

HOME STUDY GUIDELINES & REVIEW CHECKLIST FOR COOPERATING AGENCIES

VERY IMPORTANT: While the adoption home study preparer is working to complete the study, the family should prioritize completing their Children's Home Society of Minnesota (CH) application materials. A review of the adoption home study draft cannot begin until all application materials have been received by Children's Home.

This guideline outlines the information which must be included in the adoption study for Children's Home programs. You may vary the order of information to meet state regulations as long as each element described below is included in your report. Required language, if applicable, is noted.

Your draft must be submitted along with a completed copy of this checklist by email to HomeStudyReview@chlss.org.

The study will be presented to an Approval Committee to ensure that the family has been adequately prepared and meets the needs of the specific child they were approved to adopt. An official letter of approval will be provided once the home study has been reviewed and any required changes have been made. At that time you will be informed the required number of original signed copies required for submission.

HOME STUDY AGENCY MUST COMPLETE:

Family Name: _____

Worker Name: _____ Worker Email: _____ Phone: _____

Home Study Preparer, please check (✓) to indicate the information is addressed in the home study. Please do not overlook the country-specific instructions beginning on page 9, Addendum A.

☐ HOME STUDY COVER SUMMARY

- Applicant(s) Full Legal Name(s), Street Address, City/State/Zip, Telephone
- Study Approval Date and Period of Validity
- Social Worker Name & License Number (*if applicable*)

☐ IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

- Applicant(s) Full Legal Name, Gender, Birth Date, Birthplace, and Alien Registration Number (if any) ¹
- Education, Religion, Ethnicity, Occupation
- Date and Place of Marriage
- Children Residing in the Home: Full Legal Name, Birth Date, Birthplace, and Alien Registration Number (if any) ¹
- Children Residing Outside the Home: Full Legal Name, Birth Date, Birthplace, and Alien Registration Number (if any) ¹
- Other Adults Residing in the Home: Full Legal Name, Birth Date, Birthplace, and Alien Registration Number (if any) ¹

¹ *Effective November 2018, USCIS requires all international adoption home studies to include the Alien Registration Number ("A-number") for each adult or child who was not a U.S. citizen at birth. To locate this number, look in the passport used for the individual's originally entry to the United States. The A-number is the eight (8) or nine (9) digit number listed underneath "Registration Number" on the Immigrant Visa stamp within the passport (such as A012345679).*

☐ SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED CHILD

- Country of Origin and Hague Convention status
- Number of Children for which the applicant(s) is/are approved to adopt
- Gender, Age, Twins/Siblings, Approved for Special Needs (Y/N)

☐ CLIENT CONTACTS

For each contact with the applicant(s), specify the date, location, purpose of contact, name(s) of those present, and the duration of each meeting. Each child, whether residing inside or outside the home must be interviewed.

SAMPLE:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Duration</i>
<i>01-01-2021</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Adoption Information Meeting</i>	<i>John and Mary</i>	<i>1 hrs.</i>
<i>01-10-2021</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Pre-Adoption Education</i>	<i>John and Mary</i>	<i>8 hrs.</i>
<i>01-15-2021</i>	<i>Online</i>	<i>Hague-Mandated Training</i>	<i>John and Mary</i>	<i>10 hrs.</i>
<i>01-20-2021</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Adoption Study Interviews</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>1.5hrs</i>
<i>01-20-2021</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Adoption Study Interviews</i>	<i>Mary</i>	<i>1.5 hrs.</i>
<i>02-25-2021</i>	<i>Home Visit</i>	<i>Adoption Study Interviews</i>	<i>John and Mary</i>	<i>3 hrs.</i>

☐ HAGUE-COMPLIANT PRE-ADOPTION TRAINING

Each adoptive parent must individually complete a minimum of 30 documented hours of adoption-related education and training; specifically:

- **Part 1:** 18 hours prior to home study approval (including 10 hours Hague-compliant training)
- **Part 2:** 12 hours between home study approval and either 1) adoption study update or 2) placement of a child
- **Part 3:** 4 hours annually after first home study update (repeated annually until child placement occurs)

Families completing an intercountry adoption through CH are required to complete training that meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in the Hague Convention. The adoption study must clearly state the name of the coursework and education provider, as well as the total hours of relevant training completed by the applicant(s).

SAMPLE:

John and Mary Smith received ___ hours of pre-adoption training which meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in 22 CFR Part 96.48(b)(c). The family's training provided information about adoption program options and fees, as well as detailed information regarding the eligibility and procedures necessary for completion of an intercountry adoption from [COUNTRY]. This training also explored the family's motivations for seeking adoption and the lifelong impact of adoption on birth parents, adoptive parents and persons who have been adopted.

The family's training addressed:

- 1. the intercountry adoption process, the general characteristics and needs of children awaiting adoption, and the in-country conditions that affect children in the country from which the prospective adoptive parent(s) plan to adopt;*
- 2. the effects on children of malnutrition, relevant environmental toxins, maternal substance abuse, and of any other known genetic, health, emotional, and developmental risk factors associated with children from the expected country of origin;*
- 3. information about the impact on a child of leaving families ties and surroundings, as appropriate to the expected age of the child;*
- 4. data on institutionalized children and the impact of institutionalization on children, including the effect on children of the length of time spent in an institution and of the type of care provided in the expected country of origin;*
- 5. information on attachment disorders and other emotional problems that institutionalized or traumatized children and children with a history of multiple caregivers may experience, before and after their adoption;*
- 6. information on the laws and adoption processes of the expected country of origin, including foreseeable delays and impediments to finalization of an adoption;*
- 7. information on the long-term implications for a family that has become multicultural through intercountry adoption; and*
- 8. an explanation of any reporting requirements associated with Convention adoptions, including any post-placement or post-adoption reports required by the expected country of origin.*

Further adoption preparation included information regarding the developmental stages of adoption, the development of racial/cultural identity and available resources and support for families with children adopted from the country of China. As of this date, John and Mary have completed 18 hours of Hague-accredited adoption education and will complete 12 additional hours prior to child placement.

☐ **ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER PARENT HISTORY / PREVIOUS HOME STUDY**

Each adult member of the household must answer directly whether they have ever been the subject of a prior home study, been previously denied a foster care license, been rejected as a prospective adoptive parent, or been the subject of an unfavorable adoption study.

☐ **MOTIVATION TO ADOPT**

Include a statement detailing the family's reasons for choosing to build their family through adoption. Include in your assessment:

- Reasons or motivation for wanting to adopt a child internationally and specifically from the country selected
- If adopting parents have a history of infertility, how have they coped with this?
- Social and psychological experiences which may affect adopting parents' motivation
- If applicable, motivation to adopt a child with special needs
- Plans and expectations for the child
- Description of how adopting parents plan to talk to the child about his/her adoption, and the history of their birth family and birth country
- The adopting parents' attitude about and willingness to make a permanent commitment to the child
- Attitudes of extended family toward adoption

☐ **APPLICANT(S) PERSONAL HISTORY**

For each applicant, include a section on all biographical information including:

- Full Legal Name, Gender, Birth Date, Birthplace, and Alien Registration Number (if any) ¹
- Parents' current ages and overview of their backgrounds
- Description of family of origin (siblings' and their ages, marital status, occupations, place of residence)
- Discussion of childhood, adolescence and adult memories
- Interactions with siblings and parents
- Education and work experience
- Background information on discipline utilized in family of origin
- Interests, hobbies and spare-time activities
- Beliefs and values
- Significant events, personal tragedies, and other major life experiences

☐ **APPLICANT(S) HEALTH HISTORY**

- Summary of past and current health of each family member, including a statement of confirmation that medical reports on each family member have been received and on file with your agency
- Summary of any history of major illness or mental health diagnosis, as well as any medications that the adopting parents are currently taking.
- Summary of any therapy history of the adopting parents
- Statement that a physician has determined the adopting parents have no history of infectious diseases
- Adoption worker's personal assessment of each applicant's emotional, physical & mental suitability to adopt a child

SAMPLE:

John Michael Smith was examined by Dr. Robert Johnson on August 21, 2019, and has no history of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and is in good physical, mental and psychological health. John has no history of mental illness. He does not use tobacco products or illicit drugs. He describes his alcohol consumption as social. No further evaluations or referrals were required. This worker has reviewed all physicians' reports and it is this worker's assessment that John Smith is emotionally, physically and mentally stable and will provide a loving home for any child placed with this family. He works to preserve good health through proper nutrition, regular exercise, and by maintaining a safe living environment.

☐ **RELATIONSHIPS**

Include each spouse's views of the other, their attitude toward marriage, values, methods for conflict resolution, and extent of satisfaction with their marriage. Discuss patterns of communication, coping with difficult situations (stress, change and conflict), and activities the husband and wife enjoy together. State the number of previous marriages for

each spouse. (For example, *"This is the first marriage for Mr. Smith, and the second for Mrs. Smith."*) For previous marriages, include date of the marriage, date of the divorce, a summary of why the previous marriage(s) failed, and why the applicant believes the current marriage is more successful and stable.

☐ **CHILDREN RESIDING IN THE HOME**

Discuss each child who is currently living in the home. Include:

- Child's full legal name, gender, birth date, birthplace, and Alien Registration Number (if any) ¹
- Description of the personality and development of each child in the home, including such areas as school, likes and dislikes, adjustment, hobbies, etc.
- Attitude and preparation of these children in the home for the planned adoption
- If parents are parenting previously adopted children, summarize each previous placement, including the name of the agency that assisted in that placement, date of previous study completion and date of placement.
- Include information about any children from a previous marriage or other relationship.
- Include statement that the child has no history of communicable diseases and is up to date on immunizations.
- Include a statement that the child does not have any criminal history, nor any emotional or medical conditions that would limit their parents' ability to care for an additional child(ren) in their home.

☐ **CHILDREN RESIDING OUTSIDE THE HOME**

Discuss each child who is currently residing outside the home (such as children from a previous marriage, children away at college, etc.). Include:

- Child's full legal name, gender, birth date, birthplace, and Alien Registration Number (if any) ¹
- Description of the personality and development of each child in the home, including such areas as school, likes and dislikes, adjustment, hobbies, etc.
- Attitude and preparation of these children for the planned adoption
- If parents are parenting previously adopted children, summarize each previous placement, including the name of the agency that assisted in that placement, date of previous study completion and date of placement.
- If there has been a previous marriage, include information about any children from that marriage.

☐ **OTHERS RESIDING IN THE HOME**

APPLICABLE TO: Any foster/unrelated minor children living in the home, applicant(s)' children age 18+ living in the home, non-applicant adults living in the home, in-home childcare providers, any regular childcare providers (i.e. nannies) or others with regular ongoing access to the home/children in the home. Even if a nanny/childcare provider does not actually live in the home, USCIS may consider them an adult household member due to their full access to the home/children in the home.

For each applicable individual, include the following:

- Date of birth and physical description.
- Relationship to prospective adoptive family.
- Assessment of personality and overall wellbeing, including physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral health. Include any special needs of individual that may affect the adoptive placement.
- Work or school status.
- Understanding of and support of adoption plans, and ability to adjust to a future adoptive child.
- Any criminal history.
- For individuals age 18+: Health history, home study history, duty to disclose, and background clearances all must be included (i.e. same as applicants).

☐ **PARENTING SKILLS AND HANDS-ON PARENTING**

State the applicants' experience with children and their parenting style, including:

- Relationships with children inside the home and outside the home
- Childrearing philosophy and experiences that helped to shape adopting parents' attitudes
- Parenting and nurturing experience and ability
- Current discipline techniques or plans for discipline; include adopting parents' plans regarding physical discipline (discuss the family's understanding and agreement with the CH Policy Regarding Corporal Punishment and include the applicants' statement that they will not utilize corporal punishment in their home).

- Understanding of and plans for assisting a child in coping with ethnic and cultural differences, separation, attachment, and language issues
- Description of adopting parents' understanding of bonding and attachment, and the barriers to attachment which the child may present
- If applicable, current relationship between parents and children who may be in the home.
- Include an assessment of the applicants' understanding of intercountry adoption, potential risks, delays, expenses and potential issues regarding attachment, bonding and adjustment.

☐ **PARENTING A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

If the adoption may involve a child with special needs, an older child, or a child who will be out of birth order, the social worker must include a thorough discussion about the family's training and preparedness for this situation, and what counseling or therapy resources they have in place, if needed. The study must clearly state all of the conditions the family will consider and for which they are recommended and approved to adopt:

SAMPLE:

John and Mary Smith are approved, willing and able to care for a child with special needs. The family will consider and is approved to adopt a child born with [LIST ALL SPECIFIC CONDITIONS THE APPLICANT(S) IS/ARE OPEN TO AND THEIR PREPARATION FOR THOSE NEEDS].

☐ **PERMANENCY PLANNING / GUARDIANS**

Include information on the named guardians for the child – specifically, their name(s), residence (city and state), age, profession, approximate income, health, and ages and names of guardian's children. Guardians should preferably be a married couple. If the applicant's guardian is single, please include a back-up guardian. State your assessment of the appointed guardians as suitable for parenting the child. Include a statement that in the untimely deaths of the adoptive parents, all assets will be divided equally among the surviving children, whether biological or adopted.

☐ **CHILD CARE PLANS**

- Work and childcare plans, if applicable. Specify leave of absence plans.
- Discuss childcare plans in the case of adopting parents' death or long-term disability

☐ **FAMILY VALUES**

- Statement regarding applicants' religious and philosophical beliefs and practices
- Statement regarding applicants' other values, including education, achievement, material acquisition, and social status
- Attitudes of extended family toward adoption

☐ **EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCES**

Include a detailed statement of the family's current financial picture, including:

- Current annual income and verification of employment for both applicants
- Most recent year's total federal income amount taken, as stated on IRS tax forms
- Total assets, total liabilities and total net worth (stated in dollar amounts)
- Total monthly expenditures, total monthly liabilities/bills, and balance remaining for each month
- If the applicants have high debt, describe how they plan to pay the costs of an international adoption
- List all insurance coverage, including health, life, and disability.
- Include a statement of endorsement of their financial management and whether the financial conditions are suitable for raising an adopted child.

☐ **DESCRIPTION OF HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD**

- Description of home, including adequacy of space for adopting parents to parent an additional child
Include verification of working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, child safety features or plans for adaptation, and that the home conforms to the requirements of the local authorities.
 - ✓ If there are firearms in the home, specify the safeguards in place.
 - ✓ If there is a pool, specify safety features.
- Description of neighborhood and ethnic makeup of the community
- Description of educational, medical, and other community resources available

- Family's awareness of their community's view of their child's culture/ethnic heritage
- Provide information on local, culture-specific resources such as multicultural educational and community resources that will help the child develop a positive identity.
- Indicate that an inspection of the home has been made and confirm/state that all smoke alarms are up to date and a fire extinguisher is present and in working order.

☐ **CULTURAL AWARENESS**

- Adopting parents' knowledge of the country of adoption and contact with others who have adopted internationally
- Adopting parents' efforts to learn about the child's culture, including a description of counseling given to prepare them for intercountry adoption
- Description of adopting parents' attitude toward and feelings about birth family
- Description of how adopting parents plan to talk to the child about his/her adoption, and the history of their birth family and birth country
- Family's plans for incorporating the child's cultural heritage into their family life

☐ **PERSONAL REFERENCES**

- At least three personal references must be provided for the applicants and discussed in the study

☐ **DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

The home study preparer must state that they have read and verified all documents provided by the applicants.

SAMPLE:

John and Mary Smith have provided this agency with copies of their signed financial statement, current letter of employment and their 2019 federal income tax return as proof of income and a birth certificate for each applicant, plus their marriage certificate and John's divorce decree. This home study preparer has read and verified these documents as true copies.

☐ **DUTY OF DISCLOSURE & USCIS COMPLIANCE**

The home study preparer must inform the applicant(s) of their duty to provide true and complete information and the consequences of not disclosing this information.

- Include a statement that each adult member of the household was informed and understands that under penalty of perjury it is his/her duty to disclose all information addressed under 8 CFR Part 204.311(d).
- Include a statement that each adult member of this household is aware that this duty of disclosure is ongoing and that he/she must notify the home study preparer and USCIS of any new event or information that might warrant submission of an amended or updated home study until such time as there is a final decision admitting the adoptee to the United States with a visa.
- Indicate that each applicant was asked the following questions and their responses:
 - Have you ever been arrested, even if the record was sealed, pardoned, or expunged, whether in the United States or abroad?
 - Do you have a history of child abuse, sexual abuse, or domestic violence, whether in the United States or abroad?
 - If applicant was the *perpetrator*, his/her disclosure must be documented in the study.
 - Have you ever abused alcohol?
 - Have you abused illegal controlled substances or prescription drugs?
 - Have you ever been denied as a prospective adoptive parent or been the subject of an unfavorable home study?
 - Have you ever previously completed a home study?
 - Have you ever begun a home study process in relation to an adoption or any form of foster or other custodial care of a child that was not completed?
 - Have you ever relinquished custody of a child?
 - Have you ever transferred or received permanent custody of a child outside of the state/local authorities or state/local process?
 - Have you ever been denied visa clearance by USCIS?

If the applicant(s) answer(s) "NO" to all of the questions, respond in the following manner for each adult member of the household:

SAMPLE:

This worker individually asked (NAME) the following questions:

- *Have you ever been arrested, even if the record was sealed, pardoned or expunged, whether in the United States or abroad? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Do you have a history of child abuse, sexual abuse, or domestic violence, whether in the United States or abroad? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you ever abused alcohol? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you abused illegal controlled substances or prescription drugs? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you ever been denied as a prospective adoptive parent or been the subject of an unfavorable home study? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you ever previously completed a home study? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you ever begun a home study process in relation to an adoption or any form of foster or other custodial care of a child that was not completed? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you ever relinquished custody of a child? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you ever transferred or received permanent custody of a child outside of the state/local authorities or state/local process? (NAME) responded, "No."*
- *Have you ever been denied visa clearance by USCIS? (NAME) responded, "No."*

(NAME) is aware that a single incident of sexual abuse, child abuse, or domestic violence constitutes a "history" of abuse/violence.

If an applicant answers "YES" to any of the questions listed above, the information must be thoroughly discussed and evaluated in the study. Please consult with Children's Home to ensure the applicant has completed the *History of Unlawful Incidents* form and has provided all required supporting documentation that they paid their fine, that the record was expunged, that the case was dismissed, or other resolution. If no record exists, the applicant will need to provide a certified letter from the court stating that the information is unavailable and/or has been removed from the record.

☐ **CRIMINAL RECORDS AND CHILD ABUSE CLEARANCES**

Regardless of whether or not the family is adopting from a country which is party to the Hague Convention, all home studies must include the results of a criminal background check in addition to child abuse and neglect registry clearances from all states and/or countries in which each applicant and adult member of the household has ever lived since reaching the age of 18 (including military deployment, college housing and study abroad regardless of length of term). **These checks must be no more than 15 months old from the time of submission of home study to USCIS.** The assessment must include specific language regarding these clearances. A photocopy of all clearances must be provided to CH/LSS with a draft of the applicants' home study assessment.

- Include a statement that a Criminal Records Search and Child Abuse & Neglect Registry Search was conducted in each state or foreign country in which each adult household member has resided since reaching the age of 18;
- Include a statement that a search of the state criminal archives and child abuse registry was conducted for each adult household member. Provide the state and date it was completed along with the findings.
- Include a statement that the applicant(s) has/have not resided in any other states or countries since reaching 18 years of age besides those previously listed.

☐ **APPROVAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Include a statement that the home study meets State, USCIS, and Hague standards.
- Indicate that family meets all country program eligibility criteria.
- Include a statement that the adopting parents understand that no promises can be made about the particular medical conditions of a given child. Statement should include an acknowledgement by adopting parents that, while their home study agency and Children's Home discloses all information currently known about a child or children, there is some possibility that there may be information not known to the agencies.

- Statement that they have been informed of the laws and adoption process in the country from which they plan to adopt and have agreed to comply with all post-placement/post-adoption reporting requirements. They are aware of the potential need for post-placement/post-adoption counseling and will access services as needed.

SAMPLE:

John and Mary Smith have met all of the requirements for adoption in the State of [STATE] in accordance with the establish child welfare standards. (FOR UNFINALIZED ADOPTIONS: LIST SPECIFIC STATE REQUIREMENTS or STATE THERE ARE NO STATE REQUIREMENTS). This home study report has been prepared in accordance with licensing standards for approved adoption agencies, the State of [STATE], USCIS, and the Hague Convention.

John and Mary Smith meet or exceed the requirements for adoption as required by (COUNTRY) in regard to age, length of marriage, number of children in household, health and physical fitness, criminal clearance, education, employment, income, and ability to parent a child through adoption, and are willing and able to comply with post-placement/post-adoption and travel requirements as per the requirements of Children's Home Society of Minnesota and the country of (COUNTRY). They have been informed of the laws and processes to adopt a child in (COUNTRY). They are able to travel to (COUNTRY) to meet a child and complete the adoption process per established laws and practices. They are aware of the potential need for post-placement/post-adoption counseling and will access services as needed.

John and Mary Smith are aware of the potential for delays and changes in the procedures and costs associated with an intercounty adoption, as well as the risks associated with adopting children with limited or unverifiable medical, psycho-social, and developmental histories. Additionally, John and Mary are prepared to parent a child who may have undiagnosed, undocumented, or unknown social and/or medical issues.

- Approval regarding adopting parents and type of child for whom they are approved, including nationality, age, gender, special needs, and the maximum number of siblings. IMPORTANT: Please be specific and list the approved age range in months, not years, and include the phrase "at the time of referral."
- Include the statement that the family is willing, able and capable of adopting a child with this profile

SAMPLE:

John and Mary Smith are recommended, approved and willing to adopt a child of either gender from [COUNTRY], age 0-8 years at the time of referral, in good general health or with special needs including but not limited to [LIST ALL SPECIFIC CONDITIONS APPLICANT(S) ARE OPEN TO].

John and Mary Smith have given every evidence that they are suitable to adopt this profile of child due to their ability and willingness to access to excellent resources, financial stability, adequate health insurance, and sufficient adoptive parent training.

☐ **AGENCY CREDENTIALS AND HOME STUDY PREPARER DECLARATIONS**

- Include a statement indicating the home study preparer's authorization to complete home studies.

SAMPLE:

I, [WORKER NAME] hereby declare that I am an employee of [HOME STUDY AGENCY] and I am authorized by the State of [STATE] to complete home studies, recommend and approve families as adoptive parents, and to conduct post-placement and post-adoption visits and evaluations; I am authorized under 22 CFR Part 96 to complete home studies for Convention adoption cases.

I, (SOCIAL WORKER'S NAME), verify under penalty of perjury under U.S. law that I have personally conducted this home study, including personal interviews, home visits, and all other aspects of the investigation needed to prepare the home study with the professional diligence reasonably necessary to protect the best interest of any child whom the applicant might adopt. The content and factual statements within this home study are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. I have notified the applicants of their duty to disclose and their continued duty to disclose any information or new events per Hague convention regulations (8 CFR 204.309(f)). I certify that this is a true and accurate copy of the home study provided to the prospective adoptive parents and USCIS.

EXEMPTED & SUPERVISED PROVIDERS:

[HOME STUDY AGENCY] is an [EXEMPTED/SUPERVISED] Provider for Children's Home Society of Minnesota based on an agreement signed by [HOME STUDY AGENCY] and Children's Home Society of Minnesota on [DATE]. Children's Home Society of Minnesota has met the conditions set forth in 22 CFR Part 96.47(c) and has reviewed and approved this home study for John and Mary Smith.

☐ **SIGNATURES**

- a) The home study report must be signed by the social worker who conducted the assessment.
- b) The home study report must be signed by the Social Work Supervisor and include the state and license number.
- c) The home study report must be notarized.
- d) The home study report must include the expiration date of the home study according to the adoptive family's state of residence.

☐ **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

SAMPLE:

PURPOSE STATEMENT: This home study was completed for the purpose of intercountry adoption and is a true and accurate copy of the home study that was provided to the adoptive family, the United States Department of State and the foreign adoption authorities. This study was performed in accordance with 8 CFR Part 204.311 and any applicable State laws. This home study is to be used for the sole purpose of an international adoption through Children's Home Society of Minnesota.

☐ **SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

In addition to the home study report, you must submit current copies of:

- a) the Agency's license for adoption
- b) the social worker's license
- c) the Agency's valid Hague Accreditation

Documentation for any unlawful incident, as applicable.

ADDENDUM A - ADDITIONAL COUNTRY-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

CHINA

Home Study Preparer, please check (✓) to indicate the information is addressed in the home study:

☐ **General Comments**

- 1. Any reference to **Taiwan** should be cleared through China program manager.
- 2. CCCWA's "Cooperative Agreement" is required to be signed by a representative from the home study agency.

☐ **Client Contacts**

- 1. The social worker must meet with the applicants no less than **four** times including the home visits, in-person meetings, conversations and interviews. Telephone and internet interviews are not allowed as part of the adoption study meetings. It is important to show the quality of time spent with the family. Education, counseling, and **some post placement visits from a previous adoption may apply if these visits all took place within a year.**

☐ **Relationships (including Marital/Single Status)**

MARRIED COUPLES:

- 1. This includes how the married couple resolves problems in the marriage, their attitude toward marriage, and satisfaction level in their marriage.

SINGLES:

1. Single applicants must provide a statement attesting to their single status and that they are not homosexual. A written statement is required in the dossier.
2. The adoption worker must make a "reasonable assessment" as to whether or not sexual orientation claim is true.
3. Include dating/marriage/divorce history, plans or openness towards future marriage opportunities. Also, single applicants must demonstrate a willingness to appoint male figures as role models for the adopted child and welcome male friends to join family gatherings.

COHABITANTS:

1. Any person living in the adoptive applicant's home who is not a member of the family shall be mentioned in terms of the relationship between them and the reasons for cohabitation.
Single adoption applicants living together with the cohabitant of the *same sex* shall submit statement that both of them are not homosexuals and the social worker preparing the home study report shall make reasonable, true and responsible assessment. Single applicants must write a statement for the dossier and adoption workers may require previewing that statement as part of their assessment. Cohabitants can write a similar statement, notarize it and have it on file with the adoption study homework. (See Single Status under Dossier requirements.)
2. Single adoption applicants living together with friends of *opposite sex* shall truly reflect the attitude of the heterosexual cohabitant friends towards their adoption from China and their relationship between the cohabitant friends of opposite sex. Social workers should make a true appraisal of such a case.

☐ **Personal Characteristics, Resilience, Support Systems**

1. **SUPPORT NETWORK FOR SINGLE APPLICANTS:** The single applicant should identify two or three people in her local support network. These are people on whom the applicant will call if she becomes sick and needs help, or if the child becomes ill and the applicant needs help caring for the child. These support people must live in the applicant's community. The adoption study must reference that the social worker has had contact with 2-3 people who have indicated their ability to support the applicant with regard to child care, assistance during a crisis, etc. Suggestions for ways of doing this include asking the applicant to provide letters of support from 2-3 individuals, inviting these individuals to a home visit or talking to them about their support over the phone.
2. **MALE ROLE MODELS FOR SINGLE APPLICANTS:** Single applicant must demonstrate that she is able to provide male role models to be part of her child's life. The adoption study should detail how the single applicant will involve appropriate role models to be part of her child's life.

☐ **Permanency Planning (Guardianship)**

1. Adoptive applicants must verbally mention who shall be designated as the child's guardian in case of the premature death of the adoptive parents. Include the names, ages, profession, marital status, status of children, general health and general financial situation. China prefers couples to be designated. Relatives are also looked upon favorably. A high income is not as important, although the life insurance that will go to the child and guardians should be mentioned.
2. The home study preparer shall make assessment whether the designated guardian is suitable for the raising of the child. Social worker can do this based on what the adoptive parents tell him/her. Individual meetings or phone calls with the guardians are unnecessary. Example: "Based on the information provided to me by the adoptive parents, I can make the assessment that...."
3. The guardian designated by the **single adoptive applicant** must present a statement in writing to give his/her consent to the guardianship or raising of the adopted child. This statement must be notarized and attached to the home study. (It does not need to be state certified.)

☐ **Child Care Plans**

1. Change section title to "Child Care *and Nurture* Plans"
2. The applicant(s) should write out a plan for how they will care for their child and the social worker should incorporate this into the home study. They should list their medical professionals, including specialists that they will be consulting. They should also note any classes that they have taken, and list the resources available to them in their community, school district, family, etc. They should also include any family leave time that they intend to take, if necessary. If the parents are not first-time parents, they should note that they have experience in raising a child. The social worker should mention the parents' philosophy of parenting, methods of discipline, and any other relevant information.

3. **For single applicants:** The adoption worker should address any/all experiences the applicant has had with child care, either through caring for members of her own family (nephews/nieces or younger siblings), babysitting, volunteer work, previous or current jobs such as working with children in the fields of health care, teaching, counseling etc.
4. **Single applicants** should be connected to other experienced single parents as part of their preparation stage for the adoption. The home study should mention that the applicant has spoken with two to three single parents (named ___, ___ and ___ - first names sufficient), and through this contact, the single applicant has learned about ___ aspect(s) of single parenting. Children's Home will assist in providing the names of other single parents as resources to the applicant.
5. The adoption worker should include an assessment, "It is my assessment that..." giving his or her appraisal of whether the adoption applicant(s) have a suitable nurture plan in place.

☐ **Description of Home and Neighborhood**

1. Include social worker's assessment that the family's "living conditions" are suitable for raising another child.

☐ **Personal References**

1. China requires 3 letters of reference that follow specific criteria. Instructions are sent out to families in the application phase for all clients. These letters will be attached to the home study in the dossier and address all required points as outlined by CCCWA. People writing these letters of reference may send a draft to **china@chlss.org** for review, to be sure each letter touches on China's required content. These also may serve dual purpose for the adoption study, but depending on content, may need to be obtained in addition to what's prepared for the adoption study.

☐ **Approval and Recommendations**

1. China requires that a psychological evaluation be part of the home study process when an adoptive applicant presents any of the following circumstances:
 - ✓ Has received or is receiving psychological counseling, training or therapy (includes any past usage of a mild anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medication);
 - ✓ May have potential emotional problems such as alcohol abuse in his/her youth;
 - ✓ Has been mentally or physically abused;
 - ✓ Has suffered emotional loss or trauma;Include a supportive statement in the home study citing the results of the psychological evaluation.

Home Study Preparer, please check (✓) to indicate the information is addressed in the home study:

☐ **Hague-Compliant Pre-Adoption Training**

1. In addition to the CH/LSS requirements for client contact and pre-adoption training. Please note that ICBF regulations now require that at least 10 hours of this training must be delivered face-to-face and must be cover topics that are relevant to the age and medical and developmental conditions of the child(ren) to be adopted.
2. **REQUIRED ADDITIONAL TRAINING:**
 - a. Families adopting from Colombia must also complete essential training based on Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®), a therapeutic model that teaches parents to provide effective support and treatment for children with histories of adversity and trauma. This training must be completed prior to home study approval and counts toward the 30 hour total requirement. Families should register, purchase and complete the course **TBRI® Foundations: Essentials for Adoption Preparation** at familiesareforever.org/chlss. Completion of this training should be stated in the training section and family preparation sections of the study.
 - b. The home study report must also include a statement specifically addressing what the family has done to learn about Colombian culture.

☐ **Applicant(s) Health History**

1. **Psychological Evaluation.** Colombia requires all applicants to complete a psychological evaluation by a licensed psychologist. Please include the name/credentials of the psychologist, the date the evaluation was made, and the method(s)/test(s) utilized for the assessment. Briefly address the findings and whether the provider found the applicant(s) to be suitable for adoptive parenting. Include a positive statement or two from the psychological report. If any concerns are raised by the psychologist, please consult with Children's Home to discuss any potential eligibility matters.

☐ **Motivation to Adopt**

1. Per ICBF regulations, social workers must establish that the family's desire to adopt is not based on altruism, religious motivations, to provide a sibling for a child already in the family, parental loneliness, or unresolved issues with infertility, or any other motivations that interfere with the best interest of the child or adolescents." Therefore, the home study preparer needs to establish and report that the motivations are focused on the family's ability to meet the needs of the child(ren) they hope to adopt.

☐ **Relationships**

1. If the applicants are a married couple, include a statement regarding the couple's satisfaction with their marriage.

☐ **Parenting Skills and Hands-On Parenting**

1. In addition to the other topics, describe the activities shared by the family in everyday life.
2. If a medical condition is identified for one of the parents, address any limitations this may present in parenting and how those limitations will be addressed.
3. Include information on the parents' willingness to develop educational, recreational and care activities, as needed, for the child.
4. Include information on the kinds of discipline the family intends to utilize and their strategies that take into account children with histories of trauma and neglect.

☐ **Parenting a Child with Special Needs**

1. Per ICBF regulations, all home studies must show realistic openness to the needs seen in the children currently available for adoption. Since all the children will have experienced some type of trauma history (physical and/or sexual abuse/neglect/abandonment/parental substance abuse/medical condition, etc.), the home studies must accurately reflect this openness. Thoroughly address the family's openness and capacity to care for a child with special needs and children who are placed from the child protection system.

☐ **Permanency Planning / Guardians**

1. The individual(s) selected as guardians must be actively present in the child's life. For these reasons, a sibling living out of state or a couple who will only see the child once a year, despite their suitability to act as guardians, are likely to be rejected by Colombia. Applicants should choose guardian(s) who will regularly spend time with the child so that the child would know them well should guardianship become necessary.
2. The home study should state whether the chosen guardian(s) possess both the financial means and physical space in their home to support an additional child or sibling group in the family should guardianship become necessary.
3. Due to their ages and the potential for health concerns, Colombia does not consider the parents of adoptive applicant(s) suitable to be named as primary guardians. Therefore, applicant(s) should refrain from listing their parent(s) as guardian(s). Further, if the guardian is a single person, applicant(s) should name a back-up guardian should it become necessary to fulfill the role in their place.
4. This section must also state that the appointed guardians are prepared and willing to parent a child of Colombian heritage and will continue to honor the child's birth history. If the family is open to children of Afro-Colombian heritage, this section should explicitly state that the guardians are prepared and willing to parent a child of any ethnicity.
5. The individual(s) selected as guardian(s) referenced in the home study must be the same individual(s) documented in the family's dossier to Colombia.

☐ **Family Values**

1. Must include family's willingness to allow the child to maintain his/her faith.

☐ **Cultural Awareness**

1. **Spanish language proficiency.** Applicants seeking to adopt children of speaking age must demonstrate Spanish language proficiency or provide a plan to obtain Spanish language basics in order to communicate with the child(ren) regarding their basic needs once placed. Evidence of this proficiency or plan should be addressed in the home study. For example, a non-Spanish speaking family could provide proof of enrollment in a local conversational Spanish course at their local community college, which is noted in the home study.
2. The home study report must also include a statement specifically addressing what the family has done to learn about Colombian culture. Please includes this in the section on Training (above).

☐ **Personal References**

1. The personal references named in the home study must be the same individuals who provide references for the family's dossier to Colombia.

☐ **Approval and Recommendations**

1. Colombia requires a psychological evaluation to be completed for all applicants. The results of these evaluations must be very specifically addressed in the home study. Please refer to the Colombia-specific psychological evaluation instructions included with these guidelines and cite the required information in the written home study.
2. If adopting an identified child, the home study must specifically state openness to each of the conditions or elements noted in the child's background history.

☐ **Attach Additional Document: ECOMAP**

1. This diagram is intended to provide a visual representation of the relationships each applicant has formed with their community, social network, extended family, neighborhood, work, religious communities, and family friends and to identify the supports available (or not available) to the family. Please fill in the names of the relationships available in each of the categories below. You may use this document (or create your own using a template or online genogram generator such as Geno-Pro), provided the required information is included in your diagram.
This document must be attached to the home study document.

☐ **Attach Additional Document: GENOGRAM**

1. A genogram helps ICBF to visualize the intensity of intrafamilial relationships and the nature of the family network for each applicant and their family of origin. You may create this form utilizing a template or an online genogram generator (such as Geno-Pro or other available applications). Include each applicant's parents, siblings, brothers or sisters in law, biological children, adopted children, nieces or nephews, and any aunts or uncles who may have a significant relationship with the applicant(s). **This document must be attached to the home study document.**

Home Study Preparer, please check (✓) to indicate the information is addressed in the home study:

☐ **Training Hours**

Ecuador requires a MINIMUM of 40 hours of pre-adoption training.

☐ **Cultural Awareness**

1. **Spanish language proficiency.** Applicants seeking to adopt children of speaking age must demonstrate Spanish language proficiency or provide a plan to obtain Spanish language basics in order to communicate with the child(ren) regarding their basic needs once placed. Evidence of this proficiency or plan should be addressed in the home study. For example, a non-Spanish speaking family could provide proof of enrollment in a local conversational Spanish course at their local community college, which is noted in the home study.
2. The home study report must also include a statement specifically addressing what the family has done to learn about Ecuadoran culture. Please includes this in the section on Training (above).

☐ **Motivation to Adopt**

1. It is important that social workers establish that the desire to adopt is not based on inappropriate motivations, such as: a child as a solution to the couple's issues, to unresolved feelings regarding infertility, loneliness or sickness, or to social or family maladjustments, as well as adopting to give a sibling to a child in the family, to satisfy philanthropic, humanitarian or religious reasons. The home study should not include faith-based motivations and should instead be focused on the family's ability to meet the needs of the child(ren) they hope to adopt.

☐ **Applicant(s) Health History**

1. **Psychological Evaluation.** Ecuador requires all applicants to complete a psychological evaluation by a licensed psychologist. Please include the name/credentials of the psychologist, the date the evaluation was made, and the method(s)/test(s) utilized for the assessment. Briefly address the findings and whether the provider found the applicant(s) to be suitable for adoptive parenting. Include a positive statement or two from the psychological report. If any concerns are raised by the psychologist, please consult with Children's Home to discuss any potential eligibility matters.

Home Study Preparer, please check (✓) to indicate the information is addressed in the home study:

☐ **Applicant's Personal History and Health of Applicant(s)**

1. If one parent is still a citizen of India, please note this in the home study. Provide a copy.
2. If one or both parents carry an OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) card, please note it in the home study. Provide a copy.
3. **Psychological Evaluation.** India requires all applicants to complete a psychological evaluation by a licensed psychologist. Please include the name/credentials of the psychologist, the date the evaluation was made, and the method(s)/test(s) utilized for the assessment. Briefly address the findings and whether the provider found the applicant(s) to be suitable for adoptive parenting. Include a positive statement or two from the psychological report. If any concerns are raised by the psychologist, please consult with Children's Home to discuss any potential eligibility matters.

☐ **Relationships**

1. India will not allow adoption for single adoptive parents who cohabit.
2. If the prospective adoptive parent is single, it must be clear that this individual is not homosexual.

☐ **Discussion of Extended Family and Support Systems**

1. Discussing close relationships with extended family is always encouraged. There should be a paragraph in the home study which states that extended family members have been informed of the adoption plan and approve of it.

☐ **Permanency Planning**

1. India likes to know that in the event of the death of the parent, a same generation family member will resume guardianship of the child. In the case of single PAPs, India **requires** that the guardian be a relative, even one who may reside outside the U.S. In the case of married PAPs, while a relative is preferred, if a married couple chooses non-family member guardians, emphasize their "family-like" relationship. This guardian must be prepared to provide a statement for the family's dossier after referral acceptance.

☐ **Cultural Awareness**

1. Please discuss how the family intends to incorporate and maintain a connection to their child's Indian heritage, and how they will instill in their child a pride for his/her ethnic heritage. There should also be a mention of the local Indian community and the opportunities for participation.
2. Mention if there is an adoption support group in the area and if the family will be participating in its activities, and the benefits which can be derived from this participation.

☐ **Criminal Records and Child Abuse Clearances**

1. The following statement must be put into a home study for families in which one or both parents resided in India from the age of 18 or above, "This agency has been informed that the country of India does not have a Child Abuse Registry."

☐ **Length of Home Study Document**

1. The home study should be a maximum of 15 pages.

SOUTH KOREA

Home Study Preparer, please check (✓) to indicate the information is addressed in the home study:

- ☐ **Home Study Visits**
 - 1. Korea requires that the home study preparer complete at least two visits in the family's home.
- ☐ **Identifying Information**
 - 1. Passport numbers are mandatory in Korea studies. Include these on the cover page of the study.
- ☐ **Applicant(s) Health History**
 - 1. Korea requires all applicants to complete a psychological evaluation by a licensed psychologist. Please include the name/credentials of the psychologist, the date the evaluation was made, and the method(s)/test(s) utilized for the assessment. Briefly address the findings and whether the provider found the applicant(s) to be suitable for adoptive parenting. Include a positive statement or two from the psychological report. If any concerns are raised by the psychologist, please consult with Children's Home to discuss any potential eligibility matters.
- ☐ **Family Values**
 - 1. Must include a statement that indicates the adoptive parents will allow the child religious freedom.
- ☐ **Approval and Recommendations**
 - 1. Please be sure to include a statement which clarifies the approved age range (for USCIS purposes) but which also conveys the family's preference. Example: "The family is open to a child 0-4 at the time of placement, but prefers a child age 12-24 months at the time of referral."
- ☐ **Attach Additional Document: Social Worker License**
 - 1. Include an attached copy of your social worker license (or that of the social worker who approved the study) with the original home study.

**Children's Home country programs not listed in this Addendum
have no additional country-specific requirements.**

ADDENDUM B – Post-Placement/Post-Adoption Reporting Requirements

CURRENT POST-PLACEMENT / POST-ADOPTION REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In-home visits and reports to the child's country of origin are completed by the family's local service provider. The number and timing of these visits/reports varies by country program and/or state of residence. Report requirements are determined by each country's Central Adoption Authority and are subject to change. The requirements shown are current as of the date this document was created. You will be notified in writing of any change. **All reports must be completed by a social worker unless otherwise noted.**

CHINA

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 6, 12, and 24 months from adoptive placement, followed by reports prepared by adoptive parent(s) annually in years 3, 4 and 5 from adoptive placement (submitted through the placing agency). Additionally, China requires families to upload self-reports starting at year 6 and continuing annually until the child reaches their 18th birthday.

COLOMBIA

Children under 8 years old: Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 6, 12, 18 and 24 months after adoption date. Children 8 years and older: Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 6, 12, 18, 24, 30 & 36 months after adoption date.

DOMINICA

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 3, 6 and 12 months after child comes home.

ECUADOR

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 4, 8, 12, 18 and 24 months after adoption date.

GRENADA

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 3, 6 and 12 months after child comes home.

HONDURAS

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due are due at 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 and 24 months after date of placement, followed by annual self-reports until child is 18 years old.

INDIA

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 and 24 months from family's date of arrival home following finalized adoption in country.

JAMAICA

For those granted a full and final adoption ("Adoption Order") in Jamaica – Children's Home requires one social worker prepared post-adoption report due at 3 months after child comes home.

For those granted guardianship ("Adoption License") in Jamaica – Social worker prepared post-placement reports due at 6 weeks and 3 months after placement, then every 3 months thereafter until the adoption is finalized in the United States.

SOUTH KOREA

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 1, 2, 4, 6, 9 and 12 months after adoption date.

ST. LUCIA

For children who are wards of the state: Social worker prepared report due at 3, 6 and 12 months after child comes home.

For children who are not wards of the state (relative or non-relative: Social worker prepared report is due at 3 months after the child comes home.

ST. VINCENT & THE GRENADINES

Social worker prepared post-adoption reports due at 3, 6 and 12 months after child comes home.