

# Nightlight® Christian Adoptions International Adoption Program Description

## Albania



### GENERAL INFORMATION

Albania, on Southeastern Europe's Balkan Peninsula, is a small country with coastlines on the Adriatic and Ionian seas and an interior crossed by the Albanian Alps. Along its southern coast, the Albanian Riviera is known for its traditional Mediterranean villages, beach resorts and vibrant nightlife. With history stretching back to antiquity, Albania is also rich in castles and archaeological sites. The capital is Tirana. Albania is party to The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention). Therefore, all intercountry adoptions between Albania and the United States must meet the requirements of the Convention and U.S. law implementing the Convention.

Albanian adoptions are conducted through a collaborative effort of a Hague accredited adoption agency in the US and by the Albanian Central Adoption Authority (Albanian Adoption Committee/Ministry of Justice).

The following websites are a useful place to start for reading more about Albania adoption and the country:

- <http://travel.state.gov/content/adoptionsabroad/en/country-information/learn-about-a-country/albania.html> U.S. State Department page about Albania adoption
- <http://www.albania.al/> Albania Tourism

### CHILDREN AVAILABLE

- Both boys and girls are available for adoption.
- Children as young as 2 years and as old as fifteen are available for adoption. (wait time for a referral of a child under 4 years old can be up to 3 years.)
- Sibling groups are available.
- Children with Special Needs are available for adoption.

### ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

Applicants must be at least 18 years older than the child they are adopting. Both married couples and single women may adopt from Albania. Applicants must be in good health, own a home, and must have a positive net worth. Albania will not accept applicants with a criminal history, history of drug/alcohol abuse, or a history of pornography. Albania is reluctant to accept families with significant medical, psychological, psychiatric conditions. Families with Albanian heritage who meet Albania's adoption requirements may experience shorter wait times for referrals.

### PROCESS

1. Make application to Nightlight Christian Adoptions.
2. Begin your **adoption home study** and submit **form I-800A** to CIS.
3. Begin to assemble your **dossier**. We will give you detailed instructions.
4. Once USCIS has approved your adoption home study, you will receive your **I-797C pre-approval notice**.
5. Once your USCIS approval has been received your dossier is complete, you will be registered to adopt in Albania.
6. The Albanian Central Authority will add you to a list of waiting families and it can take 18 to 24 months to receive a referral.
7. Complete official referral review with Nightlight's Social Services Department
8. Upon referral acceptance, Nightlight will begin processing the family's I-800.
9. You will then travel to Albania for your first court date and to meet and bond with your child (a minimum of 2 weeks for bonding).
10. At your first court hearing, you will be given a date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing. It is typically a month or more after the 1<sup>st</sup> court date.
11. After your 1<sup>st</sup> court hearing, you and your child will meet with a psychologist who will write a report for the court.
12. The adoption is granted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> court hearing and then you must wait 29 business days to receive the court decree.
13. Once you have received the court decree, the attorney will obtain a new birth certificate and passport for your child.
14. The final step is to obtain the US visa for your child and returning home. Most families will remain in Albania for a minimum of 60 days for the adoption process to be completed. However, some families may choose to make 2 or 3 trips to Albania depending upon the timing of court hearings.

15. The children reside in orphanages while awaiting adoption.
16. Albania adoptions can take on average from 24 to 48 months to complete.

### **TRAVEL & ADOPTION**

You receive a referral of a child from Nightlight Christian Adoptions through the Albanian Adoption Committee. The referral will include a brief social history of the child, and the current health and development of the child. We highly recommend that you have this information reviewed by a doctor who specializes in international adoption before you make a decision. Once you decide to accept a referral, you will be considered “matched” with the child. You will then wait for an invitation to travel to Albania for court. Most families invited to travel receive very short notice, at times only a few days’ advance notice is given. When you are invited to travel, you will know the date of your first court hearing. Your court date may be 3 weeks out from your invitation, but because you must spend two weeks bonding with your child prior to court, this creates very short notice for you to travel. Once you travel to Albania, you will remain in Albania a minimum of 60 days to process the adoption or you may choose to make 2 or 3 trips depending on the timing of your scheduled court dates. The first 2 weeks are spent bonding with your child. During these two weeks you will visit the orphanage daily. After 2 weeks, you will attend your first court date. At the first court date, you will be given a 2<sup>nd</sup> court date. This could be just a few days or a few weeks apart. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing, you and your child will meet with a psychologist and the psychologist will write a report to the court. It is at your 2<sup>nd</sup> court hearing that the adoption is granted, but you must wait 29 business days before the written decree will be issued. Once you receive the court decree, the attorney will obtain a new birth certificate and passport and begin the visa process. Both parents do not have to remain in Albania the entire time. Both parents must attend the initial two week bonding period and the court hearing.

### **POST ADOPTION**

Within 30 days of your arrival home, you must have a home visit by your home study provider. Your home study provider will prepare post-adoption reports and submit them to Nightlight at 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, and 24 months after the adoption is finalized. These reports include your child’s developmental progress and pictures. This is a very serious commitment; Nightlight is committed to showing the Albanian Adoption Committee and birth families that children adopted by US citizens are healthy and well cared for.

Compliance with post adoption reports is also required by The Hague Convention. Therefore, Nightlight charges a fee to monitor and process these post placement reports and also requires families to pay for the cost of the post placement report in advance.

### **COSTS**

The program fee for an Albania adoption is \$15,500. Your additional costs will include home study, USCIS approval, notary & apostille fees, airfare, hotel, in country guide, and embassy fees as shown on the fee schedule. Your out-of-pocket expenses may further be reduced if you receive scholarships, grants or employer-provided adoption benefits. For additional fee information please see Exhibit A.

Please contact Lisa Whitaker at [Lisaw@nightlight.org](mailto:Lisaw@nightlight.org), or call our KY office at (859-263-9964) with any questions.





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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](mailto:info@nightlight.org).

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

**Albania**

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
<b>Application Phase</b>		\$500	<i>Due with application</i>
<b>Monitoring and Oversight fee charged by accrediting entity. Per child</b>		\$500	<i>Due upon signing the Agreement for International Services</i>
<b>Orientation phase</b>		\$2,000	<i>Due upon receiving a Letter of Acceptance from Nightlight</i>
<b>Dossier Phase</b>		\$5,000	
<i>Nightlight Program Fee</i>	\$3,000		
<i>Foreign Fee #1</i>	\$2,000		
<b>Referral Phase</b>		\$4,500	
<i>Nightlight Program Fee</i>	\$3,000		<i>Fee for adoption 2<sup>nd</sup> child is \$3,500, 3<sup>rd</sup> child \$2,500</i>
<i>Foreign Fee #2</i>	\$1,500		
<b>Travel Phase</b>		\$3,000	<i>Paid before travel to Albania</i>
<i>Nightlight program fee</i>	\$2,000		
<i>Foreign Fee #3</i>	\$1,000		<i>Albanian Adoption committee fee (\$1,000 per child)</i>
<b>Total Program Fee</b>		<b>\$15,500</b>	
OTHER COSTS (ESTIMATED)	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
<b>U.S.-Based Fees</b>		\$6,790 – \$9,590	
<i>Home Study</i>	\$1,500-\$2,500		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>Post Adoption Reports</i>	\$1,200-\$1,600		<i>Costs vary by state/agency</i>
<i>Shipping and/or translating of post adoption reports</i>	\$600 - \$800		<i>Costs may vary based on the number of children you are adopting, due at referral phase</i>
<i>Home study supporting documents</i>	\$225		<i>Cost for criminal clearances, obtaining physicals, and other misc. expenses</i>
<i>Parent Education/Training</i>	\$100-\$300		<i>Estimated cost of online education courses</i>
<i>Home Study Review Fee</i>	\$300		<i>Review of home study prepared by an agency other than Nightlight</i>
<i>USCIS Fees</i>	\$865		<i>Includes I-800A application &amp; biometrics for 2 adults</i>
<i>Dossier Authentication Expenses and Misc. Translation Costs</i>	\$2,000-\$3,000		<i>The dossier expenses are typically \$2,500. After your documents are authenticated at the county and state level, Nightlight will send it to Albania. This deposit will cover courier expenses. The dossier will then need to be translated in Albania and authenticated in Albania.</i>
<b>Other In-Country Adoption Costs</b>		\$15,385 – \$25,485	<i>Estimates are for 2 people and 1 trip</i>
<i>Airfare (2 adults)</i>	\$2,500-\$3,500		
<i>Attorney</i>	\$1,000-\$2,000		<i>Attorney to represent your family in court</i>
<i>Airfare for child (one way)</i>	\$400-\$2,000		<i>Depends on the child's age.</i>
<i>In Country Travel and Accommodations</i>	\$9,000-\$14,000		<i>Estimated for 60 days in country</i>
<i>Medical exam, immunization costs, TB screening, birth certificate, passport, etc.</i>	\$160		
<i>Interpreter/guide fees</i>	\$1,000-\$2,000		<i>Estimated for 2 weeks and/or official meetings you may want the guide to attend. (\$50 per day)</i>
<i>Certified court interpreter</i>	\$1,000-\$1,500		
<i>Child's visa</i>	\$325		
<b>Total Other Costs (Est.)</b>		<b>\$22,175 – \$35,075</b>	
<b>TOTAL FEES &amp; ESTIMATED EXPENSES</b>			
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>\$37,675 – \$50,575</b>	

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.

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

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

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

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

**Albania**

<b>SERVICES CATEGORIZED PER HAUGE REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>Albania</b>
Home Study (including estimated out of pocket costs)	\$1,500 – 2,700
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)	\$11,000
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 convention country)	\$3,500
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 Convention 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.	\$2,000-3,000
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 convention 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. <b>Fee is provided to the Albanian Adoption Authority</b>	\$1,000
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)	\$1,800 – 2,400
Travel/Accommodation Expenses: Estimated 2 Adults, 1 child: includes hotel, food, fuel, and airfare estimates.	\$11,900 – 19,500
Third Party Expenses: includes USCIS fees, courier services, and in country guide, child medical or visa costs if paid directly by the family rather than through Nightlight.	\$3,350 – 6,850

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