



...lighting the way for new beginnings

DOMESTIC ADOPTION PROGRAM



Licensed offices in:

Pensacola, FL

223 West Gregory
Pensacola, FL 32502
(850) 430-4005 (PH) (850) 430-4016 Fax
1-888-987-6300

Baton Rouge, LA

5917 Jones Creek Rd, Suite 100B
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(225) 753-5551 (PH) (225) 753-6866 Fax
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Gulfport, MS: (228) 987-7755 or 1-888-987-6300

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Russian Program: linda@beaconhouseadopt.com
denise@beaconhouseadopt.com

Executive Director anne@beaconhouseadopt.com

HOW TO ADOPT A BEAUTIFUL NEWBORN WITH BEACON HOUSE



GENERAL INFORMATION ON DOMESTIC ADOPTION PROGRAMS

Beacon House has many years of experience with the domestic adoptions of children of all ethnic backgrounds. Requirements and procedures for all the programs are very similar. Placements are made nationwide with the exception of New York State, and this agency has placed in a number of other countries.

Requirements for adopting families: Beacon House utilizes the most flexible criteria for approving adoptive families, within the parameters of each state's law. Beacon House is interested in making an adoptive placement that fits your family and fits the birth mother's wants and needs. Our criterion does not exclude single parents or families with existing children. The main criteria for families are that they be able and willing to provide a loving, nurturing environment for a child, and be the subjects of an approved home study.

Open vs. Closed: The issue of open versus closed adoptions requires some understanding of the vast spectrum of possibilities in this area. This agency does not promote either totally open or totally closed adoptions. Instead, we provide extensive counseling with the parties to the adoptive process to determine their expectations. Throughout the process, various options are discussed and considered to assure that **no** person involved in a particular adoption feels compelled to enter into an arrangement that makes them uncomfortable. It is, however, our policy that confidential information not be exchanged at any time during the process. Those individuals for whom totally open adoption is a choice may enter into any arrangement they wish at the conclusion of the adoption process.

Interstate Placements: Beacon House is very experienced in working with interstate placements. Any time a child is moved across state lines for adoption, approval must be obtained from the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, an office in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the US Virgin Islands. Beacon House is well acquainted with the requirements of the I.C.P.C. and assures that necessary documents are collected prior to the birth. This way, there is a smooth transition of the child from birth mother to agency to adoptive parents. Beacon House does not place children in the state of New York.

Execution of Consents/ Surrenders: The consent that allows Beacon House to place a child with approved adoptive parents is called different things in different states. Regardless of the terminology, it is the timing of the consent/surrender and its revocability that are important. States may have differing procedures and time frames, and depends on several factors including where the child is born and where the biological parents reside. Adoptive parents will be apprised of the appropriate information when considering a match with a birth mother.

Interim Care: In general, a birth mother and infant are discharged from the hospital on the second day after birth. Beacon House utilizes temporary private care from hospital discharge until consent/surrender, at which time adoptive parents are welcome to take physical custody of the infant. If the placement requires Interstate Compact approval, there may be a period of time when the new family needs to remain in the state where the child was born until ICPC approval can be obtained, usually not a long wait.

Beacon House understands that there are a number of agencies that encourage prospective adoptive parents to be present at the delivery of the child. Here at Beacon House we believe that we have obligations to all parties of the adoption triad in equal measure, and based on many years of experience, we have found that it is more usual for a birth mother to need some time in the hospital to obtain closure for her adoption plan. The presence of adoptive parents can disturb a delicate balance of emotions, so this method is not part of our program.

Bonding: Bonding is a process that can begin at any time after a child is united with parent(s), and continues throughout the years of the relationship. Early bonding is important, and can begin as soon as the child is placed in the physical custody of the adopting parents. In Interstate placements, the waiting period for ICPC approval provides the adopting parents with personal, special time with the newborn to begin this process.

Waiting Time: The time frame from application completion, to match, is generally 3-18 months. Naturally, this time can be extended by the requirements of the adoptive family, or the needs of the birth mother. The more flexible you are and the more reasonable your budget, the more likely you are to be placed earlier. This means that you can expect to be matched quickly with a birth mother.

Birth Mother location: Perhaps the single most difficult thing about adopting domestically today is the location of a birth mother who is considering adoption. With the easy availability of birth control and now the “morning after pill”, which can be obtained at local health clinics, the search for a birth mother who is considering adoption is taking longer and is more expensive than ever. It is more important than ever that agencies reach potential birth mothers on a large scale through advertising efforts in many geographic areas.

Beacon House has an aggressive marketing strategy that directly targets birth mothers in a number of areas that have continued to be successful; the agency funds the outreach to birth mothers through classified advertisements, television and radio ads, outdoor advertising (billboards), Yellow page ads in 14-15 states, and internet presence.

Beacon House works with birth mothers in all states, but many choose to relocate to Louisiana, Mississippi, or Florida and are therefore subject to the laws of the state where they relocate. In these states, birth mothers may receive residential assistance, medical, legal, and travel expenses.

BEACON HOUSE DOMESTIC PROGRAMS:

PROGRAM PROCESS: The following process can be followed to make an application to the agency for programs:

A. APPLICATIONS:

1. Preliminary application form, found in this packet, is to be filled out completely and sent in with a non-refundable application fee of \$300.00; this is preliminary, and will be processed by our domestic staff;
2. Receipt and processing of the preliminary application form is followed by receipt of a contract, a disclosure of fees and costs, and an Internet Guidelines agreement, all of which should be executed and returned to Beacon House with the contract fee of \$2,500.00; **this step makes the applicant(s) eligible to be presented to birth mothers.**
3. Once your contract and other documentation have been returned to the agency, Beacon House will establish your file and provide you with a list of documentation needed to complete the file. At the same time, you will be placed in our pool of adopting parents eligible for birth mother match.

**** Please Note:** Based on the information you provide, you will be contacted about every birth mother *that meets your requirements*. *Please note that one of your requirements will be the adoption budget you list on the application*. **SO, with our process, you are considered for situations as soon as we receive your completed contract! There is NO WAITING LIST! Contracts are considered complete upon receipt of executed document and contract fee.**

B. MATCHING

1. Profiles/Dear Birth Mother letters: You will need to provide letters/profiles for presentation to birth mothers. Our domestic staff can assist you in drafting a letter and advise you on how to develop a profile, or we can refer you to professionals who provide this service for you.
2. Match Process: Generally within 3-18 months from the time that you complete the application process, a birthmother situation will arise. In accordance with our **NO WAITING LIST** policy, all families eligible for this placement will be contacted. Available social and medical history will be provided verbally, along with a good faith estimate of the costs involved in the placement.

It is an important decision whether or not to be presented to any particular birth mother for selection. In most cases, this decision will have to be made quickly; once provided with the background information on the situation and estimated costs, there will be limited time for reflection. In addition, to prevent adoptive parents from rejecting a match after a birth mother makes the choice, a good faith deposit may be required to be presented to the birth mother. This deposit will be credited toward the total cost of the placement. Deposits do not exceed \$2,000.00; if not chosen by the birth mother, the deposit is returned.

In the event that adoptive parents are chosen by the birth mother and then the adoptive parents decide they do not wish to proceed, they will forfeit their deposit.

C. POST - MATCH

1. Once matched with a birth mother situation, adoptive parents will be provided a written estimate of costs/expenses with a payment schedule; it will be necessary to work with our domestic office staff to complete documentation required to make the placement during the

next few months. Regular updates will be provided on the birth mother's pre-natal care.

2. At the time of delivery, adoptive parents will be updated on the status of the birth mother after delivery, as well as delivery information on the baby. Depending on the state where the birth took place, the birth mother will execute her adoption consent at the appropriate legal time; the agency will make all the arrangements. After the consent is complete, adoptive parents will be able to accept the placement and take physical custody of the child.
3. In the event that the adoptive family lives in a different state than where the child was born, Interstate Compact must be addressed and the family will need to remain in the state of residence of the child/ birthmother until approved to return home.
4. In most cases, unless discussed with the adoptive family first, finalization arrangements will be made by Beacon House via the attorneys available to the agency.

ADOPTIVE PARENTS OBLIGATIONS

Beacon House Adoption Services, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) organization. This means that the agency is non-profit and able to accept donations for which donors can receive a tax deduction.* As a not-for-profit organization, we rely on contributions and volunteers to assist us in furthering our programs.

As a part of the process of working with Beacon House, adoptive parents are asked to commit to a minimum number of volunteer hours working on various projects for the agency, either during or after their adoption. The minimum requirement is 30 hours per year for a period of three years. Parents do not have to be geographically local to Beacon House to complete this commitment; most projects can be completed using email or telephone. A volunteer commitment letter will be required.

Alternatively, if family circumstances are such that the volunteer commitment cannot be made, there is the option of pledging a minimum contribution to the annual fund or the capital campaign. Information can be provided about this alternative upon request.

*This is a general statement and not intended to guarantee that every contribution will be eligible. Please see your tax advisor for your individual situation.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Beacon House provides additional adoption related services outside of placement programs. Home studies, post placement services and educational training are available separately from placement programs.

SUMMARY: SO WHY ADOPT FROM BEACON HOUSE?

Beacon House has an excellent record of placements of newborns. Since 1989, we have served several thousand families and birth mothers and maintain a high success rate. Birth mothers are provided with extensive in-house counseling by our staff, as well as independent counseling with licensed social workers. This communication with the agency is part of the reason for our success.

Beacon House aggressively markets our services to birth mothers; in addition, many of our past birth mothers refer others to us – they would not think of working with anyone else! Our experienced staff knows just how to respond to the needs, emotional as well as physical of a birth mother.

Beacon House Adoption Services, Inc. is committed to providing the highest quality professional adoption services to our clients. We respect the rights of all parties to the adoption process and attempt to provide an adoption experience that will leave all parties satisfied and with a positive view of adoption. Adoption is

more than just taking on a child. It is taking on a series of issues that involve other people and their feelings and this agency is well aware of the emotional environment of adoption. We believe our agency provides compassionate, straightforward service to all members of the adoption process.

**BEACON HOUSE ADOPTION SERVICES, INC.
COSTS AND FEES: DOMESTIC PROGRAMS**

The following is a list of the fees charged by Beacon House Adoption Services, Inc. for professional services:

APPLICATION FEES:

All Programs

I. Preliminary Application Fee \$ 300.00

PLACEMENT FEES:

Domestic Agency Fee \$ 14,500.00

Includes \$2,500.00 contract fee paid with contract signing

HOMESTUDY AND POST PLACEMENT FEES

I. Home Study \$ 2,000.00

Discount of \$300.00 if applicants proceed with adoption via Beacon House Adoption Services, Inc.

II. Home Study Update \$ 600.00

III. Post Placement \$ 350.00

* All placement fees are as per contract and exclusive of birth mother related costs and expenses including medical care, residential expense, legal fees, independent counseling, foster care, travel, or supervision expense. Good faith estimate provided prior to commitment.

PLEASE NOTE: THE TOTAL COST OF ANY DOMESTIC ADOPTION DEPENDS IN LARGE PART ON THE INDIVIDUAL SITUATION OF THE BIRTH MOTHER AND THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS. **PLACEMENT FEES** ARE ONLY THOSE FEES PAID TO THE AGENCY FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED FROM FIRST CONTACT WITH ADOPTIVE PARENTS THROUGH FINALIZATION OF THE ADOPTION.

THE COST OF ADOPTION

There is no doubt about it – adoption can be an expensive endeavor, and families often wonder how they can afford it. The good news is that there is help out there – in places you may have considered and those you may not! What follows is a suggested list of financial sources for you to consider and try. It is by no means exclusive – use your creativity!

1. **Tax credit:** For 2010/2011, credit is also refundable.
See <http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html> for more information.
2. **Military Adoption Reimbursement Program:** This program allows reimbursement, up to \$2,000.00 per child, for active-duty personnel. There are some restrictions on these funds, such as certain expenses that are not covered, and the requirement that a non-profit agency be used for the adoption. For information, see www.nmfa.org.
3. **Loans:** There are several groups that provide loans specifically for adoption. These include:

The National Adoption Foundation in Danbury, Connecticut (1-800-841-1982), The National Adoption Foundation Credit Card (1-800-932-2775) – see also www.nafadopt.org;

MBNA in Wilmington, Delaware which has a variety of programs including low interest loans, home equity loans, and low interest credit cards;

A Child Waits Foundation (1-914-962-0886), a non-profit foundation in Pittsfield, Massachusetts that provides low interest loans for international adoption – see also www.achildwaits.org ;

Life Song for Orphans www.lifesongfororphans.org
4. **Grants:** Some organizations providing grants for adoption include: The Gift of Adoption Fund in Wisconsin (1-877-905-2367 for information) (1-414-268-1368 for application) – see also www.giftofadoption.org ; National Adoption Foundation in Danbury, Connecticut – www.nafadopt.org ; The National Adoption Center in Philadelphia, which provides a list of corporations that give grants for adoption (1-215-735-9988) -- www.adopt.org ; Love Knows No Borders, send a SASE to 500B Monroe Turnpike, Box 4, Monroe, CT 06468 for an application. All government help pertaining to adoption can be found www.usa.gov/citizen/topics/benefits.shtml; Information regarding grants, loans, fundraising, and other help can be found at www.adoptionfinancinginformation.com

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Toll Free: 1-888-987-6300

DOMESTIC APPLICATION FORM

Date _____

Applicant 1 _____

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Spouse _____

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

Address _____

Email address _____ Home phone _____

	APPLICANT	SPOUSE
Date of current marriage		
Date of birth		
Place of Employment		
Employment address		
Employment phone		
Employment fax		
Occupation		
Annual Income		
Amount in savings		
Social Security No		
Number of divorces		
Last date divorced		
Any medical diagnoses		
Any mental health history use additional pages if necessary		
Medications		
Criminal convictions		
Arrests		
Religious affiliation		
Children: This includes all children in the family, whether or not living in the home, regardless of age, and from all previous marriages		

Do any others live in the home with you? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, describe relationship

Do you currently have a home study _____ completed or _____ in process?

Name of agency _____

Address and phone _____

Caseworker [Name, email address, phone number]

Have you ever been denied approval for a home study? _____ Yes _____ No

Aside from the previous question, have you ever been rejected as an adoptive or foster parent? If yes, please explain, if No, write "N/A" below.

Are you working with any other resource besides BHAS?

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Applicants may not specify gender and/or age of desired child.

The following questions must be answered for your application to be considered complete.

1) Does either applicant have any history of substance abuse as indicated by counseling, treatment, arrest or conviction?

2) Is there any history of mental illness or treatment for mental illness at any time in the past?

3) Is either applicant taking any medication? If so, list medications and the reason it was prescribed

4) Has either applicant completed any pre- adoptive educational training at this time? If so, describe such training, who provided it, how many hours, class/online, etc.

5) Briefly state why you wish to adopt a child domestically.

6) Have you attended any informational seminars on adoption? Where and when?

7) Adoption Budget: _____

By signing this application I/we authorize BHAS to obtain information about me/us from any and all resources listed above and from all adoption agencies or home study agencies that are now or have in the past provided services to me/us. I/We agree that BHAS is authorized to maintain and display my/our information on BHAS premises, and to provide and share confidential information to my/our home study agency.

I/we understand that laws and regulations of the foreign governments and agencies in countries where BHAS maintains programs may change without notice; that adoptions in any country may be delayed, suspended or terminated at any time without notice; and that consequently, I/we may be subject to changing requirements and/or programs for international adoption. I/we agree that a photocopy of this authorization is as valid as the original.

I/we understand that this application is preliminary in nature and as such application does not guarantee acceptance into a particular program; applicants must meet program criteria as provided by the foreign country or the agency.

I/we further state that to the best of our knowledge, information and belief, all of the information contained in this application is true. I/we understand that in the event that we have misrepresented information to BHAS, our adoption process may be terminated immediately and all fees shall be due immediately.

Signature

Please return this form along with:

1. One photograph of the adoptive couple
2. Non-refundable check or money order in the amount of \$300.00

TO:

5917 Jones Creek Rd

Ste 100B

Baton Rouge, LA 70817

Applications not accompanied by the fee will not be returned, nor will they be processed.

CHARITABLE DONATION

TO HELP US KEEP COSTS AND EXPENSES REASONABLE, WE ASK THAT ALL APPLICANTS CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION IN ANY AMOUNT TOWARD THE RISING COST OF ADOPTION.

Beacon House Adoption Services, Inc., a 501©(3) corporation, thanks you for your generous donation in the amount of \$_____. In accordance with the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service relative to tax-exempt entities, this receipt reflects that _____

[Name]

received no goods or services in exchange for this donation and that the amount is fully deductible under the IRS tax Code, subject to the individuals' eligibility for such deductions.

Anne R. Hughes
Executive Director
Beacon House Adoption Services, Inc.

YES! I want to support the efforts of Beacon House to build families. Enclosed please find my tax-deductible donation in the amount of

_____ \$100.00 _____ \$125.00 _____ \$150.00 _____ OTHER

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

DATE