



# Adoption Services (AS)

## 2026 Updates for Private and Canadian Organizations

### Purpose

Adoption ~~services~~~~programs~~ establish permanent family relationships for children in need of permanency and increase the well-being, functioning, and stability of children, birth parents, adoptive families, and adopted individuals.

### Definition

Adoption ~~services~~ ~~programs~~ ~~provide services which~~ may include: ~~providing information about~~ adoption ~~information and education~~, ~~recruitment~~, assessments, home studies, training, counseling, support, preparation, matching, placement, ~~advocacy~~, ~~referral~~, and post-placement/post-adoption services to facilitate permanent caring relationships within families for children and youth.

**Interpretation:** *Organizations should be familiar with the relevant legal requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which governs state proceedings involving American Indian and Alaska Native children. To ensure compliance with ICWA, organizations must have established procedures for determining if children are members or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe, include tribal representatives throughout all aspects of service delivery in cases where ICWA applies, and collaborate with local child welfare agencies to determine their role in the context of tribal-state child welfare agreements, ICWA, and any relevant state laws pertaining specifically to Indian child welfare.*

**Interpretation:** *Some organizations work collaboratively with the public child welfare agency and share responsibility for providing services in adoption cases. For standards or elements of standards that are handled by a public agency or its designee, the organization can show implementation by providing evidence that another entity is responsible.*

**Note:** ~~COA's standards are written to encompass best practices associated with all types of adoption and include standards for services provided to all members of the adoption triad. COA's standards are designed to be used by programs that provide some or all of the services in an adoption and programs that provide services to some or all members of the adoption triad. In particular, COA recognizes that some programs focus primarily on providing home studies, training, and/or post-adoption services, and that services in foster care adoptions can be limited based on the service delivery model structured by the public agency. Some standards include an option of "not applicable" but many standards are written to be inclusive of all types of adoption programs so that at least one or more elements of the standard are applicable.~~

COA Accreditation standards are written to encompass best practices for all adoption types, services for all members of the adoption triad, and organizations that address either some or all services in the adoption process. COA Accreditation recognizes that some organizations only provide home studies, training, and/or post-adoption services, and that services for foster care adoptions may be limited due to the involvement of the public agency. Some standards include an option of “not-applicable” when needed, but many standards are written to address various adoption program models and services where at least one or more of the elements of the standard applies.

**Note:** Home study programs will ~~complete be reviewed under~~ AS 1, AS 2, AS 76, AS 1312, AS 14, and AS 1513 only.

Post-placement/~~p~~Post-adoption programs will complete: AS 1, AS 2, AS 1211, AS 1312, AS 14, and AS1513 only.

Foster-to-adopt programs will complete all of FKC and AS 6, AS 7, AS 8, AS 9, AS 10, AS 12, AS 13, and AS 14.

Child-focused recruitment programs will ~~complete be reviewed under~~ AS 1, AS 2, AS 43, AS 54, AS 65, AS 98, and AS 109 only. ~~Child focused recruitment is an intensive and tailored recruitment strategy designed to identify adults to serve as a placement resource for a specific child or youth in need of permanent placement. Recruitment efforts consider relatives, friends, school personnel, coaches, and current or past caregivers who have had a committed, caring relationship with the child or youth as well as other individuals in the community who may be a good match based on the child or youth’s background, needs, and strengths. The child-focused recruitment plan is child- or youth-centered and tailored to their unique needs, preferences, and circumstances. Common models of child-focused recruitment include Wendy’s Wonderful Kids® and Extreme Recruitment®.~~

Child-focused recruitment is a child-centered, intensive, and tailored recruitment strategy designed to identify a permanent placement resource for a specific child or youth based on their unique needs, preferences, and circumstances. Recruitment efforts consider relatives, friends, school personnel, coaches, current or past caregivers, and other individuals who have had a committed, caring relationship with the child or youth or who may be a good match based on the child or youth’s background, needs, and strengths. Common models of child-focused recruitment include Wendy’s Wonderful Kids® and Extreme Recruitment®.

~~Foster-to-adopt programs will complete all of FKC and AS 5, AS 6, AS 7, AS 8, AS 9, AS 11, and AS 12 only.~~

**Note:** ~~The use of language in adoption is complex, sensitive, and evolving and COA selected language commonly in use at the time the standards were updated. Certain terms are used for broader applicability and ease of use throughout the standards. For example: The term “children” includes infants, toddlers, school-age children, and youth. The term “birth parents” includes expectant parents and parents who are considering or have made a plan for adoption, and generally includes the birth mother and birth father. COA’s standards do not further define birth father. State laws provide more specific definitions and requirements in relation to birth fathers and use terms such as legal or presumed father and alleged or putative father. The term “prospective adoptive parents” generally includes foster parents, kinship caregivers, relatives, single individuals, and couples.~~

COA Accreditation understands that adoption language is complex, sensitive, and evolving. The standards reflect language commonly used at the time the standards were updated, and certain terms are used for broader applicability and ease of use. For example, the term “children” includes infants, toddlers, school-age children, and youth. The term “prospective adoptive parents” refers to individuals pursuing adoption and generally includes foster parents, kinship caregivers, relatives, single individuals, and couples. The term “expectant parents” refers to parents who are considering or have planned for adoption. “Birth parents” refers to biological parents of children who have been placed for adoption and is inclusive of both private and foster care adoptions. The standards do not define birth father. State laws provide more specific definitions and requirements for birth fathers and use terms such as legal or presumed father and alleged or putative father.

**Note:** Please see the AS Reference List for the research that informed the development of these standards.

**Note:** ~~For information about changes made in the 2020 Edition, please see the AS Crosswalk.~~

## AS 1: Person-Centered Logic Model

The organization implements a program model that describes how resources and program activities will support the achievement of positive outcomes.

**NA** The organization ~~only provides foster-to-adopt services only~~ Foster Care to Adoption Services.

**Note:** Please see the Logic Model Template for additional guidance on this standard.

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See program description completed during intake</li> <li>Program logic model that includes a list of outcomes being measured</li> </ul>	<i>No On-Site Evidence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program director</li> <li>Relevant personnel</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

### AS 1.01

A program logic model, or equivalent framework, identifies:

- needs the program will address;
- available human, financial, organizational, and community resources (i.e. inputs);
- program activities intended to bring about desired results;
- program outputs (i.e. the size and scope of services delivered);
- desired outcomes (i.e. the changes you expect to see in persons served); and
- expected long-term impact on the organization, community, and/or system.

**Examples:** Please see the *W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide* and COA Accreditation’s *PQI Tool Kit* for more information on developing and using program logic models.

**Examples:** Information that may be used to inform the development of the program logic model includes, but is not limited to: (1) characteristics of the service population, (2) needs assessments and periodic reassessments, (3) risk assessments, and (4) the best available evidence of service effectiveness.

## AS 1.02

The logic model identifies desired outcomes in at least two of the following areas:

- a. change in clinical status;
- b. change in functional status;
- c. health, welfare, and safety;
- d. permanency of life situation;
- e. quality of life;
- f. achievement of individual service goals; and
- g. other outcomes as appropriate to the program or service population.

**Example:** Outcomes data should be disaggregated to identify patterns of disparity or inequity that can be masked by aggregate data reporting. See PQI 5.02 for more information on disaggregating data to track and monitor identified outcomes.

**Examples:** Child and family serving organizations interested in pursuing contracts with public entities may consider tracking outcomes that align with nationally recognized indicators of quality in the areas of prevention, safety, permanency, and well-being including, but not limited to: (1) percentage of cases in which placements remained permanent and stable, (2) percentage of cases in which family relationships and connections were preserved, (3) number of cases of recurring maltreatment, (4) number of cases of maltreatment-related fatalities, (5) number of families provided with prevention services, and (6) percentage of children whose parents lack secure employment.

## AS 2: Personnel

**Program pP** Personnel have the competency and support needed to provide services and meet the needs of individuals and families served.

**NA** The organization *only* provides foster-to-adopt services only ~~Foster Care to Adoption Services~~.

**Interpretation:** Competency can be demonstrated through a combination of education, training, and experience. Support can be provided through supervision or other learning activities to improve understanding or skill development in specific areas.

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of program personnel that includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title</li> <li>○ Name</li> <li>○ Employee, volunteer, or independent contractor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample job descriptions from across relevant categories</li> <li>• Documentation tracking staff completion of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Supervisors</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Review personnel files</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Degree or other qualifications</li> <li>○ Time in current position</li> <li>● See organizational chart submitted during application</li> <li>● Table of contents of training curricula</li> <li>● Procedures or other documentation relevant to case assignment</li> </ul>	<p>required trainings and/or competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Training curricula</li> <li>● Caseload size requirements set by policy, regulation, or contract, when applicable</li> <li>● Documentation of current caseload size per worker</li> </ul>	
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### AS 2.01

Adoption workers who provide adoption-related services that require the application of clinical skills and judgment meet applicable regulatory requirements and are qualified by:

- a. a bachelor's degree in social work; or
- b. a combination of a bachelor's degree in any field and prior experience in family and children's services, adoption, or intercountry adoption.

**Interpretation:** *When a new worker providing clinical services does not have direct experience in adoption, they receive support and/or supervision or have access to consultation with someone ~~who withdoes have~~ direct experience in adoption until they gain ~~a sufficient amount of~~ experience.*

**Examples:** *Examples of services that ~~some programs provide that~~ require the application of clinical skills and judgment include, but are not limited to: (1) home studies, (2) child background studies, (3) clinical counseling, (4) obtaining consents, (5) preparation and training, (6) making clinical decisions such as approval of home studies, matching, etc., (7) post-placement monitoring and post-placement reports, (8) crisis intervention, and (9) therapeutic interventions.*

*Examples of services that may not require the application of clinical skills and judgment include, but are not limited to: (1) preparation of profiles or dossiers for prospective adoptive parents, (2) provision of information or training on non-clinical topics such as the legal process for adoption, planning travel for international or interstate adoptions, etc., and (3) notarizing documents.*

### AS 2.02

Supervisors are qualified by at least two years of prior experience in adoption, intercountry adoption, or family and children's services and an advanced degree in social work or a comparable human service field.

### AS 2.03

Employees who provide adoption-related services that require the application of clinical skills and judgment, and others as needed based on their job responsibilities, are trained on, or demonstrate competency in:

- a. state, federal, and foreign laws and regulations governing the types of services provided by the ~~organization~~ program;
- b. ethical considerations in adoption and applicable professional and ethical guidelines;
- c. issues relating to race, ethnicity, religion, culture, tribal affiliation, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and culturally competent services;
- d. factors that lead to children needing adoptive families;
- e. feelings of separation, grief, and loss which may be experienced prior to, during and after adoption by children, birth parents, adults who were adopted, and previously by some prospective adoptive parents;
- f. trauma experienced by children and youth who have been victims of abuse, neglect, or trafficking;
- g. common medical, psychological, and developmental issues commonly experienced by ~~children~~ adopted children ~~through the program~~;
- h. the short- and long-term impact of ~~out of home~~ out-of-home care and institutionalization on children and youth;
- i. ways in which adoption can affect child, adolescent, and adult development and identity formation; and
- j. maintaining connections, openness in adoption, and attachment and bonding.

**Interpretation:** ~~Some training topics/competencies may not be relevant to all programs and programs~~ Organizations may customize their training/competency requirements based on their program model and populations served. The ~~organization~~ program ~~should~~ exempt employees from elements of their training/competency requirements only when ~~the~~ the employee has demonstrated competence with the topic.

**Interpretation- Examples:** Regarding element (b), ~~E~~ ethical considerations in adoption can include: (1) preventing child buying, trafficking, and undue influence on expectant parents, (2) making decisions when the preferences and needs of the parties to the adoption differ, and (3) limitations on eligibility and related professional, personal, and organizational values and beliefs.

## FPAS 2.04

Adoption workers and supervisors, depending on job responsibilities, are trained on or demonstrate competency to implement relevant provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), including:

- a. the importance of ICWA and special considerations for working with American Indian and Alaska Native children;
- b. the identification of American Indian and Alaska Native children;
- c. determination of jurisdiction;
- d. appropriate notice and collaboration with the child's tribe;
- e. placement preferences that support the child's connection to their native culture and heritage;
- f. process for, and alternatives to, terminating parental rights; and

- g. court procedures.

**Interpretation:** *All adoption personnel should be trained in the basic requirements of ICWA and informed of the cultural norms and historical trauma associated with Indian tribes. Staff in specialized service units, such as assessment or permanency planning, should receive additional specialized training, and all screening personnel must be trained on how to identify children with American Indian or Alaska Native heritage.*

## AS 2.05

Adoption workers who work with birthexpectant parents or have responsibilities relating to legal proceedings, including provision of providing required notices, and obtaining consents, ~~or legal proceedings~~ are knowledgeable about:

- a. requirements and processes for the proper identification of all parties whose consent is required;
- b. requirements and processes for providing appropriate notice to all parties who must receive notice or whose consent is required;
- c. preventing undue pressure or coercion on parties whose consent is required, and what steps to take if ~~it appears as if~~ undue pressure or coercion has occurred~~have been exerted~~;
- d. inappropriate financial incentives or influence; and
- e. determination of jurisdiction and jurisdictional issues that could impact ~~on~~ the adoption.

~~NA Program s~~ Staff do not work with birthexpectant parents and do not have responsibilities for providing notice of an adoption plan or obtaining consents.

## AS 2.06

The programorganization ensures that employees who provide adoption-related services that require the application of clinical skills and judgment complete ongoing professional development training on adoption-related topics in accordance with applicable agency, state, and federal requirements.

~~NA Program staff do not work with birth parents and do not have responsibilities for providing notice of an adoption plan or obtaining consents.~~

**Interpretation:** *The Intercountry Adoption Act regulations require ~~no less than~~ at least thirty hours of professional development training every two years.*

## AS 2.07

Employee workloads support the achievement of desired~~elient~~ outcomes and are regularly reviewed.

**Interpretation:** *Caseloads for workers providing child-focused recruitment services should typically not exceed 20-25 cases, with no more than 12-15 in an intensive phase.*

**Examples:** *Examples of factors that may be considered when determining employee workloads include, but are not limited to: (1) the qualifications, competencies, and experience of the worker, including the level of supervision needed, (2) the scope of services being provided including the work and time required to accomplish assigned tasks and job responsibilities, and*

(3) service volume, accounting for assessed level of needs of persons served at varying stages of the adoption process.

## **AS 3: Services for Expectant Parents Considering Adoption**

The organization engages with expectant parents considering adoption in an honest, responsive, and respectful manner and provides or refers them to appropriate services.

NA The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.

NA The organization provides home study services or child-focused recruitment only.

NA The organization does not work with expectant parents considering or planning for adoption.

<i>Self-Study Evidence</i>	<i>On-Site Evidence</i>	<i>On-Site Activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Copy of intake forms or other tools used to collect information from expectant parents</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Informational materials provided to expectant parents</u></li> <li><u>Community resource and referral list</u></li> <li><u>Educational/training curricula, if applicable</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Interviews may include:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Program director</u></li> <li><u>Relevant personnel</u></li> <li><u>Persons served</u></li> </ol> </li> <li><u>Review case records</u></li> <li><u>Review program information on website</u></li> </ul>

### **AS 3.01**

The ~~organization program~~ provides ~~expectant birth or prospective birth~~ parents considering adoption with accurate information about the adoption process and available services, including: ~~offered by the program and other organizations and individuals with whom they might work.~~

- steps and timelines for the adoption process;
- the legal process for adoption and the rights and responsibilities of each party, including expectant parents' right to legal counsel;
- the selection process for the adoptive family and options for the expectant parents' level of involvement;
- confidentiality and the range of openness in adoption; and
- availability of post-adoption services.

~~NA The program does not work with birth or prospective birth parents considering adoption.~~

~~Examples: Examples of basic information about the process and services can include:~~

- ~~a. steps and timelines for the adoption process;~~
- ~~b. legal process for adoption and legal rights of each party to the adoption;~~
- ~~c. confidentiality and the range of openness in adoption; and~~
- ~~d. availability of post-placement and post-adoption services.~~

Examples: Post-adoption services may include: (1) options for independent, unbiased counseling services with adoption-competent professionals and (2) assistance with search and reunion in the future, as applicable.

### **AS 3.02**

Upon initial contact with ~~expectant birth parents or prospective birth~~ parents considering adoption, the adoption worker attempts to collect information about:

- a. immediate needs;
- b. any individuals who may need to be provided with notice of a future adoption plan or whose consent may be required;
- c. any open cases with child protective services; and
- d. any potential membership or eligibility for membership in a tribe.

~~NA The program does not work with birth or prospective birth parents considering adoption.~~

### **AS 3.034.05**

~~Birth~~Expectant parents who have ~~made a plan~~planned for adoption receive ~~in writing~~written information which includes:

- a. ~~disclosure of the requirements relating to~~ notice and consent requirements;
- b. provisions for any financial support that will be provided;
- c. provisions for contact with prospective adoptive parents, as appropriate;
- d. ~~steps to be taken~~action steps if the ~~expectant~~birth parent believes that any undue pressure or ~~coercion~~influence is occurring; and
- e. circumstances under which ~~services may be terminated by~~ either party may terminate services.

~~NA The program only provides services in cases where birth parents rights have already been terminated.~~

**Examples:** The information may be provided ~~for example~~ in a service agreement, a disclosure of the organization's policies, a rights and responsibilities disclosure, or another appropriate document etc.

### **AS 3.0411.08**

The ~~organization~~program provides or refers ~~birth~~expectant parents to supportive services, including:

- a. information, education, and counseling provided by adoption-competent professionals whenever possible;
- ~~b. ongoing receipt and maintenance of updated medical or social information, including, as appropriate, contact information so that it can be made available to the adoptee in accordance with applicable requirements; and~~
- b. support and advocacy groups, including peer support; and
- c. post-adoption services.

**Interpretation:** ~~If the program works on cases where the birth parents' rights were involuntarily terminated, the program should consult with the public agency or its designee to determine what services, if any, would be appropriate for the program to provide directly to birth parents. In intercountry adoptions, it is unlikely for the program to have contact with birth parents. In either instance, the program should at a minimum have procedures to address element (b) of the standard.~~

## **AS 34: Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Orientation**

The organization program conducts ~~outreach,~~ recruitment and orientation activities in a responsive, and ethical, and equitable manner.

**NA** ~~The organization~~ only provides foster ~~to adopt~~ services only.

**NA** The organization provides home study services only.

**NA** The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>• Samples of documents provided to prospective clients at initial contact or during orientation</del></li> <li>• <del>Sample intake forms or other tools used to collect information during the outreach and orientation process</del></li> <li>• <u>Recruitment plan</u></li> <li>• <u>Procedures for online photo listing services, if applicable</u></li> <li>• <del>Eligibility criteria</del></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>• Documentation of Governing Body or organizational review of eligibility criteria</del></li> <li>• Most recent <u>annual evaluation of recruitment plan reports on progress of recruitment plan goals</u></li> <li>• <u>Documentation of tribal participation in adoptive parent recruitment, when available</u></li> <li>• <u>Informational materials provided to prospective adoptive parents at</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Program director</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> <li>c. Persons served</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review case records</li> <li>• Review <del>of</del> program information on website</li> </ul>

	<u>initial contact or during orientation</u>	
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### **AS 3.03**

Upon initial contact with youth who are considering or have a goal of adoption, the adoption worker provides age and developmentally appropriate information about the meaning of adoption, the adoption process, and services offered by the organization.

~~NA The program does not work with youth considering or with a goal of adoption.~~

~~Interpretation: Information about adoption may have already been provided by others and is sometimes provided before adoption is formally identified as a goal for youth. Adoption workers should have strategies for their initial contact with youth and strategies for engaging youth in conversations over time about adoption.~~

### **AS 4.013.04**

The organization program has a plan for recruitment plan for of prospective adoptive parents that: ~~and~~

- a. includes specialized recruitment strategies for children with special placement needs, as applicable;
  - b. details how the organization works with tribes to identify adoptive homes within the tribal community for American Indian and Alaska Native children; and
  - c. is evaluated annually.
- ~~a. when the program has responsibility for placement of children in foster care, children with special placement needs, or American Indian and Alaska Native children, the plan details specialized recruitment strategies.~~

~~NA The program does not recruit prospective adoptive parents, for example, the program is a foster to adopt program.~~

~~Interpretation: An organization that has responsibility for placing American Indian and Alaska Native children should work closely with tribes to establish eligibility for adoptive parents that are consistent with the norms of the tribe and to identify adoptive homes within the tribal community through joint recruitment efforts.~~

~~Interpretation: Organizations that use online photo listing services should ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to protect confidential information and respect an individual's right to refuse to have their photo taken.~~

**Examples:** Children with special placement needs may include (1) sibling groups, (2) older children, (3) children with physical, emotional, behavioral, and developmental challenges, (4) children who identify as LGBTQ+, (5) youth who are pregnant or parenting, and (6) children of color who are overrepresented in the child welfare system. A recruitment plan may specify how carefully crafted language, images, and strategies, ~~including partnerships with key stakeholders,~~ can help the organization reach and connect with out and appeal to prospective adoptive parents who are willing and able to adopt these children. ~~audiences who may be willing and able to adopt children in need of homes, including children with special placement needs (e.g., sibling groups; older children; children with physical, emotional, behavioral, and developmental~~

~~challenges; children of minority racial or ethnic groups; LGBTQ+ children; and youth who are pregnant or parenting).~~

Recruitment strategies can include targeted and/or child-specific recruitment. Targeted recruitment strategies can include efforts to locate specific families for children with unique needs such as (1) reaching out to high school parents, teachers, and coaches who may be a resource for youth, (2) engaging specific cultural organizations, churches, or minority-owned businesses to recruit adoptive parents from particular ethnic or racial groups, (3) connecting with LGBTQ+ community groups and attending LGBTQ+ events to recruit LGBTQ+ adoptive parents, (4) partnering with tribes and Indian organizations and establishing joint recruitment efforts to identify families for American Indian and Alaska Native children, (5) outreach to healthcare professionals, individuals with experience working with people with disabilities, and accessible housing communities to recruit adoptive parents for children with disabilities or acute medical conditions, and (6) outreach to existing adoptive parents.

~~Targeted recruitment strategies can include:~~

- ~~a. looking for prospective adoptive parents for youth among high school parents and coaches, and after-school programs for teens;~~
- ~~b. engaging specific cultural organizations, churches, or minority-owned businesses to recruit adoptive parents from particular ethnic or racial groups;~~
- ~~c. engaging specific LGBTQ+ community groups, attending LGBTQ+ community events, or reaching out to inclusive faith-based communities to recruit LGBTQ+ adoptive parents;~~
- ~~d. partnering with tribes and Indian organizations and establishing joint recruitment efforts to identify families for American Indian and Alaska Native children;~~
- ~~e. outreach to healthcare professionals, individuals with experience working with people with disabilities, and accessible housing communities to recruit adoptive parents for children with disabilities or acute medical conditions; and/or~~
- ~~f. outreach to existing adoptive parents, especially for LGBTQ+ recruitment.~~

Child-specific recruitment strategies generally may include a comprehensive assessment of the child and identification of all individuals who may have a connection to the child, including family members, foster parents, former caregivers, members of the child's tribe, and other adults with a significant connection to the child.

## **AS 4.02**

The organization engages, supports, and fosters trusting relationships with prospective adoptive parents beginning at their first interaction with the organization.

Examples: Strategies to effectively engage, support, and build trusting relationships with prospective adoptive parents may include: (1) responding to inquiries in a timely manner, (2) having multiple ways in which prospective adoptive parents can inquire such as by phone, email, or through social media, (3) consistent messaging at all stages in the process and across all staff involved in the response system, (4) connection with support groups, previous adoptive parents, and other resources, and (5) opportunities to provide feedback and share their experiences or concerns.

### **AS 4.03**

Organizations that utilize online photo listing services to recruit prospective adoptive families ensure that:

- a. accurate, strengths-based narratives are written with input from the child whenever possible;
- b. appropriate mechanisms are in place to protect confidential and identifying information;
- c. written consent is obtained from the child's legal guardian before photo listing the child;  
and
- d. photo listings are updated at least annually, or as often as needed to include relevant information.

**Examples:** Regarding element (c), the public child welfare agency may consent for children who are legally freed for adoption; however, if parental rights have not been terminated, the organization should obtain consent from expectant parents or the judge who has jurisdiction over the child's case.

**NA** The organization does not utilize photo listings to recruit prospective adoptive families.

### **AS 4.043.05**

Upon initial contact, the program~~The organization~~ provides prospective adoptive parents with information on adoption, the adoption process, and services offered by the organization, including ~~which includes:~~

- ~~a. a description of the adoption process, services offered by the organization, and any significant~~ policies or procedures relating to the organization's ~~its~~ adoption services;
- b. eligibility criteria;
- c. fees and expenses ~~prospective adoptive parents may be responsible for; and~~
- d. ~~E~~estimated timelines and general information on waiting lists, if the organization~~program~~ maintains such lists;
- e. common needs and characteristics of children awaiting adoptive families;
- f. the importance of race, ethnicity, religion, tribal affiliation, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other factors in adoption;
- g. options for openness and maintaining connections that benefit the child; and
- h. the availability of supports, clinical services, and subsidies following adoption.

**Interpretation:** *Information on estimated wait times should be carefully communicated articulated to prevent confusion or dissatisfaction if timelines ~~happen to~~ exceed what was originally projected.*

### **AS 4.053.06**

Adoptive parent recruitment is ethical and equitable, and e~~Eligibility~~ criteria of adoptive parents is ethical, equitable, and:

- a. prioritizes the needs and varying characteristics of children in care;
- b. promotes inclusion of individuals and families with diverse backgrounds to ensure appropriate placements are available for all children; and
- c. emphasizes the skills and capacities needed to provide a safe and supportive home environment.

**Interpretation:** *If eligibility criteria is limited, the organization must have a policy for such selectivity and refer applicants who do not meet its criteria to another provider, unless it is evident the applicants do not meet legally required criteria.*

**Interpretation:** *When placing American Indian and Alaska Native children, organizations should work closely with tribes to establish eligibility for adoptive parents that are consistent with the norms of the tribe and to identify adoptive homes within the tribal community through joint recruitment efforts.*

### **AS 3.07**

~~Prospective adoptive parents participate in an orientation session, or after initial contact receive information that includes the following:~~

- ~~a. an overview of the lifelong impact of adoption;~~
- ~~b. the process for completing an adoption;~~
- ~~c. common needs and characteristics of children awaiting adoptive families;~~
- ~~d. the importance of race, ethnicity, religion, tribal affiliation, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other factors in adoption;~~
- ~~e. options for openness and maintaining connections that benefit the child; and~~
- ~~f. the availability of supports, clinical services and subsidies following adoption.~~

~~**Interpretation:** *Prospective adoptive parents who have adopted through the program may need orientation if the information, their circumstances, or needs have changed.*~~

## **AS 54: Service and Permanency Planning and Adoption Service Contracts**

~~Clients Persons served by the program~~ participate in the development and ongoing review of service and permanency plans and/or adoption services contracts that are the basis for delivery of services and support.

**NA** ~~The organization only provides foster-to-adopt services only.~~

**NA** ~~The organization provides home study services only.~~

**NA** ~~The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.~~

**Interpretation:** ~~The organization program develops service and permanency plans for the clients-individuals they serve are responsible for serving. Plans for some clients-individuals may be combined or may be separate depending on upon the nature of the program. Service plans are sometimes incorporated into the adoption services contract. Service plans are sometimes drafted prior to the completion of birth family parent assessments, child studies, and home studies and should be updated when those assessments are complete.~~

**Interpretation:** *When the case involves an American Indian or Alaska Native child and family, the organization must: (1) give tribal or local American Indian or Alaska Native representatives an active role in all aspects of service planning and service delivery, including assessment, permanency, case closing, and aftercare, (2) consider and prioritize culturally relevant resources available through or recommended by the tribe or local Indian organizations, and (3) provide timely notification of case reviews to tribal representatives to ensure their involvement, particularly when changes are made to the plan.*

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service planning and monitoring procedures</li> <li>• Adoption service contract template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports or other aggregate data regarding the length of stay in out of home care, from the previous 12 months, if the organization facilitates foster care adoptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Program director</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> <li>c. <u>Clients/Persons served</u></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review case records</li> </ul>

### AS 54.01

Service plans are developed in a timely manner with the full participation of clients/persons served, and others as appropriate, and include:

- agreed upon goals, desired outcomes, and timeframes for achieving them;
- the adoption services and supports to be provided, and by whom; and
- the client's signature documentation of the individual or family's participation in service planning.

**Examples:** *Examples of ways to support the full participation of clients/persons served and others can include providing sufficient notice to interested parties and scheduling meetings at times and places where interested parties can attend.*

**Examples:** *In child-focused recruitment programs, workers can engage children in the development of the recruitment plan by seeking the child's input on or participation with: (1) types of recruitment activities conducted, (2) type of family desired, (3) development of recruitment tools, and (4) identification of individuals to consider.*

### AS 54.02

The permanency plan for children in foster care defines the permanency goal as adoption, is reviewed at least every 6 months through a court or administrative review process, and specifies:

- activities that support the achievement of adoption; and
- a timeframe for completing the adoption.

**NA** *The organization/program does not provide services in foster care cases.*

**Interpretation:** *Federal laws, state statutes, or administrative rules may provide guidance about when and how administrative reviews are to be conducted. The case review may be conducted by or in collaboration with the public authority. The review is scheduled at times when appropriate parties can attend.*

### AS 54.03

The worker and a supervisor, or a clinical, service, or peer team, review each case quarterly, or more frequently depending on the needs of persons/clients served, to assess:

- a. service plan implementation;
- b. progress toward achieving service goals and desired outcomes;
- c. need for additional or new services or other changes to the plan;
- d. the need for any updates to the child background study or the home study; and
- e. the continued appropriateness of agreed upon goals.

**Interpretation:** *When experienced workers are conducting reviews of their own cases, the worker's supervisor must review a sample of the worker's evaluations as per the requirements of the standard.*

## **AS 54.04**

The worker and person served~~client~~:

- a. periodically review progress toward achievement of agreed upon service goals; and
- b. sign document revisions to the service goals and plans.

**Interpretation:** *A clinical or other justification demonstrating the need for additional or new services, or for any significant pause in the process should be documented in the case record and discussion of such changes with persons served~~clients~~ should be documented in the case record to ensure the y client fully understands the justification.*

**Interpretation:** *Each child receives information about progress toward achieving permanency as appropriate to their~~his or her~~ age, cultural needs, and developmental level.*

**Interpretation:** *Workers in child-focused recruitment programs should meet with the child at least monthly to establish a productive working relationship and customize the child's recruitment plan.*

## **AS 4.05**

~~Birth parents who have made a plan for adoption receive written information which includes:~~

- ~~f. disclosure of the requirements relating to notice and consent;~~
- ~~g. provisions for any financial support that will be provided;~~
- ~~h. provisions for contact with prospective adoptive parents, as appropriate;~~
- ~~i. steps to be taken if the birth parent believes that any undue pressure or influence is occurring; and~~
- ~~j. circumstances under which services may be terminated by either party.~~

~~**NA** *The program only provides services in cases where birth parents rights have already been terminated.*~~

~~**Examples:** *The information may be provided for example in a service agreement, a disclosure of organization's policies, a rights and responsibilities disclosure, etc.*~~

## **AS 5.054.06**

The adoption service contract signed by prospective adoptive parents includes:

- a. a description of the services to be provided by the organization~~program~~ and obligations~~responsibilities~~ of the prospective adoptive parents;
- b. fees and expenses, and the organization's refund policy~~to be paid~~;
- c. a provision relating to duty of candor and ongoing disclosure requirements;

- d. available post-placement and post-adoption services ~~that will be available through the organization~~ and details of any required post-placement visits and reports;
- e. a plan describing the adoptive parents' and the organization's responsibilities if the adoption is disrupted or dissolved;
- f. risks related to adoption services and waivers of liability only when such waivers are limited, consistent with applicable law and regulation, and based on the specific risks detailed in the contract; and
- g. ~~circumstances under which services may be terminated by~~ either party may terminate services.

**Interpretation:** *When a child is being placed prior to the termination of parental rights, the organization program should inform the prospective adoptive parents of the risks of such a placement and the steps that will be necessary to complete an adoption.*

**Examples:** *Examples of information in the plan if the adoption is disrupted or dissolved can include: (1) legal and financial obligations of the family and the organization, (2) how the child's wishes may be considered, and (3) how relevant authorities will be notified and may be involved.*

NA The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.

### **AS 5.064.07**

The organization works in active partnership with ~~clients~~ persons served to:

- a. assume a service coordination role, as appropriate, when the need has been identified and no other organization has assumed that responsibility;
- b. ensure that they receive appropriate advocacy support;
- c. assist with access to the full array of services to which they are eligible; and
- d. mediate barriers to services within the service delivery system.

## **AS 65: Birth Parent Family Assessments and Child Background Studies**

The organization program conducts assessments and collects all available information to evaluate service needs, facilitate matching and permanency, and ~~to ensure~~ compile relevant information ~~will be available~~ for future use.

NA The organization provides home study services only.

NA The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.

**Interpretation:** *The term “child study” includes both the process of assessing the child's needs ~~of the child~~ and ~~to~~ the written report, which is generally included in the referral information provided to prospective adoptive parents.*

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for child assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indian Child Welfare Act information provided to families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include:</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for identification and collaboration in ICWA cases</li> <li>• Procedures for birth <del>parent</del>family assessments</li> <li>• Copy of assessment tool(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of tribal state agreements, when applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Program director</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> <li>c. Persons served <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review case records</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### AS 65.01

Assessments are conducted and information is collected in a strengths-based, culturally- and linguistically responsive manner to identify services and resources that support the achievement of agreed upon goals and increase engagement in service delivery.

### AS 65.02

The organization ~~gathers and~~ reviews records and gathers all available information about ~~both~~ birth parents and their extended families from birth parents or other individuals, including:

- a. preferences for the child's placement and wishes for the child;
- b. preferences for openness or the child maintaining connections with siblings, family members, or other individuals;
- c. ~~birth mother and father~~ family medical ~~and social~~ history, including mental health and substance use history;
- d. birth parents' relationship history and marital status;
- e. support provided by expectant parents ~~birth mother and father~~ during the pregnancy and care, visitation and custody of the child;
- f. dated photographs, videos, and/or a physical description of birth parents; and
- g. ~~family social history, including~~ information about the child's grandparents, ~~and~~ siblings, or other extended family members.

**Interpretation:** ~~A birth parent's~~ Family social history should include information about the birth parents' ~~marital status, family history,~~ (1) tribal affiliation, (2) employment, (3) education, (4) religion, and (5) interests, ~~and talents~~.

*When the program is unable to obtain this information, it makes reasonable efforts to obtain the information up until the time when the adoption is finalized and documents efforts to obtain the missing information in the case record.*

*In foster care adoptions, information from the foster care record should be obtained before the record is sealed, and ~~appropriate information should be shared with the prospective adoptive parents~~ the organization or another responsible entity should share the relevant information with the prospective adoptive parents.*

**Interpretation:** *For an American Indian or Alaska Native child, information gathered should also include the child's Certified Degree of Indian Blood and tribal membership card. To protect an*

American Indian or Alaska Native child's rights to tribal enrollment or membership, the state agency, court, and private agency, if applicable, must also coordinate the preparation and maintenance of confidential records on all state adoptions of American Indian and Alaska Native children that include: (1) a copy of the final adoption decree or order, (2) the birth name and birthdate of the Indian child, their tribal affiliation, and the name of the child after adoption, (3) names and addresses of the birth parents, (4) names and addresses of the adoptive parents, (5) name and contact information for any agency having files or information related to the adoption, (6) any affidavit signed by the biological parent(s) requesting confidential identity, and (7) any information relating to tribal membership or eligibility of the adopted child.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is also authorized to receive and maintain these records and to release them at the request of an American Indian or Alaska Native adoptee, their adoptive or foster parents, or an Indian tribe when the American Indian or Alaska Native child has reached age 18.

**Interpretation:** In child-focused recruitment programs, the worker must conduct an in-depth review of the records and information obtained which should also include all significant people in the child's life, past or present.

### AS 65.03

The organization ~~gathers and~~ reviews records and gathers all available information about the child from the ~~youth~~, birth parents, ~~or other individuals who have custody of or care for the child, and the child themselves are responsible for care of the child~~, including:

- a. dated photographs or videos of the child;
- b. history and records of prenatal care and the child's birth;
- c. date the child entered into care, the circumstances of the child's entry into care, and a history of all past and current placements with reasons for each placement change;
- d. history of abuse or neglect;
- e. assessment of past trauma;
- f. the child's medical and social history, including any significant illnesses, injuries, or diagnoses, hospitalizations, other special needs;
- g. all available medical records for the child including developmental status and data, test results, immunization records, dental records, and psychological records;
- h. results of a current medical examination;
- i. history and records of the child's education; and
- j. contact information for organizations, medical professionals or facilities, or others involved in providing services to the birth parents and the child.

**Interpretation:** In child-focused recruitment programs, the worker must conduct an in-depth review of the records and information obtained, which should also include the child's: (1) next court date, (2) most recent assessment, (3) history of services received and needed, (4) strengths, challenges, and desires, and (5) preparedness for adoption.

### FPAS 65.04

~~When the child study is for a youth, the program~~The organization engages children considering or planning for adoption ~~the youth~~ in an age- and developmentally appropriate assessment of:

- a. ~~their goals~~;

- ~~b.a.~~ their understanding of the meaning of adoption, the adoption process, and services offered by the organization and interest in adoption;
- ~~e.b.~~ their preferences, goals, and concerns; and
- ~~d.c.~~ ways in which they can be involved in the process.

**NA** ~~The program does not work with youth considering or planning for adoption. The organization only provides services for infant adoptions.~~

**Interpretation:** ~~The organization should discuss adoption with children who have a formal plan or goal of adoption and those who are considering adoption as one permanency option. Other providers may have already discussed adoption with the child, sometimes before adoption is formally identified as a goal. Adoption workers should have strategies for their initial contact with the child and for engaging them in conversations over time about adoption.~~

## **FPAS 65.05**

The organization identifies American Indian and Alaska Native children and has a process to ensure outreach and collaboration with the tribe or Indian organization to:

- a. determine jurisdiction;
- b. ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act;
- c. provide the family with information regarding their rights under the Indian Child Welfare Act;
- d. facilitate participation in assessment and service planning to determine the most appropriate plan for the child; and
- e. maintain connections between the child and their, ~~the child's~~ extended family, and ~~his or her~~ tribe.

**Interpretation:** ~~All organizations/programs must have established procedures for identifying American Indian and Alaska Native children to determine if the child or his/her biological parent(s) are members of a federally recognized Indian tribe, or if the child is eligible for membership in a federally recognized Indian tribe. Physical appearance, blood quantum, or perceived presence or absence of cultural cues within the family are not appropriate determinants of ICWA applicability. The organization should document efforts to identify and contact children's tribes and if tribes are unknown the organization should contact the regional office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to identify, locate, and notify the child's tribe.~~

## **AS 76: Home Study Practice**

~~Home study preparers~~ Qualified personnel use a standardized home study process to collect and analyze information, assess safety, and determine the eligibility, ~~capabilities, and suitability~~ of prospective adoptive parents.

**NA** ~~The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.~~

**NA** ~~The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.~~

**Interpretation:** ~~The term home study includes both the process of assessing the prospective adoptive parents and to the written report. The process is ongoing as; home studies may need to be updated periodically or when there are significant changes.~~

**Note:** ~~Foster-to-adopt/Care-to-Adoption~~ programs will complete/implement FKC 19 and AS 76.

**Interpretation: Laws and regulations regarding who is qualified to conduct adoption home studies vary by state or tribe.**

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table of contents of training curricula</li> <li>• Home study procedures</li> <li>• Copy of home study tool(s)</li> <li>• Procedures for background checks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training curricula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Program director</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Review case records</li> </ul>

### **AS 76.01**

~~Staff who conduct home studies receive~~ ~~The program provides~~ initial and periodic training and ongoing supervision ~~to home study preparers~~ on the ~~use of a~~ defined home study method and ~~tools for home studies to reinforce the consistent application of process.~~

**Interpretation:** *While practice should be consistent with the program model, tools, and standards, decisions about how the home study is conducted in each case (including who must be interviewed, how each interview is conducted, the content of interviews, and visits to the home) are clinical decisions that should ~~consider take into account~~ the unique needs and circumstances of the prospective adoptive parent(s) and the child if the child is already identified or living in the home. The ~~organization program~~ should ~~have a system or approach that~~ recognizes that there can be subjective aspects to assessment and decision-making and have appropriate mechanisms ~~are in place~~ to ensure that its determinations are well justified.*

### **AS 76.02**

The home study process includes:

- ~~the receipt of collection and review of~~ self-reported information and documents from the prospective adoptive parents;
- at least one individual in-person interview with each prospective adoptive parent and one joint interview;
- age-and developmentally-appropriate interviews with each child and adult living or frequently in the home;
- age-and developmentally-appropriate interviews with each child or adult child of the prospective adoptive parents living outside the home;
- at least two visits to the prospective adoptive family's home ~~and during one or more of those visits a~~ including a safety assessment of the home and an observation of family members interacting together;
- criminal background, ~~and~~ child abuse and neglect records, and sex offender registry checks ~~in accordance with~~ according to applicable law and regulation;

- g. a review of information and documents relating to any previous unfavorable home studies, denied adoption petitions, disruptions, dissolutions, or placement of other children out of the home; and
- h. ~~written references and interviews with individuals providing references~~ personal references, including unrelated references when permitted by law; ~~and~~
- i. ~~periodic updates and updates when there are significant changes in circumstance to ensure relevant information and documents are current.~~

**Interpretation:** *Individuals living in the home share common areas, sleep in the home, and have lived there for more than two weeks. Individuals frequently in the home should include any child care providers.*

*In-person interviews provide the best opportunity for engagement of the person interviewed and provide additional information through observations and interactions during the interview and are preferred, but have only been specifically required for the prospective adoptive parents. It can sometimes be appropriate to interview other individuals through a video conference or over the phone. When the organization/agency is unable to complete an interview, it should make a clinical determination if the interview is necessary given the circumstances, other steps that can be taken to obtain relevant information, and document that decision and its efforts in the case record.*

*People who provide references should be interviewed to validate the reference and can provide additional information or verification of other information collected through the home study process.*

*While best practice generally requires at least two visits to the home to effectively engage the family in the home study process, make the necessary observations, and effectively collect all the required and necessary information, the organization/agency should conduct additional visits when it deems necessary.*

*Tribes and local Indian organizations may also be able to provide valuable support in assessing and approving adoptive families for American Indian and Alaska Native children.*

~~**Interpretation:** Home studies including background checks should be updated periodically so that they remain valid in accordance with applicable requirements. Significant changes in circumstances include a change in: residence, employment or financial resources, additional children or adults residing in the home, criminal history, abuse history, medical status, etc. Updates for a significant change in circumstance are best completed as soon as possible, but may be postponed in certain circumstances, for example, if an additional change is expected or the prospective adoptive parents expect a significant amount of time to pass before their home study will be used.~~

## **AS 76.03**

The home study includes a psychosocial assessment of each prospective adoptive parent's:

- a. motivations, ~~and~~ expectations, and preparedness for relating to adoption;
- b. personal characteristics and caregiving abilities and experiences; ~~such as adaptability, coping skills, communication, and problem solving;~~   
caregiving abilities and experiences especially for children or adults with significant or complex needs, including knowledge and skills relating to discipline techniques;

- c. physical and mental health, including history of trauma, abuse or neglect, and substance use;
- d. significant family history, status of marital and family relationships, and family lifestyle;
- e. educational background, employment history, and financial status;
- f. community and social supports;
- e.g. willingness and ability to support a child's continued connection to ~~their his or her biological family members birth parents, siblings, and relatives~~ and racial, ethnic and cultural heritage; and
- d.h. previous experiences with foster care or adoption.

**Interpretation:** *Regarding element (a), the psychosocial assessment should provide opportunities to discuss prospective adoptive parents' experiences related to infertility, miscarriage, or the death of a child to assess their readiness for, and understanding of, adoption, determine if referrals for services such as grief counseling are needed, and provide additional support as appropriate.*

**Interpretation:** *The assessment of knowledge and skills relating to discipline techniques should include an assessment of the risk of prospective adoptive parents' use of interventions that can be harmful to children, especially children with a history of trauma. Some examples of interventions which can be harmful include but are not limited to:*

- a. *corporal punishment;*
- b. *interventions that involve withholding nutrition or hydration or that inflict physical or psychological pain;*
- c. *the use of demeaning, shaming, or degrading language or activities; and*
- d. *forced physical exercise as punishment or in excess.*

*Regarding element (b), an assessment of prospective adoptive parents' caregiving abilities and experiences should include a review of their knowledge and skills related to fostering positive behavior, with particular attention to strategies that address the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma.*

**Examples:** *Regarding element (b), personal characteristics of individuals and families positively associated with parenting adopted children include, but are not limited to: (1) patience, (2) empathy, (3) adaptability, (4) effective communication, (5) coping skills, and (6) problem-solving abilities.*

## **AS 6.04**

The home study includes a psychosocial assessment of each prospective adoptive parent's:

- a. previous history of and services related to infertility, miscarriage or death of a child;
- b. personal history of trauma, abuse or neglect, alcohol or drug use;
- c. current status and history of physical and mental health;
- d. significant family history, status of marital and family relationships, and family lifestyle;
- e. education;
- f. literacy and language skills;
- g. employment history and financial status; and
- h.a. the community and social environment.

### **AS 7.046.05**

The ~~organization provides education, support, and continued assessment throughout the~~ home study process ~~that helps prospective adoptive parents consider~~ is in an open, engaging, and transparent self-assessment:

- a. ~~of the prospective adoptive parents' their~~ strengths and ~~capacity capabilities~~ to provide lifelong care ~~for and support to~~ children who have experienced trauma and loss; and
- b. ~~to help prospective adoptive parents confirm for themselves if whether~~ adoption ~~is continue to be~~ an appropriate goal ~~for their family through the provision of education, support, and continued assessment during the home study and preparation process.~~

### **AS 7.056.06**

The information gathered during the home study process is carefully considered, in a timely manner, to determine:

- a. if any further assessment is needed;
- b. what additional counseling, training, or preparation is needed;
- c. the family's ability and readiness to successfully complete an adoption;
- d. the family's eligibility and suitability for adoption; and
- e. the specific characteristics and special needs of children the family would be suitable to care and provide for.

**Interpretation:** *The rationale for these determinations and the persons involved in making the determinations should be clearly documented in the record.*

### **AS 7.066.07**

~~When the program has reason to believe that the~~ If the organization determines that prospective adoptive parents may not meet the required eligibility criteria or certain factors might not be adequately mitigated to demonstrate suitability, the organization:

- a. ~~the program communicates the~~ ensures specific concerns are communicated to the prospective adoptive parents as early as possible and attempts to resolve them; and
- b. ~~the home study report is completed and prospective adoptive parents receive~~ provides a written explanation of the reasons for the decision and the procedures for appeal if the home study is denied. ~~if approval cannot be given and the application has not been withdrawn.~~

**Interpretation:** *Eligibility criteria of countries and states may differ, and the ~~organization program~~ must evaluate all applicable criteria. The ~~organization program~~ should ensure required eligibility factors are clearly and accurately addressed in the home study. While some jurisdictions are willing to waive eligibility criteria in unique circumstances, it is best to receive those waivers in advance and in writing.*

**Examples:** ~~Factors that may need to be mitigated and could delay the completion of the home study process include, for example: healthcare and housing needs especially in kinship or relative adoptions.~~

Factors that may need to be mitigated for home study approval may include: (1) untreated physical or mental health issues, (2) hazards in the home such as unsecured firearms or inoperative smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, (3) outdated pet vaccinations, (4) unstable finances or relationships, and (5) housing modifications related to living space and arrangements, cleanliness, or household members.

### **AS 7.076-08**

A written home study report is completed in a timely manner and contains complete, accurate, and current information addressing applicable eligibility criteria, suitability, and all other required information.

**Interpretation:** *The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act generally requires the completion within 60 days and acceptance of such studies received from another State within 14 days.*

### **AS 7.08**

The organization ensures that all prospective adoptive homes receive and maintain licensure, approval, or certification in accordance with state, tribal, or local regulation and completes periodic updates when there are significant changes in circumstance to ensure relevant information and documents are current.

**Interpretation:** Home studies, including background checks, should be updated periodically so that they remain valid in accordance with applicable requirements. Significant changes in circumstances include a change in residence, employment or financial resources, additional children or adults residing in the home, criminal history, abuse history, medical status, etc. Updates for a significant change in circumstance are best completed as soon as possible, but may be postponed in certain circumstances, for example, if an additional change is expected or the prospective adoptive parents expect a significant amount of time to pass before their home study will be used.

NA The organization provides home study services only.

## **AS 87: Training for Prospective Adoptive Parents**

Prospective adoptive parents complete required training to prepare the ~~m~~ family for adoption.

NA The organization provides home study services only.

NA The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.

NA The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.

**Interpretation:** *Training must meet all applicable state requirements and for international adoptions training must also meet all requirements of 22 CFR Part 96.48 and the child's country of origin.*

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Procedures for the provision of training and preparation of</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Informational materials provided to prospective adoptive parents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviews may include:</li></ul>

<p>prospective adoptive parents and for child specific training and preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table of contents of training provided directly by the organization and/or a list of trainings provided by third parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training curriculum for any training provided directly by the organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Program director</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> <li>c. <u>Clients</u><u>Persons served</u></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review case records</li> </ul>
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### AS 87.01

The organization uses suitable effective training methods and standardized curricula that are tailored to meet the needs of prospective adoptive parents and individualized curricula are used by the program to ensure each prospective adoptive parent is adequately prepared for placement.

**Examples:** The organization program may customize their training based methods and curricula based on the types of adoptions they are involved with or the unique characteristics of clients persons served. For example, kinship caregivers, relatives, foster parents, or prospective adoptive parents who have already adopted another child through the organization program may receive individualized training best suited to their unique strengths and needs. not need training in all areas as new prospective adoptive parents.

**Examples:** *Examples of training methods found to be effective or commonly used include: (1) in-person, group seminars, (2) online training through webinars and self-paced trainings, (3) recorded trainings and podcasts, (4) reading and writing assignments, and (5) individual counseling and training.*

### AS 87.02

Prospective adoptive parents receive training and demonstrate competence in:

- a. the adoption process and significant provisions of laws and regulations;
- b. the availability of, and application process for, subsidies or other financial benefits;
- c. options for openness in adoption;
- d. the importance of legally finalizing the adoption and for obtaining and maintaining documentation of citizenship for children adopted internationally;
- e. long term impacts of adoption on the child and the family; and
- f. the availability and importance of post-adoption supports and services.

**Interpretation:** *With regards to element (a), it is especially important for training to include educating prospective adoptive parents on the ways in which how laws and regulations might impact the adoption process. For example, it is important for prospective adoptive parents to should receive training on the Indian Child Welfare Act, its impact on placement and permanency for American Indian and Alaska Native children, and its requirements relating to supporting the child's cultural identity and facilitating connections to the his or her their tribe.*

## FPAS 87.03

Prospective adoptive parents receive training and demonstrate competence in parenting adopted children with trauma history~~common experiences and needs of waiting and adopted children~~, including:

- a. understanding chronic or complex trauma;
  - b. recognizing the signs of unknown or undisclosed abuse, effective strategies to support safe disclosure, and how to report abuse allegations to appropriate authorities;
  - c. maintaining safety when there is a history of sexual abuse, trafficking, self-harming behavior, or other unsafe conduct;
  - d. promoting positive behavior by adapting parenting techniques to fit the child's needs; and
  - e. overcoming barriers to seeking or obtaining support.
- a. ~~the general characteristics and needs of waiting children;~~
  - b. ~~the frequency and impact of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, neglect, and child trafficking;~~
  - c. ~~the impact of institutionalization and living in out-of-home care;~~
  - d. ~~the impact of malnutrition, maternal substance abuse, and any other common factors that impact on health and development; and~~
  - e. ~~attachment and bonding.~~

**Interpretation:** Regarding element (d), training on promoting positive behavior should include information on discipline techniques that can be harmful to children, especially children with a history of trauma, including: (1) corporal punishment, (2) interventions that involve withholding nutrition or hydration or that inflict physical or psychological pain, (3) the use of demeaning, shaming, or degrading language or activities, and (4) forced physical exercise as punishment or in excess.

**Examples:** The organization may provide or refer prospective adoptive parents to evidence-based parenting programs to learn more about complex trauma and how to effectively parent children who have experienced multiple traumatic events, such as physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, neglect, institutionalization and out-of-home care, malnutrition, prenatal substance exposure, or other events.

Training may include how to: (1) recognize trauma triggers and conditioned responses, (2) avoid actions or reactions that may trigger the child, (3) normalize the child's feelings and provide emotional support in ways the child can accept, (4) implement strategies for relaxation, (5) provide positive experiences to encourage self-esteem, (6) provide developmentally-appropriate information and education about trauma to the child, (7) provide developmentally-appropriate opportunities for choice and control, and (8) recognize and respond to secondary trauma.

## FPAS 87.04

Prospective adoptive parents receive training and demonstrate competence in skills and supporting the social-emotional needs of adopted children, ~~heal and thrive throughout their lives~~, including helping them:

- a. copeing with separation, loss, and grief; ~~and~~

- ~~a.b. \_\_\_\_\_ build and maintain supporting healthy bonds and attachments and relationships;~~
- ~~b.c. navigating changing roles and relationships; and~~
- ~~c.d. supporting the child's identity development explore, develop, and embrace their cultural, racial, and gender identity by providing a safe, affirming environment.~~
- ~~d. raising a child of a different race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity;~~
- ~~e. responding effectively and safely to children's behavior and unknown or unexpected issues, and adapting parenting strategies and discipline techniques to fit the child's needs;~~
- ~~f. parenting a child with a history of trauma;~~
- ~~g. recognizing signs of unknown or undisclosed abuse, effective strategies to support safe disclosure, and reporting abuse allegations to appropriate authorities;~~
- ~~h. strategies for maintaining safety when there is a history of sexual abuse, trafficking, self-harming behavior, or other unsafe behavior; and~~
- ~~i. overcoming barriers to seeking or obtaining help and support.~~

**Interpretation:** *Having skills and strategies to navigate changing roles and relationships is especially important when the child and prospective adoptive parents are relatives, already known to each other, or when some level of openness is being considered.*

**Examples:** *Regarding element (d), training can include: (1) the organization's nondiscrimination policy, (2) the history, traditions, values, and communication styles of populations served, (3) systemic inequities and implicit bias, (4) how culture influences trauma response, (5) a review of vocabulary relevant to LGBTQ+ youth; and (6) parenting practices that promote the safety and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth.*

**Examples:** *Regarding element (f), training can include:*

- ~~a. recognizing trauma triggers and conditioned responses;~~
- ~~b. developing skills to avoid actions or reactions that may trigger the child;~~
- ~~c. providing emotional support in ways the child can accept and normalizing their feelings;~~
- ~~d. strategies for relaxation;~~
- ~~e. providing positive experiences to encourage self-esteem;~~
- ~~f. providing age appropriate information and education about trauma to the child;~~
- ~~g. providing age appropriate opportunities for choice and control; and~~
- ~~h.a. \_\_\_\_\_ recognizing, preventing, and addressing secondary trauma.~~

## **AS 87.05**

Prospective adoptive parents receive directly or by referral:

- a. needed customized education, counseling, or support specific to their unique needs or experiences which may impact their readiness and suitability for placement; and
- b. reassessment when needed to ensure they remain ready and suitable for an adoptive placement~~to move forward with an adoption.~~

**Examples:** *Examples of unique needs and experiences can include, but are not limited to: (1) prior history of trauma, mental illness, or substance use, (2) experience of infertility, miscarriage, or loss of a child, (3) their own adoption as a child, (4) grief or loss due to missed time with their adopted child, and (5) a previous unsuccessful adoption attempt or disruption or dissolution of an adoption.*

## AS 98: Consents, and Matching, Referral, and Placement

The ~~organization program~~ ensures consents are obtained properly and makes diligent and timely efforts to match ~~and place~~ children with prospective adoptive parents who can meet their needs for safety, well-being, and permanency.

**NA** *The organization provides home study services only.*

**NA** *The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.*

**Interpretation:** *Children are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process to the greatest extent possible given their age and developmental level.*

**Note:** *Foster-to-adopt Care to Adoption programs will ~~complete~~implement FKC 7 and AS 8.*

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Procedures for matching and referrals</del></li> <li>• Copy of tools used for providing notice, obtaining consents, <u>and matching, and referrals</u></li> <li>• <u>Matching procedures</u></li> <li>• <del>Procedures for placement and child transfers</del></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of tribal participation in placement process, when applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Program director</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> <li>c. <u>Clients</u><u>Persons served</u></li> </ol> </li> <li>• Review case records</li> </ul>

### AS 98.01

Custody status and applicable notice and consent requirements are determined as early as possible.

**NA** *The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.*

**Note:** *The Indian Child Welfare Act includes provisions related to the termination of parental rights that apply to both public and private adoption proceedings.*

### FPAS 98.02

The ~~organization program~~ ensures timely and diligent efforts to locate and provide notice to all parties who require notification or whose consent is required and documents such efforts in the case record.

**NA** *The ~~organization program~~ only provides services in cases where birth parents' rights have already been terminated and no other consents are required.*

**NA** *The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.*

**Interpretation:** *The organization should take steps to prevent practices that could limit or compromise a party's rights to notice and consent, including, for example: (1) following up on inconsistent or incomplete information on someone whose notice or consent may be required, (2) detailing important due dates and overseeing completion of required tasks, (3) establishing procedures to determine jurisdiction and change of jurisdiction, and (4) verifying that notice and consent requirements were met when those steps are completed by another provider.*

*The organization should understand consent requirements set by state statutes. All states require consent from all legal parents if parental rights have not been terminated. Additional consent requirements vary and may include obtaining consent from (1) the child if over a certain age, (2) the agency or individual who has custody of the child, (3) the child's guardian ad litem, or (4) the court that has jurisdiction over the child.*

### **FPAS 98.03**

When obtaining consents to adoption, the organization program ensures all applicable legal requirements are met and verifies each individual providing consent:

- a. has read and understands the consent and any related the necessary documents ~~and had their questions about those documents answered;~~
- ~~b. understands the significance and meaning of the information in the documents;~~
- ~~c. b.~~ has had sufficient time to consider the decision;
- ~~d. c.~~ is not under the influence of any substances or conditions that could compromise their understanding or decision making;
- ~~e. d.~~ \_\_\_\_\_ understands ~~the need for their consent and any conditions under which they can~~ when and how they may revoke their consent;
- ~~f. e.~~ has not experienced any undue pressure or duress for their consent;
- ~~g. f.~~ has not received or been promised any compensation or other consideration in exchange for their consent; and
- ~~h. g.~~ \_\_\_\_\_ is not aware of any fraud having been committed in relation to the adoption.

**NA** *The organization program only provides services in cases where birth parents' rights have already been terminated and no other consents are required.*

**NA** *The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.*

### **AS 98.04**

The organization program assesses all available information about the birth parents, the child, and prospective adoptive parents, including expressed preferences, and determines which prospective adoptive parents may be most suitable to meet the needs of the child.

**Interpretation:** *An organization that has responsibility for placing an American Indian or Alaska Native child should work closely with the child's tribe to identify adoptive homes within the tribal community. Families from all tribes to which the child has ties should be considered as placement options, and eligibility should be consistent with the norms of the tribe.*

**Interpretation:** *Some circumstances that can make transition more difficult and have been found to be factors in some disruptions and dissolutions include placement of more than one unrelated child into a home at the same time, or placement of a child too soon after the birth or addition of another child to the family.*

The ~~organization program~~ might generally avoid matching children with prospective adoptive parents in these circumstances or take additional steps to prepare for and support such placements.

~~Note: Documentation of which prospective adoptive parents were considered should be documented in program records or in the case record.~~

### **AS 98.05**

The ~~organization program~~ provides information about the prospective adoptive parents who were identified as possible matches to the birth parents, the youth, and/or the individual(s) who are responsible for making the placement decision and documents the provision of this information in its records.

### **AS 98.06**

The ~~organization program~~ incorporates provisions of applicable law and regulations for placement preferences and matching into its established criteria for determining or making recommendations about the best interests of the child and:

- a. makes placement decisions based on this criteria; and
- b. documents the decision in its records.

**Interpretation:** *In cases where expectant parents have made an adoption plan prior to the child's birth, the ~~organization program~~ can make or support a preliminary match before the birth, and makes a final decision or recommendation on the match only after the child is born and the child study is completed and reviewed.*

**Interpretation:** *Organizations Programs must follow guidelines set forth in the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act and should consider birth parents' expressed desires and the importance of keeping siblings together. When there is any conflict in these preferences or priorities the organization engages administrative personnel and legal counsel as needed to make its decision and carefully documents its deliberations and a rationale for its decision.*

**Interpretation:** *When the organization is working with American Indian and Alaska Native children and families, tribal representatives and service providers must be involved in placement decisions and placement changes to ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act, which requires that preference be given to families in the following order: (1) a member of the child's extended family, (2) families who are members of the child's tribe, and (3) other American Indian or Alaska Native families.*

*Alternative placement preferences established by the child's tribe may apply, and the court may also take into consideration the preferences of the child or ~~their~~ birth parents.*

**Interpretation:** *When the ~~organization program~~ does not have responsibility for making the decision, it should provide input in the process whenever possible and/or review the placement decision and provide feedback when necessary to express any questions or concerns about the match.*

## **AS 98.07**

The ~~organization program~~ notifies prospective adoptive parents of the match and provides a referral package which includes the child study and all non-identifying information that can be provided.

**Interpretation:** *The organization must not withhold or misrepresent any information concerning the child. Intentional misrepresentation, concealment, or withholding of information can negatively impact children and families and put the organization at risk for litigation. The organization may not provide all non-identifying information about the child's family history at the time of the match and initial placement but should give the prospective adoptive parents sufficient information about the child to ensure safety and well-being and provide additional, non-identifying information on the child's background and family history at the time of the adoption.*

**Examples:** *Examples of practices to implement the standard include: (1) informing prospective adoptive parents in advance of any limits on information gathering and disclosure, (2) maintaining detailed records of the receipt and provision of information, and (3) training staff on procedures for collecting and disclosing information and documentation requirements.*

- ~~a. informing prospective adoptive parents in advance of any limits on information gathering and disclosure;~~
- ~~b. maintaining detailed records of the receipt and provision of information;~~
- ~~c. providing information in writing even when providing it verbally; and~~
- ~~d. training staff on procedures for collecting and disclosing information and documentation requirements.~~

~~NA The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.~~

## **AS 98.08**

The ~~organization program~~ allows ~~the~~ prospective adoptive parents at least two weeks to consider the match and provides ~~needed~~ information, counseling, training, and ongoing assessment of the suitability of the match based on the information in the referral, the home study, and any new information received.

**Interpretation:** *The prospective adoptive parents should have sufficient time to give careful thought and consideration ~~in~~to the decision. While there may be circumstances where the child's immediate needs are significant and the child would benefit from a shorter timeframe, the ~~organization program~~ must still take steps to ensure the prospective parents have given careful thought and consideration ~~in~~to their decision.*

~~NA The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.~~

## **AS 8.09**

~~The program takes all appropriate measures to ensure that the transfer of the child takes place in secure and appropriate circumstances, with properly trained and qualified escorts, if used.~~

## **AS 109: Preparation and Support for Placement**

~~The program provides information, counseling, training, and support to help prepare parties to the adoption for placement.~~

The organization prepares and supports parties to the adoption for placement by providing information, counseling, service referrals, and training.

NA The organization provides home study services only.

NA The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procedures for <u>preparing for</u> adoption <u>preparation</u> that address <del>for</del> the provision of information, counseling, and support</li> <li>Procedures for maintaining <del>continued</del> contact with relatives and openness in adoption</li> <li><u>Procedures for child transfer</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informational materials provided to <u>clientspersons served</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Program director</li> <li>e. Relevant personnel</li> <li>f. <u>ClientsPersons served</u></li> </ul> </li> <li>Review case records</li> </ul>

### AS 109.01

The organizationprogram provides or arranges for services and supports needed to help prepare birth parents for the child's placement including:

- a. ~~planning for the immediate future and~~ referral for needed services;
- b. assistance as needed within planning for ~~details of~~ the child's birth, placement, and ~~for~~ the adoption process;
- c. counseling and support relating to grief, separation, loss, and the lifelong implications of placing a child for adoption;
- d. discussion of changing roles and relationships in the case of a relative adoption or when the birth parents will have an ongoing relationship or maintain contact with the child or adoptive parents;
- e. support for assistance with maintaining relationships with friends and family who can provide support; and
- f. ~~information on~~ post-adoption services and information on the potential for search and reunion in the future.

**Interpretation:** *It can help birth parents to maintain supportive relationships by providing, with their permission, information, counseling, and/or support to family members or other individuals with whom they have a close relationship, especially if those individuals may not be fully supportive of the adoption plan.*

In foster care cases where the birth parents' rights have been involuntarily terminated, it may not be possible or appropriate to provide such services. The ~~organization program~~ may consult with the public agency or its designee to determine the appropriateness and needs for such services. Documentation of that consultation and implementation of the guidance provided is sufficient evidence of implementation for this standard.

### AS 109.02

The ~~organization program~~ provides or arranges for developmentally appropriate services needed to help the child prepare for ~~placement adoption~~, including:

- a. information to help the child understand the meaning, process, and lifelong impact of adoption;
- b. counseling to help the child understand and cope with feelings of fear, separation, and loss;
- c. opportunities ~~to for~~ visits with prospective adoptive parents, including chances to share information about the child's routines and preferences, and preparation and support for such visits;
- d. discussion of changing roles and relationships in the case of a relative adoption or when the birth parents will ~~have an ongoing relationship or~~ maintain contact or a relationship with the child;
- e. preparation for moving to a new community or school;
- f. opportunities for peer support;
- g. information on post-placement services; and
- h. providing opportunities for assisting the child's ~~to be~~ involvemented in planning for placement.

**Examples:** A lifebook can be created by older children or for younger children to describe the child's personal history.

### AS 109.03

When the parties to the adoption are considering an open adoption or maintaining connections between the child and ~~their biological family members, the birth parents, relatives, siblings, previous foster families,~~ or others with whom they have a connection, ~~the organization they are offered counseling, assistance, and support to:~~

- a. assesses and makes professional recommendations regarding if, and to what extent, continued contact is in the child's best interests;
- b. ~~develop and agree on plans offers counseling and support for planning~~ the exchange of information or continued contact, including how to resolve conflicts that may arise; and
- a.c. documents these efforts in the case record.
- b. ~~plan for how to resolve conflicts that might arise in the future.~~

**Interpretation:** ~~Most birth parents making a voluntary plan for adoption have an interest in some level of openness in the adoption. In cases where parental rights are involuntarily terminated, there may be situations where ongoing connection with a sibling, birth parent, relative, or other individuals with a significant connection to the child can be beneficial for the child's growth, development and stability of the placement. Documentation in the record that the organization has assessed of the assessment of the appropriateness of openness or~~

*maintaining connections ~~in the record~~ will be sufficient evidence of standard implementation in cases where there are no plans for openness or maintaining connections.*

*Examples: Maintaining relationships between adopted children and their biological relatives or others with whom they have a significant connection is most often beneficial for the child's development and the stability of the adoptive placement. Decisions regarding whether to maintain contact may depend on (1) the circumstances surrounding the termination of the birth parents' parental rights, (2) the characteristics of the child and the birth parents, (3) the relationship between the child and birth family, and (4) the relationship between the adoptive parents and the birth parents.*

*The continuum of open adoption is extensive and may include, but is not limited to: (1) birth parent(s)' providing their identifying information to the adoptive parents, (2) organization-mediated communication, (3) occasional written, phone, or in-person contact, and/or (4) frequent in-person contact. To assist in planning the details of an open adoption, the organization can (1) help identify individuals the child might continue to contact and encourage consideration of the child's expressed desires regarding ongoing contact, (2) discuss options for the type and frequency of contact, emphasizing that communication needs and desires may change over time, (3) explain limits on confidentiality and enforcement of agreements, and (4) document expressed preferences and concerns in the case record.*

*~~Examples: Counseling can help the parties to consider whether continued contact is in the best interest of the child and others involved in both the immediate and long term future. Planning can include identification of individuals the child might continue to contact, and the type and frequency of contact. The program should explain limitations on confidentiality and enforcement of agreements and document in the case record expressed preferences and concerns.~~*

*~~Examples: The continuum of openness is extensive. Some examples of openness include, but are not limited to:~~*

- ~~a. the birth parent(s)' provision of identifying information to the prospective adoptive parents about the birth parents at the time of placement;~~*
- ~~b. organization-mediated written communication;~~*
- ~~c. occasional contact with birth parents or other relatives; and/or~~*
- ~~d. a. frequent in-person contact with birth family members.~~*

## **AS 109.04**

*AProspective adoptive parents receive services and supports to prepare assistance preparing for the child's safe and healthy transition placement into the home, through services and supports including assistance with:*

- a. planning for the details and timeframe of the transition, including plans for pre-placement visits with the prospective adoptive family;*
- b. information on the types of preparing for and managing the child's behaviors and emotions children typically experience during the transition and typical length of time for the transition period;*
- c. counseling on how to ease the transition given the information known about the child;*
- d. c. assistance with preparation of other children or individuals living or frequently in the home; and*

e-d. \_\_\_\_\_ obtaining resources for the child's therapeutic, medical, educational, or other special needs; and

f.e. ~~assistance in~~ obtaining insurance, financial assistance, or other benefits.

**Interpretation:** Pre-placement visits can help the child learn more about the prospective adoptive family's community and family culture and form a relationship. A typical transition plan includes initial daytime visits, progressing to overnight and weekend visits in the adoptive family's home.

**Examples:** Information can be provided through: (1) reading materials, (2) contact information for service providers, (3) group or individual counseling and training sessions, and (4) online resources.

**Examples:** Regarding element (f), financial assistance may include: (1) recurring monthly payments through Title IV-E subsidies, (2) tax credits, (3) employer benefits, and (4) education expense assistance.

### **~~AS 8.09~~ AS 10.05**

~~The program takes all appropriate measures to~~ The organization ensures that the transfer of the child takes place in secure and appropriate circumstances, with properly trained and qualified escorts, if used.

### **~~AS 10.06~~ AS 10.05**

The ~~organization program~~ promptly provides prospective adoptive parents with updated information about the child if and when such information becomes available.

## **AS ~~1110~~: Temporary Care for Children Awaiting Placement**

Foster parents provide temporary care that ensures the health and safety of infants awaiting adoption.

**NA** The ~~organization program~~ does not provide temporary care for children awaiting placement or ~~the program~~ provides such care through its foster care program.

**NA** The organization provides home study and/or child-focused recruitment services only.

**NA** The organization provides post-placement and/or post-adoption services only.

~~**NA** The organization provides foster-to-adopt services only.~~

**Interpretation:** When the case involves an American Indian or Alaska Native child, the tribe or a local Indian organization and the Bureau of Indian Affairs should be notified of the decision to temporarily place an infant awaiting adoption in a foster home.

**Interpretation:** This section is intended for programs that provide short term, temporary care for children, usually newborns, while they await placement, typically in states where direct placement with prospective adoptive parents is not possible and do not otherwise provide foster care services.

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy for licensure, approval, or certification of homes</li> <li>• Procedures for licensure, approval, or certification of homes</li> <li>• Procedures for foster home assessments, including criminal background checks</li> <li>• Procedures for foster home visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training curricula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relevant personnel</li> <li>○ Foster parents</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review case records</li> <li>• Review foster parent records</li> </ul>

### **AS 1140.01**

Prior to placement, foster homes are licensed, approved, or certified according to state, tribal, or local regulation, and foster parents have completed all required training.

### **FPAS 1140.02**

Prior to placement, the organization:

- assesses the home to identify any safety concerns; and
- conducts criminal background and child abuse registry checks for all adults living or frequently in the home in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements.

**Examples/Interpretation:** *Individuals living in the home share common areas, sleep in the home, and have lived there for more than two weeks. Individuals frequently in the home can include for example, a child care provider.*

### **FPAS 1140.03**

The **organization program** coordinates needed healthcare services for the child, and foster parents are trained to respond to the healthcare needs of the child.

### **AS 1140.04**

The adoption worker visits the foster parents and the child:

- within the first two weeks of placement; and
- at least once a month while in temporary placement to evaluate safety and needs.

### **FPAS 1140.05**

Each foster family develops or uses the organization's protocols for responding to emergencies, including accidents, serious illness, fire, and natural disasters.

### **FPAS 1140.06**

Foster parents who transport children in their own vehicles:

- a. use age-appropriate passenger restraint systems;
- b. properly maintain vehicles and obtain required registration and inspection;
- c. provide the organization with validation of their driving records; and
- d. provide the organization with validation of their licenses and appropriate insurance coverage.

~~**Interpretation:** Regarding elements (c) and (d), this information should be provided as frequently as necessary, based on the amount of time licenses and insurance are valid. For example, if licenses are valid for two years, license validation can occur every two years. Regarding validation of appropriate insurance coverage, it is suggested that the organization maintain a copy of each foster parent's auto policy declaration.~~

**Interpretation:** Regarding element (d), this information should be provided as frequently as necessary, based on the amount of time licenses and insurance are valid. The organization should determine what level of insurance coverage is considered appropriate and maintain a copy of each resource parent's auto policy declaration to validate appropriate insurance coverage.

~~**Note:** In some cases this standard may not be applicable to all foster parents (e.g., if foster parents live in urban areas and utilize public transportation instead of their own vehicles).~~

## AS 1211: Post-Placement and Post-Adoption Support and Family Preservation Services

A comprehensive continuum of post-placement and post-adoption services are available to ensure safety, well-being, and long-term stability and permanency.

**NA** The organization provides home study services only.

**NA** The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.

~~**Interpretation:** Whenever possible, services provided by others should be provided by adoption competent professionals with experience in trauma informed care.~~

~~**Interpretation:** All individuals involved in an adoption have their own unique experiences and needs related to adoption. People may experience few or frequent needs, minimal or extensive needs, and may experience those needs at any point in time throughout their lives.~~

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>• List of services provided by the agency and/or available in the community</del></li> <li><del>• Procedures for referring individuals to services</del></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports <u>on related to any adoption-related</u> crisis situations reviewed through risk management or performance and quality improvement activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Program director</li> <li>○ Relevant personnel</li> <li>○ <u>Clients</u><u>Persons served</u></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for responding to crisis situations</li> <li>• Procedures for post-placement monitoring, visits, and reports</li> <li>• <del>Procedures for the collection of information, record keeping and retention, and information disclosure</del></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Community resource and referral list</u></li> <li>• <u>Educational/training curricula, if applicable</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review case records</li> </ul>
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## AS 1244.01

The organization program provides or refers children, youth, adoptive parents, adoptive families, and adopted adults to an array of preventive and supportive services based on their individualized needs, including:

- information, education, and counseling;
- social and cultural events and activities;
- preventive care for medical, developmental, and mental health needs;
- respite care; and
- support and advocacy groups, including peer support.

**Interpretation:** Adopted children may not need supportive services until years after an adoption is finalized. The organization should provide the family with information on how to obtain services even after they are no longer served by the organization.

**Interpretation:** Whenever possible, services provided by others should be provided by adoption-competent professionals with experience in trauma-informed care.

**Interpretation:** Specialized services for transracial or transcultural adoptive families, kinship caregivers, children who identify as LGBTQ+, and children with physical, emotional, behavioral, and developmental challenges should be made available to the greatest extent possible given the availability of local resources.

**Examples:** *Engaging families in social activities and basic supportive services can help ~~to~~ keep them connected to the organization program and increase their likelihood of requesting help when more significant needs emerge.*

**Examples:** *Examples of common adoption-related issues ~~which may benefit from~~ addressed by preventive and supportive services ~~may~~ include: (1) grief and feelings of loss or abandonment, (2) challenges with developing and maintaining trusting relationships, (3) identity formation, (4) difficulty navigating developmental milestones and events, and (5) unknown medical, developmental, or mental health needs.*

- ~~difficulties with grief or feelings of loss or abandonment;~~
- ~~challenges in developing trust and establishing and maintaining relationships;~~
- ~~identify formation;~~

- ~~d. difficulty navigating developmental milestones and events such as birthdays, holidays, addition of children to the home, death of a family member; and~~
- ~~e. unknown medical, developmental or mental health needs.~~

Support for transracial and transcultural adoptions can include cultural and social events such as picnics, camps, educational activities, heritage tours, and peer support.

### **AS 1241.02**

The organization program provides or refers children, youth, adoptive parents, adoptive families, and adopted adults to an array of intensive and therapeutic services as appropriate to their requests or need for service when needed, including:

- a. medical, developmental, and psychological evaluations;
- b. crisis intervention services;
- c. individual, group, and family counseling and therapy;
- d. early intervention and other developmental and educational supports;
- e. mental health and substance use services; and
- f. medical or rehabilitative care and residential treatment.

Interpretation: Whenever possible, services provided by others should be provided by adoption-competent professionals with experience in trauma-informed care.

### **AS 1241.03**

The organization program completes required post-placement and post-adoption visits to monitor and assess safety, permanency, and well-being.

**Examples:** ~~Agencies have developed a variety of strategies with mixed results to encourage full participation from families. Examples of strategies some programs have used to promote completion of required visits include:~~

~~making visit and report requirements known in advance through the contract and training;~~

~~keeping the family engaged with the program through social and other supportive services; and~~

~~requiring families to pay refundable deposits or pay post-placement fees in advance.~~

To promote completion of required visits, organizations may: (1) communicate visit and report requirements in advance, (2) provide opportunities for continued engagement with the organization through social events and supportive services, and (3) require families to pay refundable deposits or post-placement fees in advance.

### **FP AS 1241.04**

The organization program acts promptly in situations where the placement is in crisis, a child may be in danger, or where conduct relating to the adoption may be in question.

**Examples:** *Examples include situations where: (1) the placement may be at risk of disruption or dissolution, (2) adoptive parents are considering, planning or have completed an unregulated custody transfer, (3) allegations of child abuse or neglect are made, (4) a child discloses a prior history of being a victim of sexual abuse or human trafficking, (5) a child experiences a mental health crisis or suicide attempt, and (6) a question or concern is raised about the consents to the adoption or other fraudulent or unethical conduct relating to the adoption.*

## **FP AS 1244.05**

When the organization program believes that a child is in danger if ~~he or she~~ they remains in the placement or that the placement is no longer in the child's best interests, it:

- a. acts promptly, in accordance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, to report the situation to the appropriate authorities; and
- b. assists as needed with transitioning the child to an ~~other~~ appropriate placement.

**Interpretation:** *In an international adoption that is not considered a final placement, the organization program must coordinate with the primary provider, foreign central authority, and the Department of State, and in all international adoptions the organization program should take appropriate steps to prevent the return of the child to the country of origin without authorization from the foreign central authority and the Department of State.*

## **AS 1244.06**

For individuals interested in searching for and ~~making contact with~~ contacting relatives, the organization program provides information, counseling, and support in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements.

## **AS 1244.07**

When a child is placed prior to the final adoption order, the organization program takes steps to ensure:

- a. an order declaring the adoption final is sought by the adoptive parents; and
- b. the child's US citizenship is obtained and documentation of the final adoption order and citizenship is maintained when it is an international adoption.

## **~~AS 11.08~~**

~~The program provides or refers birth parents to supportive services including:~~

- ~~c. information and counseling;~~
- ~~d. ongoing receipt and maintenance of updated medical or social information, including, as appropriate, contact information so that it can be made available to the adoptee in accordance with applicable requirements; and~~
- ~~e. support and advocacy groups.~~

~~**Interpretation:** *If the program works on cases where the birth parents' rights were involuntarily terminated, the program should consult with the public agency or its designee to determine what services, if any, would be appropriate for the program to provide directly to birth parents. In intercountry adoptions, it is unlikely for the program to have contact with birth parents. In either instance, the program should at a minimum have procedures to address element (b) of the standard.*~~

## **AS 1312: Adoption Program Administration**

The organization program has administrative policies, procedures, and systems ~~in place~~ ensuring the confidentiality, accessibility, and maintenance of adoption records, proper collaboration with partnering providers, and the provision of ethical adoption services.

~~to ensure the provision of ethical adoption services and:~~

~~adoptions take place in the best interests of children;~~

~~the program has taken all appropriate actions to prevent the exploitation, sale, abduction, or trafficking of children;~~

~~if applicable, persons whose consents are required have the opportunity to give consent freely without any undue influence; and~~

~~fees, when applicable, and compensation do not inappropriately influence adoption decisions.~~

**NA** ~~The organization's adoption program is only accredited for Adoption Services: Child-Focused Recruitment. The organization provides child-focused recruitment only.~~

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy on ethical adoption practice</li><li>• Procedures for the collection of information, record keeping and retention, and information disclosure</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documentation of licensure or credentials of collaborating organizations or individuals</li><li>• Service agreements and contracts</li><li>• Records of any complaints received in the last two years related to the adoption program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interviews may include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Program director</li><li>b. Relevant personnel</li><li>c. <u>Clients</u><u>Persons served</u></li></ul></li><li>• Observe record storage area</li><li>• <del>Review financial records of compensation and fees paid by adoptive parents</del></li></ul>

### **FP** ~~AS 12.01~~

~~The program has written policies and procedures in place which:~~

- ~~a. prohibit its employees and agents from giving money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s) or other individual(s), or entities as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child;~~
- ~~b. prohibit compensation of any individual who locates or refers children, prospective birth mothers, or birth parents on a contingent or incentive basis; and~~
- ~~c. ensure that payments are not excessive and are only for activities appropriately related to the adoption when compensation is permitted or required to be paid directly or indirectly to individuals whose consents may be required.~~

**NA** ~~The organization does not have a role in placement or adoption finalization decisions~~

**Interpretation:** ~~Procedures should include provisions relating to documentation and close oversight of requested payments and actual compensation and purchase of services or goods. The program reinforces these policies and procedures in periodic training for personnel,~~

~~contractors, or other agents acting on behalf of the program, and through information it provides to birth parents and prospective adoptive parents who might be involved in such payments.~~

~~**Examples:** Examples of activities appropriately related to the adoption include:~~

- ~~a. adoption proceedings;~~
- ~~b. pre-birth and birth medical costs;~~
- ~~c. care of the child;~~
- ~~d. care of the birth mother while pregnant and immediately following birth of the child; and~~
- ~~e. a. \_\_\_\_\_ the provision of child welfare and child protection services generally.~~

## **AS 12.02**

~~Compensation paid to program personnel and any other individuals directly or indirectly involved in providing adoption services:~~

- ~~a. is not unreasonably high in relation to the services rendered and other appropriate factors;~~
- ~~b. is on a fee for service, hourly wage, or salary basis rather than a contingent fee basis; and~~
- ~~c. is only paid for services actually rendered or for reimbursement of appropriate expenses incurred.~~

~~**NA** The organization does not have a role in placement or adoption finalization decisions.~~

~~**Interpretation:** When the program allows for the payment of compensation in advance, the procedures should detail how the advanced compensation will be returned if services are not rendered.~~

~~This does not prohibit an organization or person from providing in-kind or other donations not intended to influence or affect a particular adoption.~~

~~**Examples:** Evaluation of the reasonableness of compensation can take into account, for example:~~

~~norms for compensation in the region in which the adoption services are provided;~~

~~norms for compensation within the adoption community;~~

~~norms for compensation within the organization;~~

~~qualifications of staff; and~~

~~workload requirements, such as the scope and complexity of the work.~~

## **AS 12.03**

~~If it accepts or makes charitable donations, the program has safeguards in place in its policies and procedures to ensure that such donations do not influence child placement decisions in any way.~~

~~**NA** The organization does not accept or make charitable donations.~~

~~**NA** The organization does not have a role in placement or adoption finalization decisions.~~

~~**Interpretation:** Making donations to individuals or entities who are involved in obtaining or consenting to the adoption can compromise the integrity of the process. Such arrangements~~

~~should generally be avoided. If such donations are made, the program should take significant steps to ensure the integrity of the process and keep thorough documentation.~~

#### **~~AS 12.04~~**

~~The program itemizes and discloses in writing information for each of the following separate categories of fees and estimated expenses:~~

- ~~a. home study, including any fees for updates;~~
- ~~b. placement or other program fee(s);~~
- ~~c. fees charged by other individuals or entities in the United States;~~
- ~~d. fees and expenses for the care of the child;~~
- ~~e. document and translation expenses;~~
- ~~f. required donations or contributions;~~
- ~~g. post-placement and post-adoption services;~~
- ~~h. other third party fees; and~~
- ~~i. travel and accommodation.~~

~~**NA** The organization does not charge prospective adoptive parents any fees for its services.~~

~~**Interpretation:** Translation and document expenses should include costs for obtaining, translating, or copying records or documents required to complete the adoption, costs for court documents, and costs for notarizations and certifications.~~

#### **~~AS 12.05~~**

~~The program does not routinely charge additional fees and expenses beyond those disclosed in the adoption services contract and only collects and retains fees for services rendered.~~

~~**NA** The organization does not charge prospective adoptive parents any fees for its services.~~

~~**Interpretation:** If the program charges fees in advance or the delivery of services, it should have procedures in place to accurately account for those funds, and must have procedures for refunding fees for services that are not rendered.~~

#### **~~AS 12.06~~**

~~The program returns any funds to which the prospective adoptive parent(s) may be entitled within 60 days.~~

~~**NA** The program does not charge prospective adoptive parents any fees for its services.~~

~~**Interpretation:** If fees are charged or paid in advance, best practice is to maintain the funds collected separately from general operating expenses so that they can be properly accounted for and refunded promptly when necessary.~~

#### **AS 13.01~~12.07~~**

The organization~~program~~ makes readily available to the adoptee and the adoptive parent(s) upon request all non-identifying information in its custody in accordance with applicable legal requirements and contractual obligations.

#### **AS 13.02~~12.08~~**

The organization~~program~~ ensures that adoption records and personal data ~~gathered or transmitted in connection with an adoption is~~ are used only for the purposes for which the information was gathered and safeguards sensitive individual information.

### **AS 13.03**

The organization has mechanisms to collect and maintain birth parents' updated medical or social information, including, as appropriate, contact information so that it can be made available to the adoptee in accordance with applicable requirements.

Interpretation: When a public agency or its designee is responsible for handling information related to birth parents, the organization should have procedures for referring birth parents, adoptees, or other individuals to the agency for assistance.

### **AS 13.0412-09**

~~In the event that the program~~If the organization ceases to provide ~~or is no longer permitted to provide~~ adoption services, it has a plan for:

- a. transferring custody of adoption records that are subject to retention or archival requirements to an appropriate custodian and ensuring the future accessibility of those adoption records, and
- b. transferring open cases to other organizations~~programs~~.

**Interpretation:** *It can be helpful to detail transfer plans in an agreement with another adoption service provider in advance and to plan for how persons served~~clients~~ may be provided with choices in the transfer process. The plan should also address the refunding of fees paid for services not yet rendered and expenses not yet incurred.*

### **AS 13.0512-10**

When working in collaboration with other individuals or organizations for the provision of adoption services, the organization~~program~~ operates under a written agreement with that provider which specifies:

- a. the adoption services to be provided by each party;
- b. fees and compensation;
- c. applicable laws, regulations, and standards that govern the provision of services;
- d. the lines of authority between the providers including who is responsible for oversight of the services provided
- e. terms and conditions for terminating the agreement;
- f. documentation, record keeping, and confidentiality requirements; and
- g. timely communication and the exchange of information between the parties and with persons served~~clients~~.

**NA** *The organization does not collaborate with other providers.*

**Interpretation:** *Provisions relating to fees and compensation should articulate (1) the amount of fees and compensation, (2) which party will bill the person served, (3) conditions under which fees are paid and compensation is made, including required documentation, and (4) provisions for refunds.*

### **FP AS 13.06**

Personnel do not take any action to discourage or retaliate against any individual for:

- a. questioning the conduct of the organization;
- b. expressing an opinion about the organization;

- c. making a complaint or expressing a grievance; or
- a-d. providing information, expressing a concern, or filing a complaint with the primary provider, the accrediting entity or any authority.

## **AS 14: Financial Accountability in Adoption**

The organization operates in a financially ethical and responsible manner and takes steps to prevent the exploitation, sale, abduction, or trafficking of children.

<u>Self-Study Evidence</u>	<u>On-Site Evidence</u>	<u>On-Site Activities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Payment and compensation policy</u></li> <li>• <u>Payment and compensation procedures</u></li> <li>• <u>Donation policies, if applicable</u></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Interviews may include:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <u>Program director</u></li> <li>b. <u>Relevant personnel</u></li> <li>c. <u>Persons served</u></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Review financial records of compensation and fees paid by adoptive parents</u></li> </ul>

**Interpretation:** *When responding to this standard, foster-to-adopt programs should include financial accountability policies and practices from both the foster care and adoption stages of the process.*

**NA** *The organization does not have a role in placement or adoption finalization decisions and does not charge prospective adoptive parents fees for its services.*

### **FPAS 14.0142.01**

The ~~program~~ organization ensures that finances do not inappropriately influence adoption decisions and has written policies and procedures ~~that in place~~ which:

- a. prohibit its employees and agents from giving money or other consideration, directly or indirectly, to a child's parent(s), ~~or~~ other individual(s), or entities as payment for the child or as an inducement to release the child;
- b. prohibit compensation of any individual who locates or refers children or expectant parents, ~~prospective birth mothers, or birth parents~~ on a contingent or incentive basis; and
- c. ensure ~~that~~ payments are not excessive and are only for activities appropriately related to the adoption when compensation is ~~permitted or required to be~~ paid directly or indirectly to individuals whose consents may be required.

**NA** *The organization does not have a role in placement or adoption finalization decisions.*

**Interpretation:** Procedures should include ~~provisions relating to~~ documentation and ~~close~~ oversight of requested payments, ~~and~~ actual compensation, and ~~the~~ purchase of services or goods. The ~~program~~organization should reinforces these policies and procedures in periodic training for personnel, contractors, or other agents acting on behalf of the ~~organization~~program, and through ~~the~~ information ~~provided it provides~~ to ~~expectant~~birth parents and prospective adoptive parents ~~who might be involved in such payments~~.

**Examples:** Examples of activities ~~appropriately~~ related to the adoption include: (1) adoption proceedings, (2) medical expenses for prenatal care and birth, (3) care of the child, (4) care of the expectant mother while pregnant and immediately following the birth of the child, and (5) the provision of child welfare and child protection services.

~~f. adoption proceedings;~~

~~g. pre-birth and birth medical costs;~~

~~h. care of the child;~~

~~i. care of the birth mother while pregnant and immediately following birth of the child; and~~

~~j. b. the provision of child welfare and child protection services generally.~~

## **AS 14.0212.02**

Compensation paid to ~~program~~ personnel and ~~any~~ other individuals directly or indirectly involved in providing adoption services is:

~~d. a. \_\_\_\_\_ is not unreasonably high in relation to reasonable for~~ the services rendered ~~and other appropriate factors;~~

~~e. b. \_\_\_\_\_ is~~ on a fee-for-service, hourly wage, or salary basis rather than a contingent fee basis; and

~~f. c. is~~ only paid for services ~~actually~~ rendered or for reimbursement of appropriate expenses incurred.

**NA** The organization does not have a role in placement or adoption finalization decisions.

**Interpretation:** When the ~~organization~~program allows for the payment of compensation in advance, procedures should detail how the advanced compensation will be returned if services are not rendered.

This does not prohibit an organization or person from providing in-kind or other donations not intended to influence or affect a particular adoption.

**Examples:** Compensation amounts may reflect: (1) norms for compensation within the organization, region, or adoption community, (2) staff qualifications, and (3) workload requirements, such as the scope and complexity of the work. Evaluation of the reasonableness of compensation can take into account, for example:

~~norms for compensation in the region in which the adoption services are provided;~~

~~norms for compensation within the adoption community;~~

~~norms for compensation within the organization;~~

~~qualifications of staff; and~~

~~workload requirements, such as the scope and complexity of the work.~~

### **AS 14.0312.03**

~~If it accepts or makes charitable donations, the program has safeguards in place in its policies and procedures to ensure that such donations do not influence child placement decisions in any way.~~

When the organization accepts or makes charitable donations, policies and procedures ensure that donations do not influence child placement decisions.

**NA** *The organization does not accept or make charitable donations.*

**NA** *The organization does not have a role in placement or adoption finalization decisions.*

**Interpretation:** *Making donations to individuals or entities ~~who are~~ involved in ~~obtaining or consenting to~~, or obtaining consent for, the adoption can compromise the integrity of the process ~~and~~. ~~Such arrangements~~ should generally be avoided. If such donations are made, the ~~organization program~~ should take significant steps to ~~ensure the preserve~~ integrity ~~of the process~~ and keep thorough documentation.*

### **AS 14.0412.04**

~~The program itemizes and discloses in writing information for each of the following separate category of fees and estimated expenses:~~

- ~~a. home study, including any fees for updates;~~
- ~~b. placement or other program fee(s);~~
- ~~c. fees charged by other individuals or entities in the United States;~~
- ~~d. fees and expenses for the care of the child;~~
- ~~e. document and translation expenses;~~
- ~~f. required donations or contributions;~~
- ~~g. post-placement and post-adoption services;~~
- ~~h. other third party fees; and~~
- ~~i. travel and accommodation.~~

The organization itemizes and discloses in writing all fees and estimated expenses for adoption services and provides information on:

- a. which fees and expenses are non-refundable; and
- b. payment due dates and payment plans, when applicable.

**NA** *The organization does not charge prospective adoptive parents ~~any~~ fees for its services.*

**Interpretation:** *Translation and document expenses should include costs for obtaining, translating, or copying records or documents required to complete the adoption, costs for court documents, and costs for notarizations and certifications.*

**Examples:** Fees and expenses for adoption services may cover: (1) the initial home study and any required updates, (2) placement or program fees, (3) charges from other individuals or entities in the United States, (4) the care of the child, (5) document and translation costs, (6)

required donations or contributions, (7) post-placement and post-adoption services, (8) other third party fees, and (9) travel and accommodations.

### **AS 14.0512.05**

~~The program does not routinely charge additional fees and expenses beyond those disclosed in the adoption services contract and only collects and retains fees for services rendered.~~

The organization properly handles monies collected from prospective adoptive parent(s) by:

- a. not charging additional fees or expenses beyond those disclosed in the adoption services contract;
- b. only collecting and retaining fees for services rendered; and
- c. returning funds to which the prospective adoptive parent(s) may be entitled within 60 days.

**NA** ~~The organization does not charge prospective adoptive parents any fees for its services.~~

**Interpretation:** ~~If the organization program charges fees in advance, or the delivery of services, it should have procedures in place to accurately account for those funds so that they can be refunded promptly when necessary, and must have procedures for refunding fees for services that are not rendered. It is best practice to maintain the funds collected separately from general operating expenses.~~

### **AS 12.06**

~~The program returns any funds to which the prospective adoptive parent(s) may be entitled within 60 days.~~

**NA** ~~The program does not charge prospective adoptive parents any fees for its services.~~

**Interpretation:** ~~If fees are charged or paid in advance, best practice is to maintain the funds collected separately from general operating expenses so that they can be properly accounted for and refunded promptly when necessary.~~

## **AS 1513: Intercountry Adoption Program Administration**

The ~~organization program~~ has administrative policies, procedures and systems ~~in place~~ to ensure that the services it provides as an exempt or supervised provider in intercountry adoptions are ~~provided~~ consistent with applicable foreign, federal, state, and primary provider requirements.

**NA** ~~The organization program does not provide any services in intercountry adoptions.~~

**NA** ~~The organization is accredited under federal regulations for intercountry adoption.~~

**NA** ~~The organization only provides foster-to-adopt services or child-focused recruitment.~~

Self-Study Evidence	On-Site Evidence	On-Site Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Executive Verification</u></li><li>• <del>QI Plan</del></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <del>Records of any complaints received in the last two years</del></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interviews may include:</li></ul>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><del>related to intercountry adoption services</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of any adoptions that have been disrupted or dissolved in the last 4 years or written verification that no disruptions or dissolutions are known to the organization</li> <li>• <del>Documentation of QI activities</del></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Program director</li> <li>b. Relevant personnel</li> <li>c. Prospective <u>adoptive</u> or adoptive parents</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review case records</li> </ul>
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### AS 1513.01

The ~~organization program~~ demonstrates its suitability and qualification that it is suitable and qualified to provide intercountry adoption services ~~in an intercountry adoption~~ by providing current and historical information about its operations and services, both before it begins providing services and periodically thereafter as needed ~~provides services, periodically and as needed thereafter.~~

**Interpretation:** COA Accreditation’s Executive Verification Form – ICA can be used as evidence, and documentation can be provided in the form of an attestation or as otherwise required by the primary providers with whom the organization program works.

The organization program must disclose any changes in the information required within the timeframes specified in COA Accreditation’s self-reporting requirements or as specified by the primary provider and at least within thirty business days of learning of the change.

**Examples:** Examples of information that should be provided include: (1) verification of the absence of, or information about, any other names under which the organization has been known, (2) verification of current insurance coverage, (3) documentation of current licensure status for adoption services, (4) documentation demonstrating past history of compliance with licensing and accreditation requirements including any non-compliance with licensing requirements for the last 10 years, (5) documentation of any instances in which the organization lost the right or authority to provide adoption services or documentation of any such instance, (6) verification of the absence of, or documentation of, any instances of known complaints filed against the organization in the last 10 years with or by an domestic or foreign authorities in relation to its provision of adoption services, (7) verification of the absence of, or documentation of, any instances of known lawsuits or investigations or criminal charges filed against the organization in the last 10 years in relation to its provision of adoption or other child welfare services or financial irregularities, (8) a list of all personnel who provide or oversee adoption services which indicates the names of any other adoption service providers they worked for, and (9) verification of the absence of, or documentation of, any instances in which personnel providing or overseeing adoption services were subject to external disciplinary proceedings, convicted of a crime or, are currently under investigation.

## **AS 1513.02**

The ~~organization~~program maintains the following data when it learns of a possible or actual disruption or dissolution and promptly reports the situation and the information to the primary provider:

- a. the foreign country from which the child emigrated;
- b. the State to which the child immigrated;
- c. the current age of the child;
- d. the date of the child's placement for adoption;
- e. the date of or planned date for the disruption or dissolution;
- f. the reason(s) for the disruption or dissolution;
- g. information on the child's subsequent placement(s) and final legal adoption;
- h. the names of the agencies or persons that handled the placement and adoption; and
- i. the plans for the child.

**Interpretation:** *When citing reasons for the disruption or dissolution, it can be helpful to specify reasons cited by the adoptive parents separately from reasons cited by the ~~organization~~program in the event they differ.*

## **~~FP~~AS 13.03**

~~Personnel do not take any action to discourage or retaliate against any individual for:~~

- ~~b. questioning the conduct of the program;~~
- ~~c. expressing an opinion about the program;~~
- ~~d. making a complaint or expressing a grievance; or~~
- ~~e. providing information, expressing a concern, or filing a complaint with the primary provider, the accrediting entity or any authority.~~

## **AS 15.0313.04**

The ~~organization~~program promptly complies with any requests for information or data made by the primary provider.

## **~~AS 13.05~~**

~~The program conducts quality improvement activities appropriate to its size and circumstances, and in coordination with the organization's quality improvement program, it makes systematic efforts to improve its adoption services as needed.~~

~~**Examples:** Examples can include: case record review; critical incident reviews; complaint reviews; outcomes measurement; business analytics; and client satisfaction.~~