



Q&A FINAL

Gift of Adoption

1. What is Gift of Adoption?

Gift of Adoption is a national charitable organization that inspires adoption by providing grants to qualified parents —giving children in need of families a permanent home and a chance to thrive. Our goal is to make more adoptions possible and give as many children without families a life they otherwise may not have known.

2. When was Gift of Adoption founded and how many adoptions has Gift of Adoption funded?

This year, Gift of Adoption celebrates ten years as a public charity. To date, we've provided over \$5.0 million to unite more than 1,725 children with forever families.

3. Does Gift of Adoption match children with families?

No, Gift of Adoption does not match children with families but makes the adoption possible through adoption assistance grants.

4. What types of adoptions does Gift of Adoption support?

We award grants to those in need of financial assistance to make possible the adoptions of some of the most vulnerable children in the U.S. and around the world. We help fund domestic, international, relative and special needs adoptions. Half of our grants help children born in the United States and half go to children from around the world in need of families and a loving home.

5. What are the sizes of Gift of Adoption grants?

Our grants subsidize a portion of the costs of adoption and provide the final funds needed to complete the adoption of vulnerable children. Grants range from \$1,000 to \$7,500 with the average grant award \$3,500.

6. Does the organization fully fund adoptions?

No, Gift of Adoption provides the last funding needed to bring a child home. Gift of Adoption grants typically represent 15-20% of the total cost of the adoption.

7. Does Gift of Adoption have a religious affiliation?

Gift of Adoption is a non-denominational organization. We offer adoption assistance grants to qualified families – regardless of race, religion, age, marital status or sexual orientation.

8. How does Gift of Adoption prioritize grants?

1. Adoptive Families. "2011 Adoption Cost Survey." December 2011.

<http://www.theadoptionguide.com/cost/articles/how-much-does-adoption-cost>

2. Child Welfare Information Gateway. "How Many Children Were Adopted in 2007 and 2008." September 2011.

<http://www.ncsc.org/Newsroom/Backgrounder/2011/National-Adoption-Day.aspx>

3. Child Welfare Information Gateway. "Persons Seeking to Adopt." February 2011.

http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/s_seek.pdf

4. AFCARS Report, 2013. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport20.pdf>

Gift of Adoption has identified key funding priorities in order to help make adoptions possible for the most vulnerable children. For domestic adoptions, we prioritize grants that expedite the adoption of children with serious special needs, preserve families through relative adoptions and biological sibling adoptions or prevent children from entering foster care unnecessarily. For international adoptions, we prioritize grants that prevent children from aging-out of an orphanage, keep biological siblings in the same family and result in life-sustaining care for a child.

9. How can you get involved with Gift of Adoption?

Through Gift of Adoption, everyone can make a difference. You don't have to adopt to give a child a safe and nurturing home. With 11 regional chapters across the country and more chapters kicking off this year, there are a variety of ways to get involved. Opportunities include volunteering at local events or joining our national, chapter, junior and investor boards. For more information, you can visit: <http://www.giftofadoption.org/>

10. What is the Investor Board?

The Investor Board is a team of leaders who support Gift of Adoption's efforts through financial support. Many of our Investor Board members are passionate about supporting Gift of Adoption's mission but may not have the time to dedicate to another leadership position. Through financial support as an Investor Board member they have a direct impact on our organization and help transform the lives of children in need.

11. How do you make a donation to Gift of Adoption?

To make a donation to Gift of Adoption, you can visit the "Donate" section at: <http://www.giftofadoption.org/>.

12. Where can you go to find out more on Gift of Adoption?

For more information, you can visit: <http://www.giftofadoption.org/>

Grant Methodology

13. What is the selection criteria for Gift of Adoption grants?

We award grants to those in need of financial assistance to complete both domestic and international adoptions. We offer grants to families – regardless of race, religion, age, marital status or sexual orientation. Applicants must be U.S. citizens with an approved home study from an accredited agency. The Grant Selection Committee considers the applicant's financial need and commitment to funding the adoption in addition to the circumstances of the child(ren) being adopted..

If pressed for more information:

To be qualified as a grant recipient, applicants must be U.S. citizens and have completed a home study from a licensed and accredited adoption agency or social worker before beginning the application process. For domestic adoption applicants working through an agency, the agency must

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be Hague accredited or positively rated by the Better Business Bureau. For domestic applicants not working through an agency, applicants must be working with a Quad-A/American Academy of Adoption Attorney or one that is positively rated by the Better Business Bureau.

For those pursuing international adoption, applicants must be working with a Hague or Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children (COA) accredited agency. A full listing of COA accredited agencies can be found on the U.S. State Department's Inter-country Adoption Web site.

14. What is the selection process for Gift of Adoption grants?

The Grant Selection Committee, made up of one elected representative from each of the regional chapters, reviews all grants. Grants are selected on the basis of financial need, perseverance and imminence of the adoption. Applications are accepted, reviewed and approved monthly. Recipients are notified of the decision via email within 48 hours of the Grant Selection Committee meeting

15. What qualifies an applicant for being in need of financial assistance?

We award grants to applicants who demonstrate financial need. Financial need is assessed by examining the cost of adoption against the applicant's income, expenses and assets.

16. What is the average household income of Gift of Adoption grant recipients?

The average household income of a Gift of Adoption grant recipient is \$43,500. This income provides the means to raise a child but may prove challenging to come up with the funds to meet the upfront adoption costs. Adoption costs are the same for a teacher in rural South Carolina as they are for an investment banker in Manhattan.

17. Does the number of children a family already has impact grant decisions?

No, the number of biological children or adopted children in the home does not impact eligibility.

18. Are grants paid directly to the family?

No, grants are paid directly to the adoption agency, attorney or other service provider on behalf of the family.

Grant Application

19. How does someone apply for a Gift of Adoption grant?

Applicants can download a grant application from the "How to Apply" section of the Gift of Adoption Web site: <http://www.giftofadoption.org/>.

20. How many times can someone apply for a Gift of Adoption grant?

Applicants may apply for a Gift of Adoption grant up to three times. Applications remain active for 18 months.

Grant Timing

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21. How often are grants awarded?

The Grant Selection Committee reviews completed applications and awards grants monthly but can also respond to urgent needs throughout the month.

22. Are applications reviewed in the month they are submitted?

Every effort is made to review applications at the time most favorable for each particular situation. However, this may not be the month in which the application is received. Generally, factors impacting when the application is reviewed include the status of the referral or match, placement timeframe and extent of need.

23. After approval, how long does it take for the grantee to receive the grant?

Gift of Adoption grants provide the final funding needed to complete an adoption and grants are issued at the end of the adoption process. This ensures Gift of Adoption donors are funding successful adoptions.

24. How many grant applications does Gift of Adoption receive and how many grants are awarded each month?

Gift of Adoption receives more than 50 requests for financial assistance each month. On average, 20 of those meet the application criteria. Gift of Adoption only has resources to fund eight of the qualified requests each month.

25. When is the best time to apply for a Gift of Adoption grant?

We invite applicants who have identified a financial need to apply anytime after successfully completing their home study. Because the adoption process can take surprising turns, we recommend applying as soon as possible in case a match or referral happens sooner than expected.

26. Are there any situations in which applicants should not apply for a grant?

Families should not apply if their adoption has been finalized or if they are just starting the adoption process and have not yet completed a home study.

27. Are there time limits for using a Gift of Adoption grant?

Yes, a Gift of Adoption grant must be used within 18 months of the date awarded.

Adoption

28. How much does adoption cost?

Adoption expenses vary depending on the type of adoption. According to the 2011 *Adoptive Families* Adoption Cost Survey, the average cost of adoption is between \$25,000 and \$35,000. The costs include agency fees, legal fees and home study expenses. For international adoption, costs include travel and other requirements of the country.¹

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29. Are international adoptions more expensive than domestic adoptions?

Both domestic and international adoptions have their own unique costs. The cost for international adoption may increase as these adoptions may require parents to travel to the country they are adopting from for a period that could range from a few days to several weeks. Multiple visits may also be necessary, which can increase costs.

30. How many children are adopted in the United States each year? How many children are welcomed home through international adoption?

About 135,000 children are adopted in the United States each year. Of non-stepparent adoptions, about 59 percent are from the child welfare (or foster) system, 26 percent are from other countries, and 15 percent are voluntarily relinquished American babies.⁴

31. Why is the U.S. experiencing a decrease in international adoptions?

Many factors have contributed to the drop in numbers of international adoption, from the financial crisis to longer wait times for referrals. As countries continue to implement new adoption regulations and as the financial picture continues to improve, we hope to see an uptick in adoptions because the number of children in need has not decreased.

32. How many children are awaiting adoption in the U.S.?

In the U.S. there are approximately 400,000 children living without permanent families in the foster care system. More than 100,000 of these children are eligible for adoption, but nearly 32% of these children will wait over three years in foster care before being adopted.⁴

33. How long does it take to adopt a child?

The timeframe for adoption can vary greatly. Several factors play a role, including the age of the child and country of origin.

34. What countries allow international adoption?

The most common countries for international adoption by parents in the United States in 2012 were China, Ethiopia, Russia, Republic of Korea and Ukraine. A complete list of Hague accredited agencies working to complete international adoptions is available at the U.S. Department of State's Hague Convention Web site.

Challenging Questions

35. How is adoption regulated?

Adoption is highly regulated. U.S. state licensed adoption agencies have several governmental bodies that oversee, regulate and review the adoption process. The Hague Adoption Convention protects children and their families against the risks of unregulated adoptions abroad, and ensures that inter-country adoptions are in the best interests of children. The Hague Convention also serves to prevent the abduction, sale of or traffic in children. More information can be found at the U.S. Department of State's Hague Convention Web site.

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36. How does Gift of Adoption ensure adoptions they fund aren't associated with cases of corruption and abuse?

Our goal is to make more adoptions possible and give as many children without families a life they otherwise may not have known. We only fund adoptions that work with COA-accredited and Better Business Bureau-approved agencies and attorneys. This ensures children and their families are protected against the risks of unregulated adoptions and that each adoption is in the best interest of the children.

37. How does Gift of Adoption ensure the families who receive grants are suitable parents?

Our goal is to make more adoptions possible and give as many children without families a life they otherwise may not have known. We only fund adoptions where the family has an approved home study from a COA-accredited or Better Business Bureau-approved agency. A successful home study indicates the family is financially, physically and mentally fit to parent the child being adopted.

38. Isn't promoting international adoption stripping children of their homeland and identity?

For many children, international adoption represents the only way for them to have a family of their own. We believe giving a child the chance to be part of a loving family and safe and nurturing home is most important to a child's overall well-being.

39. There are an abundance of children here in the U.S. to adopt. Why does Gift of Adoption promote international adoption?

Every child, no matter their country of origin, deserves to grow up in a loving family environment and with the sense of belonging that comes from being a permanent part of a family and home. We believe adoptive parents are the best judge of how they would like to build their families. Our goal is to make more adoptions possible and give as many children without families a life they otherwise may not have known.

40. If a family cannot afford adoption, how can they afford to raise the child?

The urgent needs of adoption mean families often don't have the benefit of funding over time. While the families we help do not have the financial means to save the upfront costs of an adoption, they do, however, have sufficient income to cover the cost of caring for a child. Gift of Adoption provides the last funding needed to bring a child home.

41. What if a family adopts a child and finds out they have medical issues they can't afford to address?

Addressing a child's medical needs can be financially overwhelming. There are resources available for parents who are struggling with these costs, including organization's who offer grants, financial planning and loans to help cover medical needs.

42. Does \$3,500 really inspire people to adopt?

When it comes to the costs of adoption, grants of all sizes can make a difference and inspire people to adopt. We hear from many families that Gift of Adoption grants helped put their adoption in reach and provide the final funding needed to make their adoption possible. Gift of Adoption grants

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typically represent 15-20 percent of the total adoption costs. This, coupled with the family's contribution, tax incentives and employer adoption benefits, can put adoption in reach.

43. Why does Gift of Adoption limit grants to \$7,500?

Our grants subsidize a portion of adoption costs and the final funds needed to complete adoptions. Gift of Adoption receives more than 50 requests for financial assistance each month and only has resources to fund eight of the qualified requests a month. We limit the grants to \$7,500 so we can help more families and put adoption in reach for more children in need.

44. Why does Gift of Adoption only fund the adoption of vulnerable children?

We offer grants to qualified parents for domestic and international adoptions. While Gift of Adoption prioritizes grants for vulnerable children, including grants that prevent children from aging-out of an orphanage or result in life-sustaining care for a child, we do not restrict our grants to only these children. By prioritizing these grants, we help put adoption in reach for children who are facing what is possibly their last or only chance at adoption.

45. What do you think of [insert latest adoption scandal]?

That is, indeed, a complex issue, and speaks to a bigger point...[bridge to key message, focusing on the positive role Gift of Adoption plays in filling the void that separates child from family]

46. I know so many parents who want to adopt and aren't being matched with children. There doesn't seem to be enough children in need out there. Why are Gift of Adoptions services needed?

There are 150 million orphans around the world without families and more than 100,000 children in the U.S. alone available for adoption.³ The need is overwhelming. The decision to adopt, however, is a personal one and we believe the adoptive parents are the best judge of how they would like to build their families. Our goal is to make more adoptions possible. By providing financial assistance to complete both domestic and international adoptions, we help put adoption in reach so more children can be welcomed into a loving home.

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