

Domestic Adoption Programs

Dear Prospective Families:

Thank you for your interest in our domestic adoption programs. In this packet you'll find information about both of our programs – our **Domestic Program** and our **Domestic Networking Program**.

Here at MAPS, we have been building families through adoption for over thirty years. Our services, which began with domestic adoption, have continued to grow and expand, and today we also offer international adoption programs, humanitarian aid projects around the world, and residential programs for pregnant and parenting women and teens.

When you choose to work with MAPS, you will work with knowledgeable staff who will walk you through the sometimes complex adoption process. Your program coordinator will work closely with you, from the initial steps of creating your family profile to providing the advocacy and support you may need at the time you travel to meet your child. We strive to ensure a positive experience for your family and your new child, both before and during your adoption.

In any adoption, a measure of patience and flexibility is required. In dealing with different state requirements, program and policy changes can occur during your adoption process. While these factors are out of any agency's control, our experienced staff will keep you informed of such changes and will help you navigate any challenges that arise during your adoption.

MAPS will provide you with the support and guidance you need throughout this journey, as we strive to bring you and your child together, and home, as quickly as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Beth Gustafson
Domestic Program Coordinator

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www.mapsadopt.org

THE PROGRAMS

Domestic Program: In this program, we work with birthparents who have decided to make an adoption plan and would like to select a family. In making this decision they are seeking caring families willing to love and parent these new lives. We work with the adoptive family and the birthparent(s) to create a birth plan respectful of everyone involved, as well as provide counseling and support services.

This program is specialized to working with pregnant women typically within the state of Maine. MAPS birthparent counselors provide free options counseling throughout the state. For the pregnant women who have chosen to make an adoption plan, their exceptional work helps define the adoption process for all involved.

Occasionally we also work directly with pregnant women residing in other states throughout the U.S. and provide direct counseling, as well as connecting them with the in-state counseling and support they may need as they develop an adoption plan for their unborn child.

Domestic Networking Program: This program allows MAPS to work with partner agencies throughout the country to bring birthparents and adoptive families together.

Other domestic adoption services: We also offer services for those pursuing a private or identified adoption. Please see our "Programs at a Glance" for more information.

THE CHILDREN

Families may specify racial preference; however, keep in mind that MAPS cannot guarantee the race of a child. Families may not specify gender.

Domestic Program: Predominantly Caucasian infants, but also infants of African American and bi-racial backgrounds.

Domestic Networking Program: Most children are newborns/infants and may be of African American, bi-racial, Hispanic or Caucasian background.

Health: We gather as much information as possible about health from the birthparent(s). Although prenatal records are not always available, summaries of the labor, delivery, and discharge are always shared with families.

FAMILY REQUIREMENTS

Married couples, single women and men, and same-sex couples can adopt through our domestic programs. Applicants should have established and maintained a stable home life for at least two years. There should be no more than 45 years between the younger adoptive parent and the infant. Some exceptions can be made on a case by case basis.

These programs are open to MAPS home studied families living in Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

Families adopting a child of different ethnicity should demonstrate a sincere willingness to understand and appreciate the culture of other ethnicities, and be prepared to impart that knowledge and affirmation to their child.

PROCESS

The adoption process begins with submitting the application packet. In this information we walk you through the materials needed to begin your adoption.

Acceptance into our domestic programs is contingent upon a favorable home study and review of your application. The home study must be conducted by a MAPS social worker and is valid for one year, after which it will need to be updated.

Once you have applied to a domestic program, our domestic program coordinator will assist you in creating your profile, which will be shared with birthparents who want to identify the best match in an adoptive family.

Once your family is selected, MAPS will share information about the birthparent(s) with you. Background information will include any available social and health history on the birthfamily, and typically includes prenatal records. If the adoptive family is comfortable with the match, the adoption plans will proceed.

Often, birthparent(s) will ask to meet the adoptive family at this point. In the Maine Domestic Program, one of our staff members will facilitate this meeting. If the family is in the Domestic Networking Program for a Caucasian infant they may need to travel to the state where the birthmother resides.

Adoptive parents may or may not be present at the hospital depending on birthmother wishes and other circumstances. Babies are typically released from the

hospital into their adoptive parents' care awaiting the termination of birth parent rights. This stage is commonly known as the legal risk period, and varies in length from state to state and sometimes even county to county. At six months, families can finalize the adoption in their own state of residence.

For adoptions of babies born outside of the family's state of residence, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) will apply. ICPC is a law which outlines a series of procedures that must be followed to ensure that children are placed with safe and suitable families and that the respective states are aware of their role in each adoption placement.

ESTIMATED TIMEFRAMES

In domestic adoption, timelines vary from case to case. In general, you can expect to be chosen by the birth mother or birth parents within 2 to 18 months.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Domestic Program: For families residing outside the state of Maine, the stay may be 3 weeks to 3 months, depending upon the stats of the birthfather and the probate court schedule.

Domestic Networking Program: In the case of out-of-state networking adoption for couples, both parents must travel. Length of stay is 7-21 days, but may be longer depending on the requirements of the state where the child is born.

AFTER THE ADOPTION

We recommend that adoptive families make every effort to understand the issues of adoption from their child's point of view. Since adoption issues do not end with placement, it is suggested that families remain open to seeking support from various resources as their child grows into adulthood. These resources include adoptive parent support groups, professional counseling, and an ever-expanding body of literature on adoptive parenting. MAPS is always available to help parents with such resources.

Families are required by MAPS (and networking/partner agency, if applicable) to send reports and photographs, to MAPS or the other agency, until the child is 18 years of age.

COSTS

The initial fees submitted to MAPS, are the home study fees. Once a family decides to enter one of our domestic adoption programs they will need to pay the fees associated with that program according to the provided schedule.

Families in the **Domestic Program** will pay MAPS an application fee of \$600 (due at time of application to the program) and a program fee of \$30,000 (due at time of acceptance of birthparents or child).

Families in the **Domestic Networking** program will pay MAPS an application fee of \$3,000 (due at time of application to the program) and a program fee of \$14,000 - \$40,000 depending on which networking agency they have chosen to work with (due according to the networking agency's fee schedule).

GETTING STARTED

Please let us know if you have any further questions regarding adoption through the MAPS domestic programs. Once all of your questions are answered, we will be happy to send you an application so you can begin the process.

We look forward to helping you build your family through adoption.

HUMANITARIAN AID

An important part of MAPS' mission is humanitarian aid. In terms of domestic assistance, within the state of Maine we offer programs which provide support to pregnant and parenting teens and young women. For more information on these programs please visit our website at www.mapsadopt.org.

Please review the enclosed material and let us know if you have questions regarding adoption through our domestic programs. I would be delighted to speak with you and look forward to discussing your plans to build your family through adoption.

Sincerely,
Beth Gustafson
Domestic Program Coordinator
bethg@mapsadopt.org

FEE SCHEDULE FOR DOMESTIC PROGRAM

MAPS application fee (due with application)	\$600
Program fee (due upon acceptance of birthparents/child)	\$30,000

The program fee covers birthparent(s) counseling, up to \$3,000 in approved living expenses and legal costs associated with obtaining routine surrender and release or waiver.

FEE SCHEDULE FOR NETWORKING PROGRAM

MAPS Networking fee (due at program acceptance)	\$3,000
Networking Agency's Program fees (Networking agency's program fees may be due upon application, at placement, or in increments starting at application)	\$14,000 - \$40,000

The MAPS' Networking fee is non-refundable. Refund of the program fee depends upon the policy of the networking agency.

ADDITIONAL COSTS (applies to all Domestic Programs)

Additional expenses, which will vary on a case-by-case basis, may include:

1. MAPS home study fee, adoption education, home certification if required, and post-placement supervision (approximately \$4,000 - \$6,000 depending on state of residence)
2. Profile compilation, printing, and distribution (\$75-\$100)
3. Travel (expenses will vary depending on destination, length of stay and personal preferences regarding transportation, accommodations and meals).
4. FBI fingerprinting (\$18 per parent); may need to be done more than once
5. Medical examinations for each parent (physical required for home study)
6. ICPC \$1,200
7. Legal fees associated with finalization as billed by family's private attorney\
8. If birth mother resides outside of Maine; additional in-state counseling and in-state legal fees (vary depending on state).