



## *First Free Adoption Fund*

Dear Adoptive Parent(s),

The **Family Care Partnership Team** was created by people at **First Free** who have a passion for supporting families who want to foster, adopt, or become Safe Families. We are ourselves either adopted or parents in this process with you. We meet monthly to pray for each other and talk about ways to support families and kids in our church and community. *We have been praying for you!*

We are so excited to be able to offer the very tangible, practical support of funds for domestic and international adoptions. We hope that along with meeting some of your financial need, we can be of great value to you in other ways as well. Whether it's providing recommendations for an adoption lawyer, swapping babysitting, praying together, or passing down a box full of 2T girl's summer clothes, we want to be there for you.

We made every attempt to keep our application process simple, yet thorough, reflecting the community that exists at First Free and our values as a team. Please provide as much information as you can while still feeling your privacy is being respected. Everything you share will be held in the strictest confidence by the Family Care Partnerships Team and the church's elder board.

This packet includes the following:

- Adoption Fund Application
- Adoption Fund Manual, describing our processes and requirements
- Letter of Recommendation forms

All items can be emailed to [familycare@firstfree.com](mailto:familycare@firstfree.com) or mailed to the Family Care Partnerships Team at First Free, 5255 N. Ashland Ave, Chicago, IL 60640. Only completed applications will be considered.

Thank you for inviting us into your adoption journey. We pray our ministry will be a blessing to your family and child.

Sincerely,  
Family Care Partnerships Team  
[familycare@firstfree.com](mailto:familycare@firstfree.com)



# *First Free Adoption Fund Policies and Procedures*

## **1. Fundraising**

- Fundraising responsibilities fall to the Family Care Partnerships team.
  - Annual Fall benefit party
  - Annual sales of items related to adoption, such as jewelry from Haiti
  - If funds are low, a Spring event, such a 5K or family rummage sale
- Potential applicants will recuse themselves from fundraising efforts.
- Past recipients will be encouraged to contribute to future fundraising efforts, with contributions such as photos, video, letters, or public speaking.

## **2. Accounting**

- First Free staff manages the donations and disbursements under a restricted fund and provides receipts to donors.
- Family Care Partnerships Team also tracks awards and disbursements of the fund.
- Checks are not cut to individuals but to service providers and agencies wherever possible.
- Given the complex nature of the adoption process, we may consider reimbursing past expenses with proper documentation.
- Families are approved for a specific amount up front, though it may need to be disbursed over time as their adoption process progresses.
- The fund will maintain reserves at all times.
- We will award funds for no more than 25% of the total cost of any adoption, except in special circumstances.
- If the fund becomes cumbersome for the volunteer team or church staff, the team will consider hiring an outside manager, such as Lifesong for Orphans.

## **3. Eligibility**

- Preference is given to those who have attended First Free regularly for at least one year and are involved in church ministries.
- Applicants must show consideration of a country's and agency's ethical standards. We do not fund adoptions through for-profit agencies.



- Applicants must be working with an agency and have an approved home study.
- If the fund is growing large and no FF families apply, we may open the grant up to the larger community as an outreach opportunity.

#### **4. Application Process**

- Written application and letters of recommendation are accepted on a rolling basis.
- A few members of the Family Care Partnerships Team interview the applicants in person, setting the tone of partnership and support.
- FCP makes recommendations to Elder board for their approval.
- Decisions are made 6 to 8 weeks after all application materials have been received.

#### **5. Allowable uses**

- Preference is given for costs directly incurred by the adoption process, such as home studies, placing agency fees, dossier translation, medical fees before the child comes home, country fees/international fees/orphanage fees/placement fees, required travel, post-adoption fees, etc.
- Consideration is also given to families incurring post-adoption costs such as medical bills, special therapies, or adaptive technology.

#### **6. Funding amounts**

- The application asks for the amount of aid the family is requesting. A family may receive less aid than their total request, taking into consideration the amount of funds available and number of families receiving aid.
- The team will consider factors such as the family's financial need and financial investment in the adoption, the family's church involvement, and the adoptive child's/children's circumstances - sibling status, age, sex, country of origin, medical needs, etc.



## *First Free Adoption Fund Application*

Please read the Adoption Fund Policies and Procedures thoroughly before completing the application. Then fill out this application as fully as possible, expanding text boxes or attaching extra pages where necessary.

<b>Applicant Name(s):</b>	
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	

<b>Phone Number 1:</b>		<b>Phone Number 2:</b>	
<b>Email address 1:</b>		<b>Email address 2:</b>	

### Adoption Information

<p>1. <b>Adoption Agency Name:</b> <i>Please attach a copy of your acceptance letter and your agency's statement of faith (if applicable)</i></p>
<p>2. <b>Where are you adopting from?</b> Please be as specific as you can.</p>
<p>3. <b>What is your adoption timeline?</b> We understand much is unknown about the process, but let us know your desired timeline, and events that have been scheduled or completed such as a home study, an in-country visit, or court dates.</p>
<p>4. How do you know the agency and country from which you are adopting meet ethical standards of the industry?</p>



## Cost and Request

Total Adoption Cost:	
Amount Paid for out of pocket:	
Amount raised/to be raised through other resources:	
Amount requesting from FF Adoption Fund:	
Are there other life circumstances you'd like to share that affect your adoption or ability to pay?	
<p><i>Please attach a complete budget (breakdown of expenses). If you are applying post-adoption, please attach a breakdown of the bills you are facing now that your child is home with you.</i></p>	



## Your Adoptive Child(ren)

How much you share in this section is completely up to your discretion. We will hold whatever you decide to share in the strictest confidence. We ask not only to inform our decision, but also so that we may provide the best emotional, practical, and spiritual support to your family and your child in the future.

<b>Child's Name:</b>	
<b>Child's Sex:</b>	
<b>Child's date of birth:</b>	

**1. Please describe what you already know about your child.**

If you are comfortable, you could share things like: What have their life circumstances been so far? Do they have any specific diagnoses or medical needs? Are they currently receiving (or do you anticipate them needing) any special therapies or services (like speech therapy or nutrition services)?

**2. If you are applying for a grant for post-adoption costs, please describe any community or school-based services your child has received or applied for.**



## Your Current Family

- 1. What does your current family look like?** Please list both spouses' name, if married, and the names and ages of any children you already have in your family, as well as anyone else who lives in your home.
- 2. Is this your first adoption?** If no, please describe previous adoption journeys including, for example, names and ages of children, when they were adopted, whether you are now using the same agency, where the children were born, etc.
- 3. What has led you to pursue adoption?** Please describe how you came to the decision to adopt.
- 4. What kind of support do you have from your extended family?** Do they live nearby?
- 5. How can our church and specifically the Family Care Partnerships Team support you during this journey?** Please list specific tangible needs you may have, as well as ways we can be praying for you and encouraging you.



## Personal Faith Journey and Church Involvement

If married, each spouse should complete this page.

1. Please describe how you came to faith in Christ and what your walk with Him has been like.

2. How long have you attended First Free?

3. Are you a member of First Free?

4. Please describe any involvement you have had in any ministries, outreaches, or leadership roles at FF.

## Anything else?

Is there anything else that you would like us to know?



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## Letters of Recommendation

*Please submit two letters of recommendation.* See the Letter of Recommendation form. Please include at least one from another member of First Free.

**Names of References**

**Email / Phone**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Administrative Notes (for Adoption Fund Administration only)**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

Amount awarded: \_\_\_\_\_