

Nightlight® Christian Adoptions

International Adoption Program Description

Tonga Adoptions

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tonga is a beautiful island country nation located in the South Pacific; and is in the same general area as other familiar Island nations such as Fiji, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Our Tonga program is designed for Tongan families living in the U.S. who have a relative or close friend living in Tonga who wishes to place their child with them. The U.S. government has strict regulations in place for children who are adopted from Tonga. In order to meet U.S. regulations, the biological mother of the child being placed for adoption must be unmarried and must show proof she cannot support the child being placed for adoption. Children born to a legally married couple are not eligible to be adopted by U.S. citizen families due to both Tongan law and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). However, if one or both biological parents' area deceased, adoption of the child is possible. There are no age restrictions for adopting families and single parents are also eligible to adopt from Tonga, however, adopting parents must be at least 25 years of age.

Adoptions from Tonga are normally completed in a timely manner. The timeline from beginning of the process until the adoption is completed is approximately 9 to 12 months, but could last longer. Travel to Tonga is required for the adoption. One adoptive parent may be required to complete a 6-month residency required before their paperwork can be submitted to the court. This residency requirement may be waived, but there is no guarantee that this will happen. It is better to be prepared for this to be required rather than to expect that this residency requirement will be waived.

It is helpful to read about your country of interest on the U.S. Department of State website on Inter-Country adoptions:

- www.adoption.state.gov
- <http://www.cda.gov.jm/>

CHILDREN AVAILABLE

- Under Tongan law, only illegitimate children under 21 years of age may be adopted. However, according to US regulations, USCIS will not process the adoption of a child if the I-600A has not been submitted prior to the child's 16th birthday. We can only assist families who are planning to adopt children under age 16 and they are able to complete their home study and submit USCIS I-600A prior to the child's 16th birthday.
- **Relinquishment Requirements:** Almost all Tongan adoptions involve direct relinquishments of children by their birth mothers to the adoptive parents, and almost all are arranged either between relatives, by close friends, or through religious institutions.

Please note that in some instances, such direct relinquishments, while appropriate under Tongan law, may complicate the U.S. immigration process. American prospective adoptive parents considering a Tongan adoption in which the child will be directly relinquished should contact U.S. Embassy Suva (Fiji) early in the process to confirm whether the circumstances of their specific case will or will not preclude the child's immigration to the United States.

ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

- **Minimum Residency:** Prospective adoptive parents must reside with the child for at least six months prior to the application for adoption of that child. The Supreme Court occasionally waives the residency requirements in exceptional cases.
- **Age of Adopting Parents:** None.
- **Marriage:** Tongan law permits both single and married foreigners to adopt Tongan children.
- **Minimum Income:** Income should be above Tonga average and prospective adoptive parents should live in a suitable environment. Proof of income will have to be submitted to the adoption authority. **Must meet US standards of 125% over poverty**
- **Other requirements:** Prospective parents must show themselves able to provide adequate emotional and financial support for the child. Under no circumstances are proxy adoptions allowed.

PROCESS

1. Collect all required child documents and provide to Nightlight coordinator (proof of orphan status; parent death certificates or relinquishment of rights; medical evaluation; school and social report)
2. Complete our online application
3. Complete our International Adoption Services Contract & pay the Monitoring and Oversight fee. The Monitoring and Oversight fee is paid to CEAS, the accrediting entity designated by the US Department of State/Office of Children's Issues, the US Central Authority.)
4. Orientation meeting with Nightlight Staff, reviewing the intercountry adoption process through Tonga. Review and return Service Plan.
5. Begin your Home Study with Nightlight or an approved Hague Accredited agency that is identified and approved by Nightlight.
6. Complete your pre-adoption application form to the CDA Child Development Agency, the Adoption Authority for Tonga.
7. Once your Home Study has been completed, Nightlight will review the Home Study and assist you with preparing your I-600A Advance Processing of Orphan Petition for US Immigration <https://www.uscis.gov/i-600a>
8. Tonga Dossier: Nightlight will assist you in putting together the packet of documents required by the Tongan Adoption Authority.
9. Receive approval of the I-600A.
10. Receive official referral from the Tongan Adoption Authority
11. Nightlight Clinical staff will review specific child referral - medical, social, psychological reports with the family, recognizing the child is often well known to the family and the family likely provided the staff member with the referral information.
12. Adopt the child in Tonga
13. Complete I-600 application and submit to USCIS – NBC for review. Nightlight will assist with this process.
14. After the approval of the I-600, the parents will travel to Tonga for the Visa interview with the US Embassy.
15. Complete a minimum of 3 post adoption reports with your Home Study provider once you return home.

TRAVEL & ADOPTION

- Most families make 2 trips for their adoption. The first trip is for the court hearing. The final trip includes the Visa Interview at the US Embassy. Length of the trips can vary. Upon completion of the visa process, your child will be able to travel home with you to the US.

POST ADOPTION

Your adoption will be finalized in Tonga. There is a minimum of 3 post adoption reports required with your social worker after you arrive home. Reports will be due 1 month, 6 months and 12 months after you arrive home with your child.

Once the adoption is finalized, you will also need to file form N600 with USCIS to apply for your child's citizenship. <https://www.uscis.gov/n-600>

COSTS

The program fee for an adoption from Tonga is \$11,450. Your additional costs will include home study, post placement, post adoption shipping reports to Tonga, immigration fees, country attorney, travel, documents or communication. Your out-of-pocket expenses may further be reduced if you receive scholarships, grants or employer-provided adoption benefits. Please see the fee schedule.

For further information please contact, Randy Mitchell at Randy@Nightlight.org call (502) 423-5780



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Getting Started CHECKLIST

1. Fill out Application Documents

- Fill out the Online Application
- Read and Sign the Agreement for International Adoption Services
- Read and Sign the Social Media Policy
- Read and Sign the Complaint Procedure
- Read and Sign the “No Healthy Child Letter”
- Read and Sign the Consent to Release Confidential Information
- Read and sign the Privacy Practices
- Upload your family photo
- Pay the application fee

**Please Note: Keep the Complaint form for your records; you may want to make a copy of the Policy & Procedure to also keep for your records.*

2. Complete your Orientation

Once we review and accept your Application materials, we will send you an acceptance letter via e-mail. Shortly after that you will receive an invoice for the orientation phase and then begin your orientation with your adoption advisor.

3. Obtain a Home Study

- **If you live in Nightlight’s licensed area**, we will perform your home study. Once your application is approved, your adoption advisor will notify you how to get started on your home study with one of our Nightlight offices.
- **If you are out of Nightlight’s licensed area**, we will help you find a local agency.

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

ATTACHMENT A
NIGHTLIGHT® CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS
INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS – FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS
Tonga Adoption Fees

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Application Fee		\$600	<i>Due with application</i>
Nightlight Program Fee #1		\$2,500	<i>Due upon application acceptance</i>
Nightlight Program Fee #2		\$2,800	<i>Due upon completion of the Orientation Call</i>
Nightlight Program Fee #3		\$3,550	<i>Due prior to dossier submission to the country</i>
Nightlight Program Fee	\$3,400		
Foreign Fee	\$150		<i>Court and Administrative fees</i>
Nightlight Program Fee #4		\$2,000	<i>Due upon receipt of referral</i>
Total Program Fee		\$11,450	
OTHER COSTS (ESTIMATED)	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
U.S.-Based Fees		\$6,595 - \$13,515	
<i>Monitoring and Oversight fee charged by accrediting entity. Per child.</i>	\$850		<i>Due upon signing the Agreement for International Services \$850 for each additional child</i>
<i>Home Study</i>	<i>\$1,500 - \$3,000</i>		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>Post Adoption Reports</i>	<i>\$1,050 - \$2,000</i>		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>Processing/Shipping and/or translating of Post adoption reports</i>	<i>\$150</i>		<i>Costs vary based on number of children adopted and number of reports required by the foreign country. Due at referral phase.</i>
<i>Home study supporting documents</i>	<i>\$225</i>		<i>Cost for criminal clearances, obtaining physicals, and other misc. expenses</i>
<i>Parent Education Training</i>	<i>\$100 - \$300</i>		<i>Estimated costs of in person and online education courses</i>
<i>Home Study Review Fee</i>	<i>\$300</i>		<i>Review of Home Study prepared by an agency other than Nightlight.</i>
<i>Home Study/USCIS update shipping and Translation fees</i>	<i>\$0</i>		<i>Paid to Nightlight when applicable</i>
<i>Psychological Evaluation/2 parents</i>	<i>\$0 - \$500</i>		<i>Some countries will require this and some will not. In addition your home study agency or Nightlight may require in certain circumstances.</i>
<i>USCIS Filing Fees</i>	<i>\$920</i>		<i>Includes I-600A application & biometrics for all family members</i>
<i>Dossier Apostille/Authentication & courier fees</i>	<i>\$0</i>		<i>Dossier will be apostilled through the secretary of state. Costs vary by state.</i>
<i>Shipping/translation of dossier</i>	<i>\$0</i>		<i>Paid to Nightlight when applicable</i>
<i>Medical Review of Referral</i>	<i>\$0 - \$300</i>		<i>Some physicians do not charge</i>
<i>Adoption Finalization</i>	<i>\$1,500 - \$3,000</i>		<i>Costs vary by state/attorney</i>
<i>Certificate of Citizenship</i>	<i>\$0 - \$1,170</i>		<i>Applies to families in guardianship countries where the child has come home on an IR4 VISA.</i>
<i>Dossier prep/state certification for families</i>	<i>\$0-\$800</i>		<i>NCA offers dossier prep where our staff will gather the dossier documents and send off to the secretary of state for you. \$800 for entire dossier or \$50 per document. These fees do not include shipping or the apostille costs.</i>
Other In-Country Adoption Costs		\$10,275 - \$10,675	
<i>Airfare (2 adults)</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>		
<i>Airfare to Fiji for consulate appointment</i>	<i>\$350-\$400 pp</i>		
<i>Airfare for child (one way)</i>	<i>\$400-\$600</i>		<i>Depends on the child's age.</i>
<i>In Country Travel and Accommodations</i>	<i>\$2,100</i>		<i>\$150 per day</i>
<i>Medical exam, immunization costs, TB screening, birth certificate, passport, etc.</i>	<i>\$100-\$250</i>		
<i>Child's visa</i>	<i>\$325</i>		<i>Depends on child's age</i>
Total Other Costs (Est.)		\$16,870 - \$24,190	
TOTAL FEES & ESTIMATED EXPENSES			
GRAND TOTAL		\$28,320 - \$35,640	

The cost of operating an international adoption program is substantial and increasing with the additional compliance requirements under the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption. The nature of international adoption makes it impossible to predict the exact costs you will incur, but we believe the estimates above are realistic. Although we strive to maintain a predictable fee schedule, unexpected increase in our costs may necessitate an increase in fees. Therefore, fees may be increased upon 90 day notice. Program fees are paid in phases and are non-refundable. Nightlight establishes a budget for costs each year based on the number of adoptions it estimates completing, as well as revenue from grants and donations. Based on these estimates, we establish program fees to cover the costs of attorneys, facilitators, social workers, insurance, and other costs we incur. Of course it would be prohibitive to allocate all of the costs (payroll, rent, insurance, supplies, travel, etc) to one adoption in one program.

Please initial that you have received a copy of this List of Fees and Estimated Costs.

Date: _____ **Adopting Parents:** _____

Attachment B
 Nightlight Christian Adoptions
 INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS – FEES AND ESTIMATED COSTS
 Tonga

SERVICES CATEGORIZED PER HAGUE REQUIREMENTS	Tonga
Home Study (including estimated out of pocket costs)	\$1,725 - \$3,225
Adoption expenses in the US (includes personnel costs, administrative overhead, operational costs, training and education, communications and publications costs and other costs associated with providing adoption services in the US)	\$11,300
Foreign country program expenses (includes personnel costs, administrative overhead, operational costs, training and education, communications and publications costs and other costs associated with providing adoption services in the child's international country)	\$150
Care of the child (the expected total fees and estimated expenses charged to PAP's for the care of the child in the country of origin prior to adoption, including, but not limited to costs for food, clothing, shelter, medical care, foster care, orphanage care and other services provided DIRECTLY to the child.	\$0
Translation and Document Expenses: the expected total fees and estimated expenses for obtaining any necessary documents, translation of documents related to the adoption and information on whether the PAP's will pay costs directly or to a 3rd party either in the US or international country or through the agency. Category includes but is not limited to, costs for obtaining, translating, copying records or documents required to complete the adoption, costs for Convention court documents, passport, adoption certificate and other documents related to the adoption, costs for notarization and certifications.	\$0
Contributions: any fixed contribution amount or percentage that the PAP expected or required to make to child protection or child welfare service programs in the Child's international country or in the US along with an explanation of the intended use of the contribution and the manner in which the transaction will be recorded and accounted for.	\$0
Post placement (PP) and post adoption (PA) reports: the expected total fees and estimated expenses for any PP or PA reports that the agency or parents must prepare to comply with requirements of the expected country of origin (and NCA requirements)	\$1,200 - \$2,150
Travel/Accommodation Expenses: Estimated 2 Adults, 1 child: includes hotel, food, fuel, and airfare estimates.	\$9,850 - \$10,100
Third Party Expenses: includes USCIS fees, parent visas for travel, courier services, in country guide, and child medical or visa costs if paid directly by the family rather than through Nightlight.	\$2,195 - \$3,000

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

Date: _____ **Adopting Parents:** _____