

A D P T

Why Adopt From Samoa?



All adoptions in Samoa are completed through a collaborative effort with a Samoan attorney and foreign service providers, with strict compliance to Samoan law in regards to international adoption. They ensure all

children legally available for adoption are classified as true orphans under USCIS definitions and available for adoption.

Who Are the Children in Need of Families?

- Children range in ages from infancy to teens.
- Both boys and girls are in need of families. Children are of Asian/Pacific Islander descent.
- Children with special needs are in need of families, including children with emotional needs and/or a history of abuse.



Who Can Adopt From Samoa?

- Married couples and singles may adopt. If married, parents must be 23 – 55 years old.
- If single, parent must be at least 24 years old when filing the I-600A and 25 years old when filing the I-600 form.
- Additional stipulations may be determined by your government to apply for an orphan visa if you live outside of the United States.

How Long Does It Take to Complete the Adoption Process?

Currently referral times are 18-48 months after receipt of prospective adoptive parents' 171H approval letter from USCIS, depending on age and gender requested. Wait times for older children are much shorter.

Once a family is matched with a child, they can expect to travel to Samoa in about 12-14 months. While the family is waiting to travel, their child will continue to reside at a shelter called, Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG).



What Travel Is Required?

Families are required to travel once at the end of the adoption process. The trip will include a stay in Samoa for five to seven days and an additional five to seven days in Auckland, New Zealand to attend the embassy appointment and receive the child's orphan visa.

Why Choose MLJ Adoptions to Adopt From Samoa?

MLJ Adoptions is the only Hague approved agency working in Samoa. MLJ Adoptions maintains a collaborative working relationship with Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) in Samoa to place orphaned children in need of loving homes. SVSG is well respected not only in Samoa but in the South Pacific for their dedication to assisting victims and abandoned children.

Experienced and Compassionate Staff. Our MLJ Adoptions' foreign and domestic teams are composed of a diverse group of professionals who are committed to supporting families before, during and after adoption. Our Samoa Program Director, Sonja Brown, has ten years of experience in adoption, and has united more than 200 children with their forever families. Furthermore, MLJ Adoptions retains full-time licensed attorneys domestically and works with an attorney in Samoa. It is beneficial to families to have attorneys in both the United States and Samoa assisting with the legal process of adoption. Our attorneys are well versed in Samoan adoption law, US Embassy practices and procedures, and the US federal laws and regulations related to international adoption and orphan visas.





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Samoa Program Adoption Fees

Adoption Application \$395

**1st
Payment
\$4,900**

Due with Service Agreement to Begin the Adoption Process	
Agency Fee (1 st portion)	\$3,550
Home Study Review/Education	\$850
IAAME Monitoring & Oversight Fee per child*	\$500
*See additional fees on page 8.	
Families residing in an MLJ licensed state will add \$1,625 for the home study.	

**2nd
Payment
\$5,350**

Due Upon Completion of Home Study Draft <i>Usually about 2-4 months after the First Payment</i>	
Agency Fee (2 nd Portion)	\$2,750
Dossier Assistance/Review	\$2,600

**3rd
Payment
\$3,833**

Due Upon Acceptance of Referral <i>Timeline depends on when a family is matched with a child.</i>	
Foreign Country Program Expenses (1 st Portion)	\$3,833
See Fees Paid Abroad on page 4.	

**4th
Payment
\$10,433**

Due Upon Attorney General Approval	
Foreign Country Program Expenses (2 nd Portion)	\$3,433
Interim childcare one-time payment	\$7,000
See Fees Paid Abroad on page 4.	

**5th
Payment
\$5,084**

Due Upon Issuance of Child's Passport and New Zealand Travel Visa	
Foreign Country Program Expenses (3 rd Portion)	\$3,434
Post-Adoption Agency Services	\$1,650
See Fees Paid Abroad and Post Adoption Fees on page 4.	
Families residing in an MLJ licensed state will add \$1,800 plus mileage for four post-adoption reports and visits.	

Fees paid to and through MLJ Adoptions \$29,995 Estimated cost of third party payments and travel on following pages

All amounts listed are in United States Dollars (USD) unless otherwise noted. Families may pay with check, all major credit cards, bank wire or a direct bank debit. A 3% transaction fee will be added to all credit card payments excluding application payments. A fee of \$16 will be added for each incoming wire payment. Fees will not be waived or refunded, except as noted below.

Effective date: 3/1/2019

Prospective Adoptive Family,

Welcome to the beginning of your adoption journey! I'm sure you're feeling a mix of anticipation and a bit of trepidation right now, especially when it comes to how you're going to afford an adoption. We're here to assist you!

On page one, the fees that you'll pay to and through MLJ Adoptions are broken down by each step of the adoption process. Below we share other expenses that you will pay throughout the process to other agencies, USCIS and for travel. We have done our best to address questions that you may have about which fees cover what and what services you are paying for.

If you have additional questions about when payments are due or what fees may apply to your family, please let us know. We are thrilled to be able to walk alongside your family on your adoption journey!

Sincerely,

Karlene Edgemon, MSW
Executive Director

First Payment

ADOPTION FEES PAID TO MLJ

When is the application fee due?

After consultation with our client intake specialist and your decision has been made to move forward with international adoption, your first step is filling out an adoption application. The application fee is due once you filled out the adoption application.

Which fees are paid to MLJ and what are they for?

The agency fees cover MLJ's cost to arrange and support family's adoption in the United States and abroad. The fees include, but are not limited to, personnel costs, administrative overhead, operational costs, staff training and education, foreign provider training and education, state, federal, and foreign licensing and accreditations, communications and insurance. Any reduction of agency fees will be at the discretion of MLJ (typically only in the event of a grant or limited time promotion), no other fees will be reduced.

What is the IAAME Monitoring & Oversight Fee?

The IAAME Monitoring & Oversight Fee is a fee paid through MLJ Adoptions to Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity (IAAME). This fee will enable IAAME to monitor and oversee international adoption agencies and is non-refundable.

How and why are the fees different depending on my state?

No matter where you live, MLJ Adoptions will be your placing agency otherwise known as your primary provider. If your family resides in a state where MLJ is licensed, MLJ will complete the home study assessment and post-adoption reporting for you. If your family resides in a state where MLJ is not licensed to provide home study services, we are not able to conduct your home study and post-adoption services directly. Your family will be responsible for obtaining home study services and required post-adoption reports from a Hague Accredited service provider within your state. MLJ will approve your home study provider and enter into a

relationship with them so that we may work collaboratively with you and your provider towards the successful completion of your home study and post-adoption reporting services.

Families residing in an MLJ licensed state will add \$1,625 to their first payment for home study services and add \$1,350 to the fourth payment for three (3) post-adoption reports. Home study updates completed by MLJ, completed every twelve months, cost \$600. Families completing their home study with MLJ will be charged the standard IRS mileage rate for the miles travelled roundtrip for each home study, home study update and post-adoption visit.

Families completing a home study with a different provider should consult that provider regarding any travel cost associated with the home study, home study update or addendum, and any state or agency required home study updates and post-adoption reports. The cost of home study and post-adoption services will vary by provider. The estimated standard fee for a home study is \$2000-\$4500. The estimated standard fee for a post-adoption report is \$400-\$600 per report.

What does my education fee pay for?

The education fee pays for your access to the Hague packet which covers all the Hague training and additional classes assigned during your adoption process. This provides you free access to training. Upon review of home study, additional classes may be assigned to families based on their dynamics and where the child(ren) they are adopting from.

How do I select a home study provider if I do not live in an MLJ licensed state?

MLJ will be able to assist you in finding a Hague Accredited adoption provider located in your state. You are welcome to visit [IAAME](#) or contact us directly for assistance. It is our policy that families work with a Hague Accredited agency, unless there is no Hague agency in your state or working with a Hague agency would create a significant hardship. Agencies who pursue a Hague accreditation will typically be more experienced in intercountry adoption and will likely be better able to serve, prepare and support your family before and after your adoption.

In the event there is no Hague Accredited provider in the family's state or MLJ has otherwise agreed in writing that the family is permitted to use a non-Hague Accredited provider due to hardship, families will pay an additional \$375 fee for the required Hague letter approving a full home study and associated review. The \$375 will be due to review each new home study for families using a non-Hague Accredited provider. Additionally, families not using a Hague Accredited provider will be responsible to pay \$150 for any home study update or addendum reviews and corresponding letter that is needed.

REFUND POLICY & PAST DUE ACCOUNTS

Under what circumstances may my family be eligible to receive a refund?

If you provide a written request for a refund to Accounts@MLJAdoptions.com and also to our mailing address within ten (10) days of the initial payment, you will be reimbursed 75% of the first payment fee. The 75% reimbursement of the first payment will be refunded to Parent(s) within sixty (60) days of the request. The adoption application fee and IAAME Monitoring & Oversight fee are nonrefundable under any circumstances. MLJ Adoptions will return any paid funds for which the adoptive parent may be entitled within 60 days of the completion of delivery of services, for it the adoptive parent paid for a service that was not provided. All donations to MLJ Adoptions are non-refundable.

What happens if a payment is late or missed?

Payments are due at time specified on the fee sheet. All payments must be made in full prior to travel for the family's trip to bring their child(ren) home.

Families with a past due balance greater than 30 days will have a hold placed on their adoption services until the account is brought current. A 1% finance charge will be assessed to all accounts more than 30 days past due, 5% for accounts more than 60 days past due, and 12% for accounts more than 90 days past due.

If it becomes necessary to pursue collection of any past due account balance through outside sources (collection agency, IN Attorney General, or local attorney) reasonable collection costs, attorney fees, court costs, and contingency fees will also be added to the outstanding balance.

As adoptions may take many months to complete, fees, costs and requirements are subject to change over the course of the adoption process. I expressly agree to complete post-adoption reports, as required by Samoa.

Second Payment

Which fees are paid to MLJ and what are they for?

The agency fees cover MLJ’s cost to arrange and support family’s adoption in the United States and abroad. The fees include, but are not limited to, personnel costs, administrative overhead, operational costs, staff training and education, foreign provider training and education, state, federal, and foreign licensing and accreditations, communications and insurance. Any reduction of agency fees will be at the discretion of MLJ (typically only in the event of a grant or limited time promotion), no other fees will be reduced.

What is being provided for my dossier assistance and review?

The fees paid towards dossier assistance and review include fees associated with support provided to assist the adoptive parents with the gathering of dossier documents required by the country, providing instruction on obtaining the correct documents, apostilling and certifying instructions and review of the dossier documents to ensure compliance with the country’s requirements and specifications for the dossier prior to submission to the country. Costs also include copying, emailing and shipping to the foreign country.

What are the potential additional fees for any additional services that my family may require?

Should families request or require the additional services listed below, the following fees will apply:

Review of subsequent Hague home study	\$150
Education	\$150
Home Study Update/Translations	\$15/page
Home Study Update/Shipping	\$40-\$100 (estimated)
Home Study Update/Authentication	\$25/document (estimated)
Copy/Mailing Fees (subsequent services, if requested)	\$90/hour
Indiana Background Checks	\$125/adoptive parent
Indiana Background Checks Additional Household Member	\$25/person
Out-of-State Background Check	\$25/person
Hold fee, if you place your adoption on hold for 12 months	\$500
Extended hold fee, for additional 12 months	\$750
File re-activation fee	\$500

We previously completed an adoption with MLJ Adoptions, are there any discounts available?

Yes, families who previously completed an international adoption with MLJ will receive a \$1,000 reduction on their 2nd payment and will not have to re-pay their application payment.

Third Payment

FEES PAID ABROAD TO MLJ FOREIGN PROVIDERS

Which fees are paid abroad and what are they for?

The foreign fees include, but are not limited to, costs for personnel, administrative overhead, training and education abroad, legal services, communications, and any other costs related to support a family's adoption abroad. A \$75 bank processing fee will be charged to families for each separate wire abroad. This fee is the total of the bank fees assessed by the sending and receiving banks. This fee is an estimate of the bank fees assessed by the sending, intermediary and receiving banks.

The foreign fee breakdown for Samoa is as follows:

Assistance with gathering information/documentation for child dossier	\$1,000	Sarona Ponifasio
Attorney fee and fees associated with the legal process including court process, Ministry and Attorney General reporting, approvals and monitoring.	\$5,000	Sarona Ponifasio
DHL and mailing costs throughout the adoption process	\$300	Adoptive Parents
Obtain birth certificate, passport and visa, including administrative, transportation and document fees, and assistance with U.S. Embassy appointment.	\$3,000	Registrar, Passport Office & Sarona Ponifasio
Obtain child's medicals and immunizations including administrative, transportation and document fees.	\$500	SVSG & Sarona Ponifasio
In-Country Support Staff and Travel Support	\$500	Sarona Ponifasio
Social History Report of matched referral	\$400	Solomona Consultants

FEES PAID DIRECTLY BY FAMILY TO THIRD PARTIES

The expected total fees and expenses for services that families will be responsible to pay directly to a third party is estimated to be between \$1,810 and \$6,110. These fees are due throughout the process and may include, but are not limited to, fees to the following:

Hague-accredited home study, non-MLJ licensed state Paid to your home study provider	\$2,000 - \$4,000
USCIS Filing Fee (per each unrelated child)	\$775
Authentications paid to Secretary of State	\$55 average of CA, NY, IN & TX
Authentication charges for services provided by MLJ	\$25 per document
Fingerprints per person paid to USCIS	\$85
Convention Adoptee Visa: I-800 (Hague)	\$400
U.S. Legal Services, if applicable Paid to an independent attorney	Varies
USCIS Application for Extensions	\$325
Post-Adoption Reports in state of residence Paid to your home study provider	\$400 - \$600
Re-adoption/Adoption in state of residence	\$800 - \$1,500

These fees are estimates only and may change at any time. Additional expenses may include medical services, child's passport, wiring fees and mailing of documents. The government in Samoa or the U.S. government may request additional information or documents which may require additional expense. If the prospective adoptive parents would like to request additional medical information for the adopted child, this will be an additional charge. You may incur additional medical costs for your child during the visa process if your child requires additional or updated vaccines. The cost of vaccines would be determined by the type of vaccine needed and how many vaccines are required. Approximate cost is \$100 – 250.

ESTIMATED COST OF TRAVEL

The expected total fees and expenses for any travel, transportation, and accommodation for two trips of two adults and one child is **estimated to be between \$7,500 and \$10,000**. These fees may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Airfare – 2 Adoptive Parents round trips	\$1,500 - \$2,500 round trip per person, estimated
Airfare – Child One Way	\$400 - \$600
Accommodations	\$175 per night
Other regional expenses including meals	\$2,000 - \$3,000 per trip
Optional cost for driver & translator for recreational outings	\$60 - \$75 per day

Fourth Payment

What is the interim childcare payment?

Families will pay for their referred child’s interim care. Interim care includes childcare supplies, housing, staff expenses and training, limited medical testing, medical treatment, immunizations, monthly check on child by physician and/or social worker. This payment provides interim care until your child comes home.

Fifth Payment

What is the breakdown of the \$1,650 fee in the fifth payment?

Post-Adoption Report Administration Fee	\$1,000
Post-Adoption Refundable Deposit	\$500
Support Services/Facebook Support Group/Resources/Additional Services after Post-Adoption	\$150

What are the requirements related to post-adoption reporting for Samoa?

MLJ requires an agency-completed post adoption report one month after placement. Currently, Samoa requires agency-completed reports at six months, 12 months, and 24 months from the date of placement with at least five printed photos to include pictures of the whole family and pictures of the child alone. Reports must be notarized. Pictures must also be sent to your program director the first week home and then every three months for the first year. If you do not live in an MLJ licensed state, your home study agency or state may require additional post adoption reports. Country requirements are subject to change without notice. Families expressly agree to comply with all required post-adoption reporting requirements.

How do I get my \$500 post-adoption deposit back?

The post-adoption deposit will be placed in an escrow account and will be returned upon the successful and timely completion of all required post-adoption reports submitted within two years after placement, the re-adoption or finalization of foreign adoption decree within family's

state of residence and proof of receipt of the child's certificate of citizenship. The re-adoption or finalization and the certificate of citizenship must be completed and submitted to MLJ on or before the date of the last required post-adoption report necessary to receive the post-adoption deposit.

Frequently Asked Questions

How are fees paid to MLJ?

All amounts listed are in United States dollars unless otherwise noted. Families may pay with check, all major credit cards, bank wire or a direct bank debit. A 3% transaction fee will be added to all credit card payments excluding application payments. A fee of \$16 will be added for each incoming wire payment.

How can I afford adoption?

There are many ways families afford adoption, many of our families utilize a combination of sacrificial saving, fundraising, and grants. Adoption grants are available from a variety of organizations. Please refer to the [MLJ Adoptions Financial Resources Guide](#). The maximum [adoption tax credit](#) for the adoption of a child is up to \$13,840. Please consult your tax professional to see if you will benefit from this credit.

What if my country program closes or the laws change, and my family is no longer permitted to adopt from Samoa?

Payments made to MLJ Adoptions are for services rendered and are not to be considered payment for children. If your adoption is suspended due to program changes, MLJ Adoptions may at their discretion choose to credit up to \$5,000 to another country program for which the family is eligible.

In the case of country closure, parent ineligibility, contract termination, or adoption failure or adoption withdrawal, international fees that have been collected for services that have not yet been distributed abroad will be refunded. Although MLJ Adoptions will work hard to obtain the refund of any international fees paid to a foreign coordinator/attorney/authority, MLJ Adoptions cannot make any assurances or promises for the return of international fees/program country expenses.

WAITING CHILD ADOPTION

MLJ Adoptions maintains the Waiting Child Photo listing. Should you choose to adopt a child(ren) from this list, your first and second payment will be due together to begin your adoption process.

Signature of First Parent

Print Name of First Parent

Date of Signing

Signature of Second Parent

Print Name of Second Parent

Date of Signing

Appendix A: For Families Considering the Adoption of Multiple Children

ADOPTIONS OF SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT CHILDREN

Fees are for the adoption services for one child. It may be possible to adopt more than one child from Samoa, though referrals for sibling groups and for two unrelated children at the same time are very rare. These fees do not include additional medical services, immigration or travel expenses.

First Payment No Applicable Agency Fees

Second Payment No Applicable Agency Fees

Due upon Acceptance of Additional Child Referral

Foreign Country Program Fee (First Portion)	\$2,827
IAAME Monitoring & Oversight Fee	\$500 per additional child

3rd Payment

Due Upon Attorney General Approval

Foreign Country Program Fee (Second Portion)	\$2,827
Interim Care One-Time Payment per Child	\$7,000

4th Payment

5th Payment

Due Upon Issuance of Child's Passport and New Zealand Travel Visa

Foreign Country Program Fee (Third Portion)	\$2,826
Post-Adoption Report Administration Fee	\$500
Three Post-Adoption Reports	
• MLJ Licensed State Families	\$50 per report
• Non MLJ Licensed State Families	Varies by provider

Disclaimer: Please see page 4 and 5 for listing of 3rd party fees and additional fees.



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Adoption Service Plan: Samoa

The adoption process from Samoa is completed through the collaborative efforts of a variety of individuals and organizations. **The goal of this document is to help you, as a prospective adoptive family, understand who is providing which adoption service to you or the child you are seeking to adopt.** Since MLJ Adoptions is your adoption agency (Primary Provider), we collaborate with persons domestically and internationally throughout your adoption process.

MLJ Adoptions, a Hague Accredited adoption service provider, as the Primary Provider, bears responsibility to develop and implement the service plan for providing all adoption services and to provide all such services, either directly or through arrangements with other individuals or entities.

Step in the Adoption Process	Service Being Provided	Who's Providing the Service
Home Study	Performing the home study on the adoptive family and reporting on such a study.	An accredited home study provider in your state of residence approved by MLJ
Education	Adoption preparation education.	National Council for Adoption, Creating a Family, & MLJ Adoptions
Identifying a Child in Need of a Family	Identifying a child for adoption and arranging an adoption.	Sarona Ponifasio, attorney at law, in collaboration with Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG)
Parental Rights of Child are Terminated	Ensuring the legal consent to termination of parental rights and to adoption/guardianship.	Sarona Ponifasio, attorney at law obtains the legal consents of biological parents and the Samoa Courts terminate parental rights.
Referral Information on Child is Received	Performing the background study on the child and reporting on such a study.	Attorney General & Solomona Consultants
Child Placed with Family, but Adoption is Not Yet Finalized*	Monitoring the case after the child has been placed with the family until final adoption.	This service is not applicable because the adoption is finalized in Samoa prior to the child(ren)'s arrival.
Family Decides Not to Move Forward with Adoption after being Matched with Child*	Assuming custody and providing social services to the child if the placement disrupts before the adoption becomes final	Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG)
Ensuring that the process of adoption is in full accordance with both foreign law and proper ethical standards.	<i>Ensuring that the process of adoption is in full accordance with both foreign law and proper ethical standards.</i>	

*These are not necessarily parts of the adoption process for most families

Should you have concerns with any part of your adoption process facilitated by MLJ Adoptions, please contact: Karlene Edgemon (Executive Director), Sonja Brown (Chief Operating Officer and Samoa Program Director), or Julie Conner (Accounting and Finance).

Please note that your Adoption Service Plan may be changed over time. We cannot guarantee that the providers named this plan will necessarily be the person or entity processing your case at any given time. We will keep you updated with any changes in your Adoption Service Plan.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about your adoption process.



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Signature of First Parent

Print Name of First Parent

Date of Signing

Signature of Second Parent

Print Name of Second Parent

Date of Signing