

§ 14923. Standards and procedures for providing accreditation or approval

(a) In general

(1) Promulgation of regulations

The Secretary, shall, by regulation, prescribe the standards and procedures to be used by accrediting entities for the accreditation of agencies and the approval of persons to provide adoption services in the United States in cases subject to the Convention.

(2) Consideration of views

In developing such regulations, the Secretary shall consider any standards or procedures developed or proposed by, and the views of, individuals and entities with interest and expertise in international adoptions and family social services, including public and private entities with experience in licensing and accrediting adoption agencies.

(3) Applicability of notice and comment rules

Subsections (b), (c), and (d) of section 553 of title 5 shall apply in the development and issuance of regulations under this section.

(b) Minimum requirements

(1) Accreditation

The standards prescribed under subsection (a) shall include the requirement that accreditation of an agency may not be provided or continued under this subchapter unless the agency meets the following requirements:

(A) Specific requirements

(i) The agency provides prospective adoptive parents of a child in a prospective Convention adoption a copy of the medical records of the child (which, to the fullest extent practicable, shall include an English-language translation of such records) on a date which is not later than the earlier of the date that is 2 weeks before: (I) the adoption; or (II) the date on which the prospective parents travel to a foreign country to complete all procedures in such country relating to the adoption.

(ii) The agency ensures that a thorough background report (home study) on the prospective adoptive parent or parents has been completed in accordance with the Convention and with applicable Federal and State requirements and transmitted to the Attorney General with respect to each Convention adoption. Each such report shall include a criminal background check and a full and complete statement of all facts relevant to the eligibility of the prospective adopting parent or parents to adopt a child under any requirements specified by the central authority of the child's country of origin under section 14912(b)(3) of this title, including, in the case of a child emigrating to the United States for the purpose of adoption, the requirements of the child's country of origin applicable to adoptions taking place in such country. For purposes of this clause, the term "background report (home study)" includes any supplemental statement submitted by the agency to the Attorney General for the purpose of providing information

relevant to any requirements specified by the child's country of origin.

(iii) The agency provides prospective adoptive parents with a training program that includes counseling and guidance for the purpose of promoting a successful intercountry adoption before such parents travel to adopt the child or the child is placed with such parents for adoption.

(iv) The agency employs personnel providing intercountry adoption services on a fee for service basis rather than on a contingent fee basis.

(v) The agency discloses fully its policies and practices, the disruption rates of its placements for intercountry adoption, and all fees charged by such agency for intercountry adoption.

(B) Capacity to provide adoption services

The agency has, directly or through arrangements with other persons, a sufficient number of appropriately trained and qualified personnel, sufficient financial resources, appropriate organizational structure, and appropriate procedures to enable the agency to provide, in accordance with this chapter, all adoption services in cases subject to the Convention.

(C) Use of social service professionals

The agency has established procedures designed to ensure that social service functions requiring the application of clinical skills and judgment are performed only by professionals with appropriate qualifications and credentials.

(D) Records, reports, and information matters

The agency is capable of—

(i) maintaining such records and making such reports as may be required by the Secretary, the United States central authority, and the accrediting entity that accredits the agency;

(ii) cooperating with reviews, inspections, and audits;

(iii) safeguarding sensitive individual information; and

(iv) complying with other requirements concerning information management necessary to ensure compliance with the Convention, this chapter, and any other applicable law.

(E) Liability insurance

The agency agrees to have in force adequate liability insurance for professional negligence and any other insurance that the Secretary considers appropriate.

(F) Compliance with applicable rules

The agency has established adequate measures to comply (and to ensure compliance of their agents and clients) with the Convention, this chapter, and any other applicable law.

(G) Nonprofit organization with state license to provide adoption services

The agency is a private nonprofit organization licensed to provide adoption services in at least one State.

(2) Approval

The standards prescribed under subsection (a) shall include the requirement that a person shall not be approved under this subchapter unless the person is a private for-profit entity that meets the requirements of subparagraphs (A) through (F) of paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3) Renewal of accreditation or approval

The standards prescribed under subsection (a) shall provide that the accreditation of an agency or approval of a person under this subchapter shall be for a period of not less than 3 years and not more than 5 years, and may be renewed on a showing that the agency or person meets the requirements applicable to original accreditation or approval under this subchapter.

(c) Temporary registration of community based agencies**(1) One-year registration period for medium community based agencies**

For a 1-year period after the entry into force of the Convention and notwithstanding subsection (b), the Secretary may provide, in regulations issued pursuant to subsection (a), that an agency may register with the Secretary and be accredited to provide adoption services in the United States in cases subject to the Convention during such period if the agency has provided adoption services in fewer than 100 intercountry adoptions in the preceding calendar year and meets the criteria described in paragraph (3).

(2) Two-year registration period for small community-based agencies

For a 2-year period after the entry into force of the Convention and notwithstanding subsection (b), the Secretary may provide, in regulations issued pursuant to subsection (a), that an agency may register with the Secretary and be accredited to provide adoption services in the United States in cases subject to the Convention during such period if the agency has provided adoption services in fewer than 50 intercountry adoptions in the preceding calendar year and meets the criteria described in paragraph (3).

(3) Criteria for registration

Agencies registered under this subsection shall meet the following criteria:

(A) The agency is licensed in the State in which it is located and is a nonprofit agency.

(B) The agency has been providing adoption services in connection with intercountry adoptions for at least 3 years.

(C) The agency has demonstrated that it will be able to provide the United States Government with all information related to the elements described in section 14914(b) of this title and provides such information.

(D) The agency has initiated the process of becoming accredited under the provisions of this chapter and is actively taking steps to become an accredited agency.

(E) The agency has not been found to be involved in any improper conduct relating to intercountry adoptions.

(Pub. L. 106-279, title II, § 203, Oct. 6, 2000, 114 Stat. 832.)

Editorial Notes**REFERENCES IN TEXT**

This subchapter, referred to in subsec. (b), was in the original “this title”, meaning title II of Pub. L. 106-279, Oct. 6, 2000, 114 Stat. 830, which is classified principally to this subchapter. For complete classification of title II to the Code, see Tables.

This chapter, referred to in subsecs. (b)(1)(B), (D)(iv), (F) and (c)(3)(D) was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 106-279, Oct. 6, 2000, 114 Stat. 825, known as the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 14901 of this title and Tables.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**EFFECTIVE DATE**

Section effective Oct. 6, 2000, with transition rule, see section 505(a)(1), (b) of Pub. L. 106-279, set out as an Effective Dates; Transition Rule note under section 14901 of this title.

§ 14924. Secretarial oversight of accreditation and approval**(a) Oversight of accrediting entities**

The Secretary shall—

(1) monitor the performance by each accrediting entity of its duties under section 14922 of this title and its compliance with the requirements of the Convention, this chapter, other applicable laws, and implementing regulations under this chapter; and

(2) suspend or cancel the designation of an accrediting entity found to be substantially out of compliance with the Convention, this chapter, other applicable laws, or implementing regulations under this chapter.

(b) Suspension or cancellation of accreditation or approval**(1) Secretary's authority**

The Secretary shall suspend or cancel the accreditation or approval granted by an accrediting entity to an agency or person pursuant to section 14922 of this title when the Secretary finds that—

(A) the agency or person is substantially out of compliance with applicable requirements; and

(B) the accrediting entity has failed or refused, after consultation with the Secretary, to take appropriate enforcement action.

(2) Correction of deficiency

At any time when the Secretary is satisfied that the deficiencies on the basis of which an adverse action is taken under paragraph (1) have been corrected, the Secretary shall—

(A) notify the accrediting entity that the deficiencies have been corrected; and

(B)(i) in the case of a suspension, terminate the suspension; or

(ii) in the case of a cancellation, notify the agency or person that the agency or person may re-apply to the accrediting entity for accreditation or approval.

(c) Debarment**(1) Secretary's authority**

On the initiative of the Secretary, or on request of an accrediting entity, the Secretary