attached as "Exhibit A" to these policies. Please see our "About our Programs" Booklet for information about fees specific to each country.

CHI - Ohio will work with local and national organizations that assist in adoption funding so to allow families of various income levels the opportunity to adopt. In addition, CHI includes a finance link on its website that provides financial resources for families wishing to adopt. Finally, CHI, through CHI Foundation, occasionally provides adoption grants for families who encounter unexpected expenses in the adoption process, or for families adopting special needs children. It is the firm belief and policy of CHI that the ability to pay a fee shall not influence the choice of the most appropriate family for a child or deter a qualified family from adopting (Note: family income level must meet the requirements of the foreign country of adoption, if applicable).

**Home Study and Post Placement ONLY Families.** CHI concentrates first on home studies and post placements for families who use CHI as both their home study agency and as their child-placing agency. CHI does not complete domestic adoption home studies, as we only work with international families. CHI cannot complete home studies for any family that is using another child-placing agency and is completing an adoption through any of the countries in which we work: China, Russia, Colombia, Vietnam, Kazakhstan or India. If a family wants to adopt from any of these countries, then they should be using CHI to complete both the HS and the adoption. We will make exceptions for families that have previously worked with CHI and have chosen a waiting child from another agency's waiting child list.

Only when time allows can CHI complete home studies for families who wish to adopt internationally through countries not listed above. CHI can, when time allows, complete post placements for families who did not use CHI as their home study agency. Examples of this include families who have moved after their adoption was completed. All and any exceptions will need to be approved by the Social Service Director in the STL office.

**Adoption Inquiries.** In addition to the terms set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 6 (Ethical Practice, Rights and Responsibilities, Internal and External Research), Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch will also provide the following:

1. Information on how to access CHI - Ohio's Agency Policies and Procedures (or a summary of the Policy) as well as Agency MEPA Complaint Procedures, via the CHI - Ohio website.
2. A description of Children's Hope's current programs along with a statement that CHI does not certify foster homes or foster-to-adopt homes, but that CHI would be happy to refer interested parents to an ODJFS licensed agency or to a PCSA who will provide such services;
3. A description of the eligibility requirements and the application process for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance;
4. Information on how to review the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing (OAPL) web page at [www.state.oh.us/odjfs/oapl](http://www.state.oh.us/odjfs/oapl) and the JFS 01675 "Ohio Adoption Guide";
5. Information regarding the requirement of criminal records check for all prospective adoptive parents and all adult residents of an adoptive home, as a precondition to being approved for an adoptive placement, and fees associated with the same; and
6. Information regarding the foster care/adoption Home Study assessment process.

After the prospective adoptive family reviews the material and have submitted a completed JFS 01691 Application, a home visit will be scheduled to provide the family with additional information and guidance about adoption. Fees charged will be in accordance with Children's Hope's Fee Schedule (See Exhibit A).

**Adoption Pre-Service Training Requirements.** Children's Hope International requires a minimum of ten (10) hours of training in order to be approved as an adoptive home/parent. Training will include such topics as: (1) The Adoption Process (CHI Policies and Procedures, CHI's Role, Pre-Service Training, The Home Study Process (including fees allowed), Matching, Placement, Post-Placement Services, Adoption Subsidies, Legalization, and the Openness of Adoption), (2) Child Development (Normal Child Development, Predictable Stages of Development in the Adopted Child, The Impact of Earlier Separations, The Impact of Abuse and Neglect, and Identity and Control Issues in Adolescence), (3) Separation and Loss (Techniques for Supporting a Grieving Child, Developing Empathy for the Child's Past, Promoting attachment, and Dealing with the Unattached Child), (4) Dealing with Behavioral Challenges (Why Behavior Occurs, Typical Behaviors to be Expected, and Creative Parenting/Discipline), (5) Cultural Issues (Defining Culture, Understanding How One's Culture Impacts Parenting in General, Understanding How One's Culture Impacts the Adopted Child, Impact of Cultural Issues on Adoption Issues Arising Post-Placement, How Adoptive Parents can Use Knowledge of Child's Culture to Stimulate Attachment, Stimulate Developmental Growth and Assist Child in Identity Formation, Impact of Cross-Cultural Placements on Triad Members and Extended Family, Diversity Issues, Issues of Racism, and an Overview of Multiethnic Placement Act, as Amended), (6) Caring For

Children Who've Been Sexually Abused (Dynamics of Sexual Abuse, Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children, and Therapeutic Parenting Methods), (7) Adoption Related Issues (Talking About Adoption with the Adopted Child, The Child's Birth Family and On-Going Contact with Significant Others, Adoption and Extended Family, Adoption Issues at School, Using Community Resources, and Advocating for the Adoptive Family and Child)

Should the adoptive parent need more information and/or additional training, the Children's hope caseworker will identify the needs and make any necessary referrals. CHI may waive components of the requirements for education and training if the assessor determines that the family has received training previously or the family has the skills to care for the needs of the child that will be placed in the home. When a waiver has been granted by Children's Hope, it shall document the waiver in the case record pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-22 of the Administrative Code.

Children's Hope International, will encourage all of its approved adoptive parents to attend at least three (3) training and support group meetings prior to the finalization of their adoption. These meetings will begin upon the approval of the family's assessment and continue until the finalization of their adoption, though families are still encouraged to attend training and support programs even after the finalization of their adoption.

The pre-placement sessions of the support group meetings will contain educational information on preparing for and parenting the internationally adopted child. The post-placement sessions will consist of support and referral for the family after their child has been adopted internationally, and meeting the post placement requirements of the country of adoption.

**Initial Application for Child Placement.** In addition to the terms set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 6 (Intake, Assessment and Service Planning), Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch will, within seven (7) days of receipt of request for information, provide a JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" to any person who resides in the state of Ohio and meets the specifications of CHI's recruitment plan. CHI shall use the JFS 01691 for all initial adoption applications. CHI shall not accept a JFS 01691 which does not contain complete and accurate information and CHI shall not begin the Home Study process prior to receipt of a fully completed JFS 01691 Application which is signed by the adoptive parent(s). CHI shall begin the Home Study assessment process within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the completed JFS 01691 Application. CHI shall assist with completion of said Application as needed.

Unable to Initiate Study. If CHI determines that an adoptive home study cannot be initiated, CHI shall send written notification to the applicant stating the reason for not initiating the home study and a description or procedures for requesting a review of CHI's decision. The notification shall be send to the applicant no later than fifteen (15) days after the application was submitted.

Revision of Application. Applicants may revise their JFS 01691 at any time regarding the characteristics of number of children desired. If the applicant's revision indicates that they are now seeking a special needs child, requirements of the time frame for the home study process shall begin at the date that the revised JFS 01691 is received; if not a special needs child, then consistent with CHI policies pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-05 of the Administrative Code.

Submitting False Information. An application submitted with a knowingly false statement shall not be used to initiate the homestudy. A person seeking to adopt a minor who knowingly makes a false statement to be included in a foster or adoptive application submitted to CHI to the obtain services of CHI in arranging an adoption pursuant to 3107.11, 3107.012, or 5101.03 of the Revised Code is guilty of the offense of falsification under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code. If CHI determines that an application has been falsified, CHI shall follow the procedures outlined in rule [5101:2-33-13](#) of the Administrative Code and these Policies.

Large Family Assessment. When a family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including foster children and children in kinship care; or if the family will have a total of five or more children who will reside in the home upon the adoptive placement of a child, the CHI assessor shall complete the [JFS 01530](#) "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (12/2006) and will complete said JFS 01530 *prior* to each adoptive placement.

**Required Documentation in Support of Application.** Once the applicant is accepted for Home Study services, Children's Hope International will request the following additional information (and assist with securing of the same, as needed):

1. Documentation of current marital status; marriage certificate and/or copy of divorce decree;

2. JFS 01681 "Adoptive Applicant Financial Statement" providing new information regarding applicant's income, assets, child support obligations and financial liabilities;
3. State criminal background check (Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII)), via web check, with a fee dependent upon the particular web check organization. Note\*: CHI shall not recommend a person to be an adoptive parent if the person or any adult member of the Applicant's household has been convicted of any crime listed in paragraph (C) of Rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, except as provided in paragraph (D) of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.
4. Completed FBI check, with a fee of approximately \$24.00 per person - or - proof that the applicants have resided in Ohio for the previous five years) (see Note\*, above);
5. A minimum of four (4) personal references, of which three (3) must be from individuals unrelated to the applicant(s). Prior to approval of an adoptive home, CHI shall contact all references given by the Applicant, including any other agency or organization with which the applicant has been previously certified as a foster caregiver, or has provided care and supervision of children. All contacts with references shall be documented;
6. JFS 01200 "Fire Inspection Report". CHI shall require each prospective adoptive parent to obtain an inspection of the family home by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal's office, certifying that the family home is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of children;
7. JFS 01653 "Adoptive/Foster Care Applicant Medical Statement". CHI shall require that the Applicant provide a statement for all members of the household, completed by a licensed physician. Such statement shall document that the caregiver and all members of the household are free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition which would endanger children or seriously impair the ability of the household to care for a child;
8. Proof of attendance of Training classes, as described in these Agency Policies and Procedures;
9. JFS 01348 "Safety Audit of a Foster Home Also Used for Adoptive Homes", documenting that the residence has met all safety standards; and
10. Completed water test, if required.

All the above information must be documented before approval will be given. The result of the criminal background check is not public record.

**Assessment of Initial Application to Adopt.** In addition to the terms set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 7 (Service Delivery), Children's Hope International's assessment process, as documented through a written international home study, shall include at least one (1) visit by an Assessor to the applicant's home to ensure that the physical facilities of the home are in compliance with applicable law to determine any placement limitations which the physical environment or space availability of the home may necessitate. In order to complete the international home study, an Assessor shall interview all members of the household over the age of four (4) years. The interview may be conducted in conjunction with the visit to the prospective adoptive home, or may be conducted during a separate visit to the home or held elsewhere. The interview with all members of the household over the age of four (4) years may be a joint interview or separate individual interviews.

**Assessors.** Home studies completed by CHI - Ohio shall be conducted by an adoption assessor who meets the requirements of the State of Ohio and is employed by or under contract with Children's Hope International.

CHI shall not place a child or cause a child to be placed in an adoptive home until the initial assessment of the adoptive home has been completed by an Assessor and the Assessor has approved that the Applicant's home study.

For international home studies, CHI is exempt from completing the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Home Study)" pursuant to Rule 5101:2-48-12(E). However, all information will be thoroughly documented to show that the applicant has been assessed by an Assessor to determine the applicant's compliance with Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code and to determine the applicant's ability to parent an adopted child. In completing the international Home Study, a written narrative shall be compiled and signed by the Assessor, indicating the Assessor's approval or denial of the Application.

In addition to the criteria in the above mentioned policies, CHI may establish a written policy, applicable to all applicants, which requires applicants to submit additional materials or documents and to participate in additional assessment activities.

**Restrictions (Ineligible Adoptive Applicants).** Children's Hope International shall not accept an application for completion of the Home Study or adoption process for any adoptive applicant if applicant has committed a felony. In addition, Children's Hope International will not accept an application for completion of the Home Study or adoption process for any adoptive applicant if applicant has been arrested or convicted of any crime (excluding traffic violations) in the previous five (5) years. Children's Hope shall deny approval for adoptive placement for any adoptive applicant if applicant or if or any household member has been convicted of any Sex or Child Endangering offense listed in Section 2919.22 or 2907 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC)

Children's Hope International will not proceed with the application process for any of the following persons: an unmarried person who is not at least 24 years of age (per the requirements of the US Immigration Service) or a married couple when at least one of them is not 21 years of age.

Children's Hope International may not proceed with the application process for any of the following persons:

- A person for whom the home study assessment indicates that the applicant would not be a suitable adoptive parent
- A person whose financial management reflects inability to meet the needs of a child placed in the home even with the provision of financial assistance.
- A person diagnosed by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, certified psychologist or licensed independent social worker, to have a physical or mental condition negatively affecting his or her ability to parent a child.

(D) If the decision is not to continue with the adoptive application process, notification will include the reason and a description of the procedures applicant may take for requesting a review by the Director.

### **Home Assessment Process**

**Notification to County PCSA.** CHI shall notify the public children services agency (PCSA) in the county in which the prospective adoptive parent resides within ten (10) days after the initiation of a home study.

Such notification shall contain relevant information about the adoptive applicant(s) to the PCSA which includes, but is not limited to, all of the following: 1) Past or present functioning of the prospective adoptive parent, 2) Rule violations involving foster and pre-adoptive child, 3) Third party investigations, 4) Information relating to previous adoption applications, or 5) Previous disruptions from the prospective adoptive family home.

CHI shall also notify the PCSA in the county in which the prospective parent resides of an impending adoptive placement no later than ten (10) days prior to the placement of the child in the adoptive home.

Prior to recommending an adoptive home for approval and upon request, ODJFS shall provide CHI with a summary report of a search of the central registry to assist CHI in completing its evaluation of an applicant seeking approval as an adoptive parent, pursuant to rules [5101:2-34-381](#) and [5101:2-33-22](#) of the Administrative Code. The summary report of the registry shall include all other adult members of the adoptive applicants household. The search shall result in a summary report, which CHI shall place in the applicant's file. Prior to the adoptive placement of each adoptive child in the adoptive applicant(s) home, CHI shall consider the summary report as a tool to help determine the appropriateness of the placement.

The summary report shall include, for each applicant and each adult household member, a chronological list of abuse and neglect determinations or allegations in which the person was involved where a PCSA has done one of the following: a) Determined that abuse or neglect occurred; b) Initiated an investigation, and the investigation is ongoing; c) Initiated an investigation, and the agency was unable to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred.

The summary report shall not contain any of the following: a) An abuse and neglect determination of which a person seeking to become an adoptive parent is subject and in regards to which a PCSA determined that abuse or neglect did not occur; b) Information or reports the dissemination of which is prohibited by, or interferes with eligibility under, the "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act," 88 Stat. 4 (1974), 42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq., as amended; c) The name of the person who or entity that made, or participated in the making of, the report of abuse or neglect (including any additional collateral contact that made, or participated in, the report of abuse and neglect).

If the search indicates there are no allegations or reports of involvement in child abuse and/or neglect investigations or there are only unsubstantiated reports for any applicant or adult household member, the summary report shall indicate that there are no substantiated or indicated reports involving any applicant or adult household member in an allegation or report of involvement in a child abuse and/or neglect investigation reported to the uniform statewide child welfare information system or the central registry.

CHI works with qualified families to complete their home assessment for children that are available for international adoption only. When a foster caregiver who has not been approved to be an adoptive parent through the joint homestudy process expresses an interest in being approved as an adoptive parent, CHI will assist families interested in adopting domestically by referring them to an ODJFS licensed agency or a PCSA qualified to conduct such studies.

CHI shall also provide a notification letter to the PCSA in which the adoptive parent resides which shall include a description of the following applicable information: the special needs, if any, and the age of the prospective adoptive child; the name of the prospective adoptive parent(s); the number of children that will reside in the prospective adoptive home when the prospective adoptive child is placed in the prospective adoptive home. This does not apply to stepparent adoption.

Homestudies initiated prior to the effective date of Rule 5101:2-48-11, as revised, shall be in compliance with Administrative Code rules which were in effect prior to the effective date of said rule. These homestudies shall be updated in accordance with the update process outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code. This does not apply to a homestudy which has been determined to have knowingly false statements. The assessor shall follow procedures according to rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

**2. Time Frames.** Children's Hope International will commence the assessment process (Commencement of a homestudy means, at a minimum, scheduling an appointment to interview the applicant or assuring that the applicant has been informed of the necessary materials required for the assessor to complete the homestudy) within thirty days of the date the agency receives the [JFS 01691](#) "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2006). The assessment shall be completed within one hundred eighty days of the date that the agency received the application. Should CHI fail to commence a homestudy within thirty days of receiving the application or fail to complete a homestudy within one hundred eighty days (180), CHI shall document in the applicant's record the reason(s) CHI was unable to meet one or both of these requirements. Children's Hope International, considers this process to be a joint decision, and will include the family in all decisions and considerations of approval. An assessor's assessment of the adoptive parent(s) shall include a minimum of one face to face home visit with each member of the household who is currently residing in the home. Any adoptive applicant's case for which a home study has not been completed within one hundred eighty (180) days of receipt of initial application will be terminated, except in the instance extenuating circumstances including but not limited to sickness,

military leave, etc., whereby the case may be continued, as determined by the Director on a case-by-case basis. Children's Hope International will notify the adoptive applicant in writing no less than thirty (30) days prior to closing the case.

Any case for which a homestudy has not been completed within one year of the application date shall be terminated unless CHI makes the determination that the homestudy should not be terminated. The decision not to terminate shall be made at the agency's discretion. CHI shall notify the adoptive applicant in writing no less than thirty (30) days prior to the termination. Written notification shall include an explanation of the reason for termination and the procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision.

**3. Adoption Administrative Falsification Procedures.** CHI shall not complete a homestudy when it is determined by the assessor that the application or homestudy contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s) that is included in the application or written report of the homestudy. CHI shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or to the probate court when it has been determined that the application or homestudy contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s) that is included in the written report of the homestudy. When CHI determines an application or homestudy has been falsified, CHI shall follow the following procedure:

CHI, upon an internal investigation, shall refer all cases to the county prosecutor in which there is probable cause to believe that falsification of an adoptive application or homestudy has been committed under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code. The CHI Assessor shall report in writing a person who knowingly makes a false statement on an application or homestudy document during the homestudy process to the CHI-Ohio Director within three days of the Assessor's determination of possible falsification. The written statement shall include, but is not limited to: (1) The original application completed by the applicant. (2) Documentation verifying the information reported on the application or in the homestudy by the applicant is knowingly false.

CHI shall, within fourteen (14) days of the determination of falsification, send a notification letter to the applicant indicating that the information submitted to the agency had been determined to be knowingly false. The notice shall be mailed to the applicant by certified mail and shall include procedures for an agency review and shall include all of the following information: (a) The date on which the notification letter is prepared by the assessor, (b) The mailing address of the applicant(s), (c) A statement indicating the homestudy process will discontinue because the agency has probable cause to believe the information provided by the applicant on the JFS 01691, "Application for the Placement of a Child" (rev. 12/2006) or during the homestudy process is knowingly false. (d) A copy of the information that is alleged knowingly false, (e) Documentation verifying the information submitted on the JFS 01691 or during the homestudy process that is knowingly false, (f) A statement indicating that all cases in which it is determined by the agency the applicant made knowingly false statements will be referred to the county prosecutor office in the county the applicant(s) reside, (g) The applicant(s) right to an agency review to respond to the alleged

falsification, and (h) A statement indicating that if the applicant(s) fails to respond within the fourteen day period the applicant(s) application is withdrawn, and the action of refusing to respond to allegations of knowingly making false statement(s) has resulted in the applicant(s) selecting themselves out of continuing the homestudy process.

If the applicant responds within fourteen (14) days of the date of receipt of the written notice alleging falsification, the agency is responsible for reviewing information received from the adoptive applicant within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the applicant(s) response. CHI shall conduct an internal investigation that shall include but not limited to: (1) Face-to-face visit with the adoptive applicant, and all relevant witnesses, if available, (2) Issuance of a final investigatory report to the adoptive applicant(s) that is the subject of the investigation.

The report shall include the allegations, relevant background information deemed appropriate by the agency, the results of the investigation and recommendation of whether or not the agency found probable cause to indicate the applicant(s) made knowingly false statements on the application for child placement or during the homestudy process. The agency shall notify the applicant(s) no later than ten (10) days after the agency review. If unanticipated circumstances require additional time to complete the investigation or to issue the final report, CHI shall notify the adoptive applicant that is the subject of the investigation of the need for additional time. The extension shall not be longer than fourteen (14) days after the agency notifies the applicant(s) of the need for additional time to complete the investigatory report. CHI shall provide written notification, within thirty (30) days, to the adoptive applicant of any action to be taken.

Upon completion of the final investigation report and if CHI determines there has been no falsification made by the applicant(s), CHI shall resume the homestudy process if the applicant(s) chooses to proceed. The homestudy shall be completed within one hundred eighty (180) days from re-commencement.

CHI shall include in the adoptive family case record all documentation which supports CHI's action in determining the results and recommendation of the internal investigation.

When an adoptive child is placed in an approved adoptive parent(s) home and the adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) knowingly made a false statement that results in the assessor's reassessment of an approved or updated homestudy, and when an internal investigation determines that the prospective adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) is guilty of the offense of falsification under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code, the Assessor shall report incidents of falsification according to the procedures pursuant to this policy. The agency Director must determine, within twenty-four (24) hours of the completion of CHI's internal investigation, if there is probable cause related to the adoptive child's safety and well-being to remove the child from the adoptive parent(s) home until the result of an investigation is rendered.

**4. Large Family Assessment.** When an applicant seeking to adopt a minor child will have at least five (5) children residing in the prospective adoptive home after the minor child to be adopted is placed in the home for adoption, the CHI assessor shall complete the

[JFS 01530](#) "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (12/2006) in addition to completion of the home study report.

**5. Approval or Denial of Home Study.** Children's Hope International, will notify the adoptive applicant by mail within ten days after the Home Study has been approved or disapproved.

A. Approval Decision. If the decision is to *approve* a home study, written notification will include 1) the date of approval and expiration date of the home study; 2) The description and ages of children for which the applicant has been approved; and 3) The description of the adoptive home study update process.

B. Denial Decision. If the decision is to *deny* a home study, written notification will include 1) a detailed explanation of the reason for denial, setting forth all the reasons upon which the denial was based; and 2) a description of the procedures to request an agency review of the home study, as outlined in Section 9 of these Policies.

C. Upon Decision. Upon approval or denial of a family's home study through Children's Hope, the Assessor or Director shall complete form JFS 01609 "Family Permanency Planning Data Summary" (02/2005), documenting the results of the home study in accordance with the Rules of OAC 5101:2-48-12.

**6. Home Study Update/Amendment for Adoptive Parent(s) with Previous Assessment from CHI.**

Expiration. The expiration of an initial Home Study is six (6) years from the date of the initial approval of the applicant(s) as adoptive parents(s). Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch shall update the adoptive home study every two (2) years from the date of approval of the initial home study. Updates to adoption homestudies shall be completed by an assessor employed or under contract with CHI who meets the definition of who can be an assessor contained in rule [5101:2-1-01](#) of the Administrative Code. CHI shall not consider race, color, or national origin of a family for whom CHI is conducting an update to a homestudy in determining whether a homestudy is approved or disapproved. CHI shall not consider the race, color or national origin of the child in whom a family has indicated an interest in adopting in determining whether to approve or disapprove the update to the adoptive family's homestudy. CHI shall not discriminate in approving or disapproving an update to a homestudy on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 1201.

Once a home study is updated, the expiration date is calculated from the date of the approval of the update, not to exceed six years from the date of the initial approval. The date of approval of the most current update will become the new date to determine when the next two-year update is due. After the expiration of the home study, the family shall submit a new JFS 01691 and a new home study shall be completed.

Amendment. For the purposes of this Policy, the words amend/amendments means: the process of formally altering or adding to a document or record. When the prospective adoptive parent(s) notifies CHI that any of the following circumstances will or have occurred, CHI shall amend the adoptive homestudy: 1) Change in marital status of an approved adoptive applicant, 2) A change in health status of an approved prospective adoptive applicant(s) or household member(s), 3) The finalization of an adoption of a child, 4) A change in the number of child household members through birth, kinship or foster care who have not reached the age of majority, 5) The death of an adoptive applicant(s), adoptive child or any other household member, 6) A criminal charge or conviction of an approved prospective adoptive parent or other adult household member, 7) A change in the number of adult household members (not including existing household member(s) who reaches the age of majority). New adult household members must have JFS 01653, BCII background check and if applicable, FBI check, 8) The physical relocation of the approved adoptive parent(s) which results in a change of address that is different than the address listed on the most recent homestudy or homestudy update. A safety audit must be completed at the time of the amendment, or 9) A change in financial status/income.

The amendment shall be completed within sixty days of the agency becoming aware of changes to the family's composition or life circumstances.

Notification of Expiration. Not less than ninety (90) or more than one hundred twenty (120) calendar days prior to the expiration of the home assessment, Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch will, in writing, notify the family of the approaching expiration of the home study. The notification shall identify any information or documentation that the adoptive parent(s) is required to submit for the homestudy update or procedure for a new homestudy according to rule [5101:2-48-12](#) of the Administrative Code. The notification shall be on the [JFS 01331](#) "Notice of Expiration and Reapplication for a Foster Home Certification or Adoption Homestudy Update/Amendment." (rev. 12/2006). If the prospective adoptive parent(s) fails to apply for renewal on the JFS 01331 for renewal of the adoption homestudy within thirty days of the date on the notification letter, the homestudy will lapse upon the expiration date, the prospective adoptive family record shall be closed and the applicant(s) must reapply through the initial homestudy application process pursuant to rule [5101:2-48-09](#) of the Administrative Code.

Update Requirements. If completed prior to the two year expiration of the home study, the following will constitute an updated home study: 1) At least one (1) face-to-face interview with the adoptive applicant and each family members in the home The interview with other household member(s) may or may not be a joint visits, and 2) An assessment of any family changes since the initial home study completion date which may include the following: a) The [JFS 01653](#) "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 01/2002) signed by a licensed physician for any household member(s), if there has been a change in the person's health a new JFS 01653 is required, 2) In order to ensure the safety, health or care of an adoptive child, CHI may require a report of a physical, psychiatric or psychological examination or treatment of the caregiver or prospective adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s). The examination shall be conducted by a licensed physician, psychologist, or other certified or licensed professional.

3) A fire inspection by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal's office if CHI deems it necessary to ensure that the home is free from conditions that may be hazardous to the safety of an adoptive child. 4) The [JFS 01348](#) "Safety Audit of a Foster Home," (rev. 01/2003), also used for adoptive homes; if there is a reason for concern relative to the home 's continued safety, 5) The [JFS 01681](#) "Applicant Financial Statement." (rev. 10/2000), if there has been any substantial changes to the prospective adoptive parent(s) financial situation and 6) A completed water test by an approved Ohio water testing laboratory, if required. The update shall include the following: 1) A minimum of one reference from a professional who is knowledgeable of the prospective adoptive parent(s) family dynamics, or if a reference is not available from a professional, one personal reference from someone who is aware of the prospective adoptive parent(s) family's functioning, 2) The bureau of identification and investigation(BCII) and, if applicable, federal bureau of investigation (FBI) report, and 3) A child abuse and neglect summary report from the statewide automated child welfare information system

Notification of Update Decision. The assessor shall complete a written homestudy report on the JFS 01385 and provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the update to the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided to the adoptive family within ten days of completion of the homestudy update.

A. Approval Decision. If the decision is to *approve* a home study, written notification will include, but not be limited to the date of approval of the update to the adoptive home study and the expiration date of the update to the home study.

B. Denial Decision. If the decision is to *deny* a home study, written notification shall include 1) a detailed explanation setting forth the reason/basis for denial; and 2) a description of the procedures to request an agency review of the home study, pursuant to rule [5101:2-48-24](#) of the Administrative Code.

C. Upon Decision. Upon approval or denial of a family's home study through Children's Hope, the Adoption Assessor or Director shall complete form JFS 01609 "Family Permanency Planning Data Summary", in accordance with the Rules of OAC 5101:2-48-12.

### **7. Home Study Update (Adoptive Parent(s) with Assessment from Another Agency and Has Finalized an Adoption).**

General. Children's Hope International, to ensure that any home study received by another agency has met all applicable ORC/OAC requirements. If the home study has not met all applicable ORC/OAC requirements, the Director retains the right and shall have discretion to determine whether an entirely new home study will be required or whether the adopting parents will be allowed to complete the missing requirements.

Process. Upon receipt of the completed JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" and the initial home study from the previous agency, and the determination that the home study received from another agency has met all applicable ORC/OAC requirements, CHI shall:

1) Determine that the adoptive family has finalized an adoption within the last three (3) years. 2) Determine that the adoptive parent is currently residing in Ohio; and 3) Determine if an adoptive parent wishes to adopt a child with special needs.

**Time Frame.** If the application and initial home study is accepted, Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch will complete an updated home study within one hundred eighty (180) days of receipt of the JFS 01691 and the initial home study.

**Requirements.** The updated home study will be completed according to Children's Hope's Agency Policies and Procedures and will also include an evaluation of adjustment of the previously adopted child; and exploration of the impact of additional children on the family.

**Notification.** Families will be notified in accordance with general update notification policies.

**Release or Transfer of an Adoptive Home Study.** In addition to the terms set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 1 (Ethical Practice, Rights and Responsibilities, Internal and External Research), Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch will release and/or transfer an adoptive home assessment, not including reference letters, BCII results and/or FBI results, to another PCSA, PCPA or PNA (including another PCSA, PCPA, or PNA which requests a copy of the home study for matching purposes), at the request of the adoptive parents. A fee of \$125.00 will be assessed for families transferring to another agency. CHI will release the home assessment within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of the transfer fee and document such transfer in the case record retained by CHI. Should families request a transfer of their study prior to the completion of the home study, the transfer fee will be assessed and all fees collected at the point of transfer request will not be refunded.

**Maintenance of Approved Home Studies Received from Another Agency.** When approved home studies are transferred to CHI for a specific child, CHI will consider and maintain those home studies in the same manner in which CHI considers its own home studies that had been approved within CHI.

**Access to Home Study and Related Documents.** In addition to the terms set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 1 (Service Delivery), Children's Hope International will provide access to approved home studies and adoption related documents in the following manner: Upon Branch Director's receipt of written request for access to said documents, the Director shall, within fifteen (15) days of receipt of said written request, contact the adoptive parents and provide for a time and location at Children's Hope for access to said documents. Parents shall have as much time as necessary during normal business hours to review said documents.

**Open Adoption.** Children's Hope International focuses solely on international adoption services at this time. However, Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch shall provide information concerning the availability of open adoption to adoptive parents wishing to adopt domestically and to refer the adoptive parents to an ODJFS licensed agency or a PCSA qualified to prepare the needed information and to facilitate the open adoption, if the family chooses to go the route of domestic adoption.

**Children's Hope International's Role in Adoptive Placement.** Children's Hope does not certify foster homes, nor is it an "out-of-home-care" provider. CHI will concentrate its services to working with qualified families to complete their home assessment for international adoption only. However, Children's Hope International shall assist families interested in becoming a foster caregiver and/or becoming certified for joint foster care/adoption by referring them to an ODJFS licensed agency or a PCSA who can assist them. Children's Hope shall not take custody of a child or place children in the custody of an adoptive home. Children's Hope will consider all approved families equally regardless of race, color, national origin or family's geographical location. Children's Hope will not delay placement of the child based on their race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, handicap, or age.

**Children's Rights.**

a. General Statement of Rights. It is the Policy of Children's Hope International that no employee, volunteer, college intern, service provider or member of the Board of Trustees shall in any way violate the civil rights of children, including:

1. The right to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. The right to reasonable enjoyment of privacy.
3. The right to have his or her own opinions heard and to be included, to the greatest extent possible, when any decision are being made affecting his or her life.
4. The right to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support and supervision.
5. The right to be free from physical abuse and inhumane treatment.
6. The right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation.
7. The right to receive adequate and appropriate medical care.
8. The right to receive adequate and appropriate food, clothing and housing.
9. The right to his or her own money and personal property in accordance with the child's case plan, where applicable.
10. The right to live in clean, safe surroundings.
11. The right to participate in appropriate educational programs.
12. The right to communicate with family, friends and significant others from whom he or she is living apart, in accordance with the case plan, where applicable.
13. The right to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself or herself and to others.

b. Rights as Related to Fundraising. In addition to the rights set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 1 (Ethical Practice, Rights and Responsibilities, Internal and External Research), it is the Policy of Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch that any participation in human research projects, fund raising and publicity activities shall not involve a child in any such activity without the prior informed, written consent of the parent, guardian or legal custodian and the child, according to the child's age and functioning level. Such written consent shall be contained in the client's/child's case record.

**Religious Participation, Socialization and Education.** CHI is a non-custodial international child placing agency. As such, CHI will never take either legal or physical custody of any child. All adoptions will be completed and finalized in the country in which the child is domiciled before the child returns with his/her parents to the United States.

CHI will not be involved in foster care or domestic adoptions. Therefore, CHI does not participate in the placement of children in an out-of-home care setting. Should the agency participate in the placement of children in an out-of-home care setting, this policy will be revised and submitted to ODJFS within 10-days of the change.

**Discharge Policy.** Children's Hope does not certify foster homes, nor is it an "out-of-home-care" provider. All international adoptions are finalized abroad, prior to the placement of the child in Ohio.

**Confidentiality Adoptive Family Case Records.** All records and documentation relating to the adopted child and to the adoptive family are confidential and shall not be disclosed to unauthorized persons or entities, except in accordance with the terms of these Adoption Policies, or as permitted by Ohio law.

a. ODJFS. CHI shall promptly disseminate any information requested by ODJFS staff with supervisory responsibility for child protective services or children services licensing.

b. Central Registry. CHI shall disseminate information to the central registry on child abuse and neglect as required by rule 5101:2-35-16 of the Administrative Code.

c. Child Fatality Review Board. CHI shall disseminate information to a Child Fatality Review Board recognized by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) upon request.

d. Other. CHI shall promptly disseminate all information it determines to be relevant to any federal, state, or local governmental entity, or any agent of such entity, with a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibilities under law to protect children from abuse and neglect.

**Maintenance.** CHI shall maintain case records in a consistent and organized manner such that required information set forth in Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code can be readily located. If/when CHI maintains any required information set forth in this Policy in a location other than the case record, it shall be stated in the agency policy or noted in the case record where the information can be found.

**Pre-Finalization Services.** Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch will not be conducting pre-finalization services, as international adoptions are finalized abroad. Those interested in pre-finalization services will be referred to an ODJFS licensed agency or PCSA.

**Post-Finalization Services.** In addition to the terms set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 7 (Service Delivery, Aftercare Planning and Follow-Up Procedures), Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch shall provide continued support at the request of the adoptive parents or the adoptee after legalization.

If Children's Hope does not provide the requested post-finalization adoption services directly, the agency shall: (1) Refer each person who requests post-finalization adoption services to an agency that provides such services; (2) Upon written request of a parent , legal custodian, or guardian, provide consultation on adoption-related issues to non-agency professionals who are working with the family; or (3) If applicable, provide information regarding the procedures for releasing identifying information pursuant to rules 5101:2-48-19 and 5101:2-48-20 of the Administrative Code.

Adoption Subsidies. Children's Hope International shall educate, inform and help an adoptive family complete all the necessary applications to receive the appropriate subsidies for their adoption. Children's Hope will work with the family and the custodial county to assist in complying with subsidy requirements. Children's Hope will also provide families with the "Adoption Subsidies" Handout (see *below*).

#### HANDOUT Adoption Subsidies

There are two sources of Adoption Subsidy; State and Federal (both subject to continuing modification).

Eligibility for Federal Subsidy (Title IV-E) is based on whether the child's birth parents were receiving welfare benefits or would have been eligible to receive them. IV-E provides up to \$250 per month and a medical card. IV-E is not available for families adopting internationally.

Eligibility for State Subsidy is based upon the adoptive family's size and gross income. There are three available benefits involved with the State Subsidy Program:

- Maintenance Subsidy (provides up to \$250/month; cannot receive both State Maintenance Subsidy and IV-E);
- Special Service Subsidy (based on child's present and future needs and is negotiable); and
- Non-Recurring Expenses (cannot exceed \$2,000).

#### **Federal Adoption Assistance Program - Title IV-E Adoption Assistance**

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance is a federally funded financial program whose purpose is to make permanent homes for children whose birth parents were receiving or eligible for welfare benefits.

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance provides:

- A negotiated monthly stipend of up to \$250 until the child reaches the age of 18 (21 if the child has a mental or physical handicap)
- Categorical eligibility for Medicaid coverage for the adopted child. This coverage continues as long as adoption assistance is in effect regardless of the adoptive parent's income.
- Child is deemed an ADC eligible child for the purpose of qualifying for Title XX services (a variety of social services).

Eligibility for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance:

Eligibility for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance may be based on if the child's biological parents were eligible for ADC or if the child receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The

adoptive child must also meet the definition of a special needs child (See Appendix A for definition). A public or private agency must have permanent custody of the child. The adoptive family's income is totally irrelevant in determining eligibility.

Application for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance:

To apply for Title IV-E Assistance, the adoptive parents must fill out the Ohio Department of Human Services (JFS) 01613 "Application for Subsidized Adoption". The adoption worker of the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. Beginning July 1, 1993, IV-E Assistance may begin at adoptive placement, if the child is found eligible.

Amount of Federal IV-E Assistance:

The amount of the IV-E assistance is arrived at by a mutual agreement reached between the adoptive family and the custodial agency(ies). The amount is based on the needs of the child and the circumstances of the adoptive family and should be negotiated. Federal regulations do not permit payment over the foster family care rate for the individual child.

Applying for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance after a Final Decree of Adoption:

IV-E assistance may be established after a final decree of adoption. Eligibility for assistance may be considered after finalization if, upon appeal of the adoptive family, conducted in accordance with Ohio's State Hearing Procedures, the family establishes one of the following extenuating circumstances that prevented the family from applying prior to adoption:

- Relevant information about the child's needs was not available prior to adoption;
- The child exhibits special needs after the adoption that are traceable to the child's pre-adoptive experiences or medical history;
- The adoptive family is not informed about the adoption assistance program prior to the adoption, or information about other factors affecting the child's eligibility was inaccurate or incomplete at the time of adoption; or
- An agency administrative error prevented a Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Agreement from being completed before finalization of the adoption in the case of an otherwise eligible child.

If the state hearing establishes that extenuating circumstances existed, then eligibility for adoption assistance may be considered without regard to the normal timeliness standard. If the child meets the remaining eligibility requirements for Title IV-E Assistance, the adoption assistance may be established.

Appeal Process for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance:

The adoptive parents have a right to a state hearing before the ODHS if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. For a complete explanation of the state hearing process, refer to JFS Form 4059 "Explanation of State Hearing Procedures".

### **Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses**

Non-recurring adoption expenses are expenses that are directly related to the adoption process.

Eligibility for Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses:

There is no income eligibility directed towards the adoptive family in determining whether or not payments for non-recurring adoption expenses will be made. The child, however, must meet the special needs requirements (*see Appendix A*).

Amount of Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses:

The adoptive family is able to receive reimbursement of up to \$2,000 per child for adoption related expenses. The expenses may include the following:

- Adoption Home Study
- Legal fees and court costs
- Transportation, meals and lodging
- Reasonable adoption fees
- Medical exams for adoptive parents
- Expenses related to supervision of adoptive placement

The adoption expenses cannot be covered or reimbursed by other federal funds. The amount of payment shall be determined by a written agreement signed by both the adoptive parents and the custodial agency prior to the finalization of the adoption.

Application for Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses:

To apply for non-recurring adoption expenses, the adoptive parents must fill out JFS 01431 "Application for Reimbursement of Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses". The adoption worker from the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. Application and agreement of reimbursement must be processed prior to the finalization of the adoption.

Appeal Process for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance:

The adoptive parents have a right to a state hearing before the ODHS if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. For

a complete explanation of the state hearing process, refer to JFS Form 04059 : Explanation of State Hearing Procedures”.

### **State Adoption Subsidy Program**

Purpose of State Adoption Subsidy Program:

The State Adoption Subsidy Program is a financial assistance program whose purpose is to make permanent homes possible for children with special needs. Through maintenance subsidy payments and special service subsidy payments, the State Adoption Subsidy Program is intended to:

- Assist adoptive parents who are qualified and wish to adopt a special needs child, but the needs of the child are beyond the economic ability and resources of the adoptive parents;
- Providing funding for services to meet the special needs of the child at the time of adoptive placement and any future needs that may be anticipated; and
- Support and sustain the adoptive placement after finalization of the adoption.

### **State Maintenance Subsidy**

The State Maintenance Subsidy a state adoption assistance program whose purpose is to make permanent homes possible for children with special needs (see Appendix A), but who do not meet the IV-E requirements for federal assistance A child cannot be both IV-E and State Maintenance eligible.

State Maintenance provides:

- A monthly stipend of up to \$250 for support of the child until the age of 18 (21 if the child is a full time student or has a mental or physical handicap)
- Medicaid coverage if the child has special need for medical or rehabilitative care.

Eligibility for State Maintenance Subsidy:

The child must meet the definition of Special needs (see Appendix A) and must be in the permanent custody of a public or private agency. However, foreign adoptions may be eligible for this subsidy. The adoptive family's eligibility shall be based on their annual gross income. To determine eligibility, the custodial agency will use the JFS income chart, which is updated annually by the department.

#### Application for State Maintenance Subsidy:

To apply for State Maintenance Subsidy, the adoptive parents must fill out JFS Form 01613 "Application for Subsidized Adoption". The adoption worker from the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. The subsidy may begin at placement if the child is found eligible. The application must be completed and amount negotiated prior to the finalization of the adoption.

#### Appeal Process for State Maintenance Subsidy:

The adoptive parents have a right to a county hearing if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. All appeals should be sent to the Administrator/Executive Director of the custodial agency, unless otherwise directed by agency policy.

### **Special Service Subsidy**

Special Services Subsidy is a state adoption assistance program whose purpose is to make permanent homes possible for children with special needs (see Appendix A).

#### Special Services Subsidy provides:

- Payment for a range of medical, psychological, rehabilitative and support services for the child until the age of 18 (21 if the child is a full time student or has a mental or physical handicap);
- Medicaid coverage if the child has special need for medical or rehabilitative care.

#### Eligibility for Special Services Subsidy:

The child must meet the definition of Special needs (see Appendix A) and must be in the permanent custody of a public or private agency. However, foreign adoptions may be eligible for this subsidy.

The Special Service Subsidy may be combined with IV-E Adoption Assistance or with the State Maintenance Subsidy.

The subsidy may be used if health insurance, Medicaid or other programs are not available to cover the services.

The family's statement that they could not adopt the child because of their financial circumstances and the child's special needs without financial subsidy will allow the family to apply for Special Services Subsidy. However, the family's gross income may be taken into consideration when determining the type of expense that is covered by the agency and the amount of subsidy.

Application for Special Services Subsidy:

To apply for Special Services Subsidy, the adoptive parents must fill out JFS Form 01613 "Application for Subsidized Adoption". The adoption worker from the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. The subsidy may begin at placement if the child is found eligible. The application must be completed and amount negotiated prior to the finalization of the adoption.

Amount of Special Services Subsidy:

The amount of the Special Services Subsidy is a mutually agreed upon amount between the adoptive parents and the custodial agency. This amount is based upon the needs of the child and the circumstances of the adoptive parents and should be negotiated.

Appeal Process for Special Services Subsidy:

The adoptive parents have a right to a county hearing if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. All appeals should be sent to the Administrator/Executive Director of the custodial agency, unless otherwise directed by agency policy.

### **Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS Program)**

The PASSS Program was designed to give adoptive parents additional funds to help their adoptive child reach the goals they have set. This program is to be used as a last resort when all personal funds have been exhausted. Adoptive parents can apply for the PASSS program within the county that they reside.

## **APPENDIX A**

**Definition of Special Needs:** Special needs include children who fall into the following categories: (1) Child over the age of six; (2) Child who is a member of a minority or ethnic group; (3) Any sibling group that should be placed together; (4) Child who has remained in the permanent custody of an agency for more than one (1) year; (5) Child that has a medical condition, physical impairment, mental retardation or developmental disability; (6) Child that has an emotional disturbance or behavioral problem; (7) Child that has a social or medical history or background or the child's biological family has a social or medical history which may place the child at risk of acquiring a medical condition, a physical, mental or developmental disability or an emotional disorder; (8) Child that has been in the home of his/her prospective adoptive parents as a foster child for at least one (1) year and would experience separation and loss if placed in another setting due to his/her significant emotional ties with these foster parents as determined and documented by a qualified mental health professional; or (9) Child who has experienced previous adoption disruption or multiple placements.

**Agency Review of Adoptive Applicant's Complaints and Requests for Review.** In addition to the terms set forth in Children's Hope International's Agency Policies and Procedures – Section 1 (Ethical Practice, Rights and Responsibilities; Client Grievances), Children's Hope International's Ohio Branch receive complaints and/or requests for review from adoptive applicants, prospective adoptive families and adoptive families in the following manner:

- (1) The agency review shall include a fact-to-face meeting with the individual(s) requesting an agency review, the adoptive family caseworker, and the Director or his/her designee;
- (2) A written decision by the Director or his/her designee will be sent within fifteen (15) days of the above meeting. The written decision shall include the reason for the decision, based on evidence presented at the review and will be sent to all parties to the agency review.
- (3) All documentation concerning the review, including notification regarding rights to the agency review and written decisions of the agency review, will be maintained in the adoptive family's case file.
- (4) If an approved adoptive family requests a review on the basis that an adoptive placement was or will be denied solely on geographic location, Children's Hope will provide the family with notices and copies of materials related to the availability and requesting of a state hearing.
- (5) For complaints involving alleged discriminatory acts, policies or practices in the adoption process that involve race, color or national origin (RCNO), the procedures contained in Rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code supersede the requirements of this Policy.
- (6) CHI shall follow procedures as outlined in rule [5101:2-33-13](#) (also outlined in Section 3 of these Policies) of the Administrative Code when CHI determines there may knowingly be falsification on an adoptive application or home study.

**Procedure for Complaints of Alleged Discriminatory Acts.** Children's Hope International shall handle complaints and/or requests for review involving alleged discriminatory acts, policies or practices in the adoption process that involve race, color or national origin (RCNO), in the following manner:

- A. Provide written notice of the procedure for any complaints of discrimination in the adoption process that involve RCNO to all individuals inquiring about or applying to be an adoptive parent. Such notice shall be provided within seven (7) days of the individual's first contact with this agency.
- B. Any individual may file a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the adoption process of this agency.
- C. Any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of Children's Hope or a member of a family which has sought to become an adoptive parent, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way by Children's Hope because he or she has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that Children's Hope engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the adoption process.

- D. The individual filing a complaint shall use the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form" and shall be filed within two (2) years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two (2) years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy or practice. The complaint may be filed with any PCSA, PCPA or PNA; or the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services.
- E. When any complaint alleging discrimination involving RCNO in the adoption process is received by Children's Hope:
  - a. Children's Hope shall forward the complaint to ODJFS within three (3) working days of date of receipt of the complaint.
  - b. Children's Hope, if the subject of the complaint, shall not initiate, conduct or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS.
  - c. Children's Hope, if the subject of the complaint, shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and shall submit any information requested by ODJFS not later than fourteen (14) days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- F. No person who has filed a complaint alleging a discriminatory act , policy or practice involving RCNO in the adoption process with Children's Hope or who has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in the investigation of a complaint shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or retaliated against by any employee or contractor of Children's Hope.
- G. Children's Hope shall provide a written notice of the procedures for any complaints of discrimination in the adoption process that involve RCNO within thirty (30) days of the effective date to all individuals who have approved adoptive Home Studies or who are participating in the adoptive Home Study process on the effective date of this rule.

**Standards of Conduct Regarding MEPA and TITLE VI.** These Standards of conduct govern the performance of CHI employees or contractors, as that performance related to compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b) (hereinafter "MEPA") and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq, as they apply to the adoption process (hereinafter "Title VI"). As such, the following Standards apply:

- A. Children's Hope International prohibits denying any person the opportunity to become an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person or of the child involved. Children's Hope also prohibits delaying or denying any placement if a child for adoption on the basis of race, color or national origin of the adoptive parents or of the child involved.

- B. Children's Hope shall not require an ongoing adoption worker to justify a proposed transracial adoption/placement due to the reason that the child's race, color or national origin is different than that of the family whom the worker is proposing as the child's adoptive parent.
- C. CHI ensures that all Agency Policies and Procedures, including recruitment activities and materials, shall be in compliance with 42 U.S.C. 671(a), the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997", Pub. L. No. 105-89 5101:2-48-05(A)(7) (hereinafter "ASFA"), the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901 *et seq.* (hereinafter ICWA), The Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b), (hereinafter "MEPA"), and Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, *et seq.*, as they apply to the adoption process (hereinafter "Title VI"), do not supersede the provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.
- D. Whenever an Children's Hope employee or contractor engages in discriminatory acts, policies or practices involving race, color or national origin in the adoption process, (as determined by ODJFS upon completion of the investigation conducted pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code), policy enforcement requirements will be utilized. In accordance with applicable employment laws and union contracts, these sanctions/disciplinary actions may include but shall not be limited to:
  - 1. Leave with or without pay;
  - 2. Suspension for a variable or fixed period;
  - 3. Demotion to position with lower compensation and/or authority;
  - 4. Reprimand; and/or
  - 5. Removal/Termination of contract.
- E. If an ODJFS investigation conducted pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code results in a finding that a CHI employee or contractor engaged in discriminatory acts, policies or practices, Children's Hope shall submit a corrective action plan which will address how CHI will prevent future violations by that employee or contractor. Such corrective action plan shall be submitted to ODJFS within thirty (30) days of notification of the findings of the investigation.
- F. Children's Hope shall provide a copy of these written Standards of Conduct to each employee or contractor who is engaged in the placement of children for adoption, or engaged in recruitment, assessment, approval or selection of an adoptive parent.
- G. Children's Hope shall provide a copy of these written Standards of Conduct to each new employee or contractor who is engaged in the placement of children for adoption, or engaged in recruitment, assessment, approval or selection of an adoptive parent within thirty days of their hire date or the effective date of their contract.
- H. See Exhibit "B", which includes Form JFS 01611 "Non-Discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoption", identifying permissible and prohibited acts under MEPA and Title VI.

**Administrative Standards Regarding MEPA.** Where applicable, CHI shall refer all cases in which race, color, or national origin (RCNO) may be a factor in the placement decision to a child's custodial agency for assessment pursuant to rules 5101:2-42-18.1 and 5101:2-48-13 of the Administrative Code.

CHI will complete the JFS 01668 "MEPA Biennial Comprehensive Self-Assessment Report" (rev. 01/2005) and submit it to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) by March first of every even numbered year. The review period shall be the two calendar years prior to the report due date.

## EXHIBIT "A"

### Home Study / Post Adoption Report Fee Schedule

#### HOME STUDY FEES

##### **HOME STUDY FEE SCHEDULE:**

**\$200.00 upon Application (non-refundable)**  
**\$600.00 upon registration and agreement to begin Home Study (non-refundable once services have been rendered)**  
**\$700.00 upon completion of Home Study (non-refundable)**  
**\$1500.00 Total Home Study if CHI is the child placing agency**

- The fee for an UPDATE of a home study previously completed by CHI is \$500.
- The fee for an addendum to a home study where a home visit is required is \$250
- The fee for an UPDATE if original was conducted by CHI but you are going through a different Agency for placement, is \$750.
- The fee for a home study UPDATE if original was not conducted by CHI, but you now wish to go through CHI, is \$900.
- The fee for families receiving a home study, but not using CHI as the placement agency is \$1700\*\*.

**Additional fees:** Travel reimbursement is at the current rate set by the IRS for mileage over 60 miles one way. Social Worker will submit statement for exact travel reimbursement fee.

*\*\* Please see Agency Policy and Procedures, Section 2, Home Study and Post Adoption ONLY Families*

#### POST ADOPTION REPORT FEES

##### **POST ADOPTION REPORT FEE SCHEDULE:**

\$200.00 per report, PAID IN FULL UPON COMPLETION OF HOME STUDY  
\$250.00 per report if using another child-placing agency

Your exact fee is determined by the number of reports required by the country you are adopting from.

**Additional fees:** Travel reimbursement will be the current IRS standards per mile for mileage over 60 miles one way. Social worker will submit statement for exact travel reimbursement fee.

##### ***Post Adoption Report Retainer Fee\****

Total Fee if Adopting From China, Colombia or Vietnam: \$600.00 (This fee is due **upon completion of Home Study**)

Total Fee if Adopting From Russia or Kazakhstan: \$800.00 (This fee is due **upon completion of Home Study**)

\*Please Note: In order to ensure completion of all Post Adoption Reports, we must collect the entire Post Adoption Report Fee upon completion of your home study. If you have questions as to why it is so important for these reports to be completed, please contact Kellie at 877.408.HOPE(4673).

EXHIBIT "B"

JFS 01611 "Non-Discrimination Requirements for  
Foster Care and Adoptive Placements"

<http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/file.asp?id=42848>