International Adoption Program Description

Dominican Republic

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dominican Republic is a small Caribbean country home to approximately 10 million people, most well-known for its tourism and home to Christopher Columbus's New World landing in 1492. Dominican Republic's land contains many forests, swamps, beaches, and savannas. Once ruled by Spain, Dominican Republic achieved independence in 1884. While considered one of the most beautiful islands of the Caribbean, poverty is still an issue in the rural areas outside the areas of tourism. The capitol is Santo Domingo. Dominican Republic 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 Dominican Republic and the United States must meet the requirements of the Convention and U.S. law implementing the Convention. Hague countries have additional safeguards to ensure ethical adoptions and tend to be more stable and predictable in processing adoptions.

All adoptions in Dominican Republic are completed through a collaborative effort between an adoption service provider approved by the Dominican Central Authority, Consejo Nacional para la Niñez y la Adolescencia (or CONANI), who handles international adoptions and orphan care in the Dominican Republic.

The following websites are a useful place to start for reading more about Dominican Republic adoption and the country in general:

-U.S. State Department page about Dominican Republic Adoption: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/Intercountry-Adoption/Intercountry-Adoption-Country-Information/DominicanRepublic.html
-Dominican Republic Tourism: https://www.godominicanrepublic.com/

CHILDREN AVAILABLE

- Both boys and girls are available for adoption; gender preference may be specified.
- Available children range in age from around 1.5 to 15 years.
- Sibling groups are available in the Dominican Republic.
- Children are of Hispanic, Haitian, and bi-racial descent.
- Children with special needs, including those with known needs ranging from correctable to severe, are available for adoption, including older children, some with and some without correctable to severe special needs (6 and older).

ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

Couples who have been married five years or more can adopt from The Dominican Republic. Both parents must be a minimum of 30 years old and neither spouse may be older than 60 years old. Adoptive parents must also be at least 15 years older than the adopted child.

PROCESS

1. Submit your application to Nightlight Christian Adoptions.
2. Begin your **adoption home study** and submit **form I-800A** to USCIS.
3. Begin to assemble your **dossier**. We will give you detailed instructions.
4. Once USCIS has approved you to adopt from Dominican Republic, you will receive your **I-797C approval notice**.
5. Once your USCIS approval has been received your dossier is translated, registered in Dominican Republic.

6. You will be added to the list of waiting families and it can take 18-24 months to receive a match from the central authority.
7. Complete official referral review with Nightlight's Social Services Department
8. Upon referral acceptance, Nightlight will begin assisting you with processing of your I-800.
9. Upon provisional approval of your I-800, Your file is submitted to the U.S. Embassy in Dominican Republic and the Article 5 letter is issued.
10. Your legal adoption process is completed in Dominican Republic.
11. You will then travel to Dominican Republic for a period of 1-2 months to meet your child and complete a cohabitation period to begin the finalization process.
12. The final step is to obtain the US visa for your child, obtain exit approval, meet with the central authority and judge, then return home with your adopted child.
13. The children reside in orphanages while awaiting adoption.
14. Dominican Republic adoptions will take approximately 4-6 months to be finalized after a referral is accepted.

TRAVEL & ADOPTION

After being matched with a child, the adoptive parents are required to take at least one trip to Dominican Republic. The trip is a required 60 days' cohabitation period for the adoption of a child younger than the age of 12, and 30 days for a child over 12. However, this can be waived in special circumstances. When traveling, the adoptive parents are united with their child and attend multiple appointments, including a hearing with a judge. These appointments allow a child to exit the country and return to the U.S. with their new family. Total travel time is 60-90 days.

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 and 12 months from the date of placement and then annually from the date of placement for the next 5 years after placement, with at least ten printed photos to include pictures of the whole family and pictures of the child alone. Reports must be notarized and apostilled. These reports will include your child's developmental progress and pictures. This is a very serious commitment; Nightlight is committed to showing the Dominican Republic's government 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 a Dominican Republic adoption is $21,000. Additional third party expenses may apply, see attached fee sheet for details. Out-of-pocket expenses may be reduced if you receive adoption grants, scholarships or other employer-provided adoption benefits. For additional fee information, please see Exhibit A.

Please contact Lexis Knight at lexis.knight@nightlight.org or call 317-875-0058 with any questions.

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

Dominican Republic

PROGRAM FEE	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
Application Phase		$500	*Due with application*
Monitoring and Oversight fee charged by accrediting entity. Per child		$500	*Due upon signing the Agreement for International Services $500 for each additional child*
Orientation Phase		$2,500	*Due upon receiving a Letter of Acceptance from Nightlight*
Dossier Phase		$7,100	*Due upon dossier submission*
Nightlight Program Fee	*$4,000*		
Foreign Fee #1	*$3,100*		
Referral Phase		$5,400	*Due upon acceptance of referral*
Nightlight Program Fee	*$3,000*		
Foreign Fee #2	*$2,400*		*Additional children $1,000 per child, $1,500 each additional child*
Travel Phase		$5,000	*Due upon adoption finalization*
Nightlight Program fee	*$2000*		
Foreign Fee #3	*$3,000*		*Additional child fee $3,280*
Total Program Fee		**$21,000**	

OTHER COSTS (ESTIMATED)	COSTS	TOTALS	NOTES
U.S.-Based Fees		$7,295-$15,930	
Home Study	*$1,500-$2,500*		*Costs vary by state/agency*
Post Adoption Reports	*$1,200-$1,600*		*Costs vary by state/agency*
Processing/Shipping of post adoption reports	*$800-$2,250*		*Cost varies depending on the number of children you are adopting. Due at referral phase.*
Home study supporting documents	*$225*		*Cost for criminal clearances, obtaining physicals, and other misc. expenses*
Parent Education/Training	*$100-$300*		*Estimated cost of online education courses*
Home Study Review Fee	*$300*		*Review of home study prepared by an agency other than Nightlight*
Home Study/USCIS update, shipping and translation fees	*$875-$2,140*		*Paid to Nightlight when applicable*
Psychological Evaluation/2 parents	*$200-$1,000*		*Required via Dominican Republic's dossier*
USCIS Filing Fees	*$945*		*Includes I-800A application filing fee and biometrics for 2 adults*
Dossier Apostille/Authentication/Courier Fees	*$0-$1,050*		*Dossier will be apostilled through the secretary of state. Costs vary by state.*
Shipping of Dossier	*$100-$300*		*Paid to Nightlight when applicable*
Medical Review of Referral	*$0-$200*		*Some physicians do not charge for this service. Other international clinics will charge a fee for this.*
Attorney Fee Re-adoption Fee	*$800-$1,500*		*Dependent on your state of residence. Due after child comes home.*
Translation of Child Dossier	*$250-$450*		*Paid to Nightlight when applicable.*
Certificate of Citizenship	*$0-$1,170*		*Applies to families in guardianship countries, families living abroad, families coming home on an IR4 visa. Not applicable in some countries.*
Other In-Country Adoption Costs		$8,020-$12,070	
Airfare (2 adults)	*$1,900-$3,000*		*Airfare varies depending on time of year travel occurs.*
Airfare for child (one way)	*$300-$750*		*Airfare varies depending on time of year travel occurs and child's age.*
Visas (for 2 Adults)	*$320*		*Estimate does not include courier fees.*
In Country Travel, Accommodations, Meals	*$4,000-$6,000*		*Estimated for 2 adults. 1 trip. Approximately 60-90 days, traveling to Dominican Republic. Airfare varies depending on time of year travel occurs.*
Child documents in country	*$500-$1000*		*Due prior to and while traveling in country*
Child's Visa & Medical	*$1,000*		*Due while in country.*
Total Other Costs (Est.)		**$15,315-$28,000**	

TOTAL FEES & ESTIMATED EXPENSES	
GRAND TOTAL	**$36,315– $49,000**

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

Dominican Republic

SERVICES CATEGORIZED PER HAGUE REQUIREMENTS	Dominican Republic
Home Study (including estimated out of pocket costs)	$1,725-$3,025
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)	$12,500
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)	$8,500
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.	$1,225-$3,940
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.	$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)	$2,000-$3,850
Travel/Accommodation – Estimated 2 Adults, 1 child includes hotel, food, fuel, and airfare estimates.	$5,090-$9,000
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.	$4,165-$6,565

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