Applications are available to all persons seeking adoption of an infant born in the United States, a child of any age from another country or a waiting child that has been freed for adoption. The application fee is due at the time the application is returned to the agency. The fee covers the cost of processing the application and the initial interview.

Adoption Services are available to any individual or couple who is interested in pursuing adoption. Employees, Board Members, and HFA volunteers are not exempt from services, and they do not receive preferential treatment.

Prospective adoptive parents are treated respectfully and equitably and are informed about the available services, how to access those services, and the fees for services.

**General Eligibility Criteria for Prospective Adoptive Parents**

Hillside Children’s Center adheres to New York State Domestic Relations Law, Sections 10 and 115(a) and New York State Regulations of the Department of Social Services, Title 18 NYCRR 421 in determining the eligibility criteria for prospective adoptive parents:

1. **Age:** Applicants accepted for adoption study shall be at least 18 years old. However, countries and child placing agencies will establish minimum and maximum ages for adoptive parents.

2. **Health:** Applicant shall be in such physical condition that it is reasonable to expect him/her to live till the child’s majority as reported in a physical examination conducted not more than one year preceding the date of the adoption application and a written statement from a physician regarding the family’s general health, the absence of communicable disease, infection or illness or any physical condition(s) which might affect the proper care of an adopted child must be filed with the Agency. This examination must include a Mantoux skin test for tuberculosis.

3. **Marital Status:** Hillside Children’s Center will not consider marital status in its acceptance of applicants. However, one married partner may not adopt without the other unless one partner is living separate and apart from his or her spouse pursuant to a legally recognizable separation agreement or decree of separation; or one partner has been or will be living separate and apart from his or her spouse for a period of three years or more prior to the commencement of the adoption proceeding. Placing agencies and countries will determine their own requirements regarding marital status which will constitute the parameters upon which applicants base their choice of programs and countries with whom to work in order to complete an adoption. Hillside Children’s Center
will not reject applicants for study or after study on the basis of the length of time they have been married. Placement programs and countries will establish their own requirements for the length of the marriage of applicants.

4. **Fertility**: An adoptive applicant may not be rejected for adoption because of his, her or their fertility (capacity to have biological children).

5. **Family Composition**: Hillside Children’s Center may study family size as it relates to the ability of a family to care for another child and the quality of life which will be offered to an adoptive child. Policies shall not be established which require the rejection of an applicant based on family composition without determining its effect on the ability to care for a child and the quality of life that will be offered. Placing agencies and countries may establish regulations regarding family size and composition which will determine the parameters upon which applicants will base their choice of programs and countries with whom they will work to adopt a child.

6. **Employment and Education**: Employment, education or volunteer activities of applicants may not be a basis for rejection of adoption services. Placement programs and countries may have regulations regarding employment and education which will determine the parameters upon which applicants will base their choice of programs and countries with whom they will work to adopt a child.

7. **Religion and Race**: Race, ethnic group and religion shall not be a basis for rejecting an adoption applicant. Placement programs and countries may have regulations regarding religion and race which will determine the parameters upon which applicants will base their choice of programs and countries with whom they will work to adopt a child.

8. **Income**: No applicant shall be rejected on the basis of low income, or because of receipt of income maintenance payments. The adoption study process shall evaluate an applicant’s ability to budget his or her resources in such a way that a child placed with him or her can be reasonably assured of minimum standards of nutrition, health, shelter, clothing and other essentials. Placement programs and countries may have regulations regarding income which will determine the parameters upon which applicants will base their choice of programs and countries with whom they will work to adopt a child.

9. **Sexual Orientation**: Sexual orientation shall not be a basis for rejecting an adoption applicant. Hillside children's center welcomes traditional families, single parent families, both men and women, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender families, transracial and multiracial families and all other families as prospective adoptive parents. Hillside Children's Center is committed to serving all families equally with dignity and respect. Placement programs and countries may have regulations regarding religion and race which will determine the parameters upon which applicants will base their choice of programs and countries with whom they will work to adopt a child.

10. **Employment and Geographic Stability**: Changes in employment and residences may be examined to determine the significance of such changes for the functioning and well-being of the family and any child to be placed in the home. Placement programs and countries may have regulations regarding employment and geographic stability which will determine the parameters upon which applicants will base their choice of programs and countries with whom they will work to adopt a child.
11. **Child Care Experience**: An adoption study shall inquire into an applicant’s experience with children. No applicant shall be rejected solely on the basis of a lack of such experience.

12. **Inquiry of State Central Registry of Child Abuse and Maltreatment**: An adoption study must include an inquiry of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services regarding whether the applicant and/or any household member over 18 years old is the subject of an indicated child abuse and maltreatment report on file with the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

13. **Criminal History Record Check**: Hillside Children’s Center must perform a criminal history record check with the Division of Criminal Justice Services regarding any prospective adoptive parent and each person over the age of 18 who is currently residing in the home of such prospective adoptive parent before the adoptive parent is finally approved for the placement of a child.

14. **Substance Abuse, Alcohol Abuse and Additional Factors**: Current abuse of alcohol or other drugs requires the rejection of an application. An applicant may not be rejected for past drug or alcohol abuse, or past psychiatric illness or treatment, unless the record shows how these factors would contribute to the applicant’s inability to care for an adopted child.

15. **Pregnancy or Adoption of Child**: Hillside Children’s Center considers it best practice to not place two unrelated adoptive children with a family within one year of each other, in order to give a child and the family time to adjust to the unique changes and challenges presented by adoption. Placement agencies and countries may establish their own regulations regarding the referral of a child if prospective adoptive parents accept the referral of a child from another agency or individual, or if the prospective adoptive parents become pregnant prior to the referral of a child. These regulations will determine the parameters upon which applicants will base their choice of programs and countries with whom they will work to complete an adoption.
WAITING CHILD PROGRAM

Waiting children are those children who are “freed for adoption” and typically range in age from 7-18. These children came into care through the foster care system. Their parent’s rights were terminated and they now are in need of a permanent family. HCC’s Waiting Child Program is designed to certify a family to adopt and help the family navigate and identify the child that your family can best parent. Services offered in this program include:

**Intake Meeting/Home Visit.** An Adoption Homefinding Specialist will conduct an initial home visit to assess basic requirements to proceed (safety, adequate bedrooms, etc.)

**GPSII/MAPP/Deciding Together.** “Group Process & Selection II/Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting” (GPSII/MAPP) or Deciding Together are training programs that the completion of one or the other is a requirement of the program and attendance at each session is mandatory.

**Home Study.** The Home Study process may begin during GPSII/MAPP or Deciding Together training and is typically completed within four months of the last training class. A minimum of three face-to-face visits in the home are required. Additional home visits may be required at the discretion of the Adoption Social Worker.

**Required Training**
- GPSII/MAPP or Deciding Together
- Initial TCI (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention) - 4 hours
- CPR and First Aid and Safety - 2 hours
- Medication Administration and Infection Control - 3 hours

*12 hours of training are required on an annual basis for re-certification and must include:
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention update - 3 hours
- CPR and First Aid update - 1.5 hours
- Medication Administration and Infection Control update - 2.5 hours

**Seeking a child.** A member of Hillside’s Adoption Team will provide you with assistance in seeking a Waiting Child to adopt, and will provide you with resources and training on Internet search.

**Contract Development.** The contract process begins upon a family’s consideration for a specific waiting child, and must be completed prior to visitation and transition to the adoptive parents’ home. Hillside’s standard procedure is to bring a child into an adoptive placement through the foster care system (either Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) or regular foster care) to ensure that the needs of the child and family are met from placement through the adoption finalization.
**Placement and Post-Placement.** Once a child has been identified and has been selected by the placing agency, Hillside will coordinate with you and the placing agency to set up an appropriate visit and transition plan and work toward moving the child into your home.

**Adoption Subsidy.** Adoption subsidy is determined by the child’s identified level of need. An Adoption Social Worker will assist in completion of the required paperwork, and will advocate ensuring the family receives the appropriate subsidy.

**Adoption Finalization.** The finalization of an adoption will take place a minimum of three months after the child is placed with the family. Family must engage an attorney to file all required documentation.

Call Adoption Resource Network at Hillside Children’s Center at:

585/350-2501

for more information or to schedule an appointment to meet with one of our Adoption Team Members

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