



1.888.241.6930

www.iaame.net

**Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity, Inc.**

Physical Address: 802 NW 5th Avenue. • Gainesville FL 32601 • USA

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March 17, 2020

### **IAAME Messaging COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis**

IAAME seeks to work in conjunction with the Department of State and Adoption Service Providers (ASPs) to collaborate and make adjustments to processes as needed during these uncertain times. Given the effects of the COVID-19 virus are widespread, but vary by state, city, and region, we all need to work together to adjust, plan to continue completing work as is possible, and implement contingency plans, such as those listed below, to get through these times while focusing on the health and safety of all involved. IAAME understands these circumstances are difficult for all of us. We will all need to clearly communicate with one another throughout this process, and make compromises as needed. We will need to clearly document and communicate the need for, and approval of, any specific contingency plans made for actions scheduled to be completed. IAAME is open and receptive to ideas for working together through this process. IAAME understands there may be office closures, staff who are out ill, must stay at home with children who are out of school, and/or are caring for someone at high risk or who is ill. We believe communication and the teaming approach will allow us to continue to work together in the best interests of the children and families.

#### **Monitoring and Oversight**

As circumstances allow, IAAME staff will continue to process complaints, self-reports, and other monitoring and oversight activities. IAAME will continue to request evidence, review and process evidence received, review evidence and responses related to adverse actions, etc. IAAME will continue to provide due dates for requested evidence and response, but will on a case by case basis, adjust timeframes as appropriate given each ASP's individual circumstance. If an ASP requires an extension of a due date the ASP should submit a request to IAAME outlining the details of the request and the circumstances related to the COVID-19 virus that have an impact of the ASP's ability to respond and complete actions by the timeframe given or set via IAAME policy (e.g. self-reports). IAAME will work with each individual ASP to review the request and to adjust timeframes as appropriate to the circumstances of both the issue and the reason for the request.

#### **Maintenance of Two-Months Operating Expenses - 96.33(e):**

IAAME will maintain communication with the Department of State as to circumstances and application of the standards related to the impact the Covid-19 virus on Adoption Service Providers' (ASPs') financial situations. IAAME expects to review each ASP's individual circumstances and, with information provided by the ASP, determine the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the ASP's financial situation.

#### **Accreditation and Approval**

**Extensions of Accreditation/Approval:** IAAME is open to the potential for providing extensions of accreditation or approval to eligible agencies and persons. For an extension to be considered an ASP must meet the eligibility requirements set forth in IAAME Policy 003. ASPs should let their IAAME Analyst know immediately if the ASP would like to be considered for an extension. Extensions may be granted for a period of one-month up to one-year, and decisions will be based on multiple factors and will be determined in conjunction with the ASP. Fees associated with approved extensions during this time will be waived.



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**Application Part B Submission:** ASPs who are or will be in the process of completing the Application Part B during this time should contact their assigned IAAME Analyst if circumstances related to operations are affected because of the COVID-19 virus. The ASP must provide the Analyst with information to include any unique circumstances and a suggested date by which the Application Part B can be completed by the ASP. The IAAME Analyst will work with the ASP to adjust due dates as deemed appropriate.

### **On-Site Reviews:**

IAAME will be in contact shortly with each ASP with accreditation and approval on-site reviews scheduled in April 2020. As we continue to watch the progression and impact of the COVID-19 virus, IAAME will continue to contact ASPs with on-site reviews scheduled in May, June, July 2020 to develop potential alternate plans as needed.

If circumstances are such that on-site reviews may not physically take place as scheduled, IAAME will work with the ASP on an alternate plan. Unless determined otherwise, the on-site review schedule will continue as planned. If travel to the ASP is determined to be unsafe, IAAME staff will conduct things such as entrance meetings, interviews, and exit meeting via video, and/or conference call. IAAME staff will conduct a desk review of the on-site evidence submitted by the ASP via electronic files, drop box, zip file or submitted in the IAAME Portal. IAAME staff will communicate with the ASP via phone, email, and video, as needed, to request additional information, and maintain ongoing communication.

At the time in which it is determined to be safe to do so, IAAME staff will coordinate with the ASP to schedule the physical on-site review. This revised version of the on-site review may entail a review of financial records, personnel records, and other evidence not available via the electronic review or through the evidence uploaded to the portal.

IAAME staff will contact ASPs to review the following plans for action and will work together to implement a plan of action for each ASP's unique circumstance(s).

### **Required Evidence:**

ASPs with electronic case management systems will be requested to provide the assigned IAAME staff with credentials to the ASP's electronic system, or provide a "drop box", zip file type file system which will allow IAAME staff to review evidence which was requested to be reviewed during the on-site review, when possible.

ASPs who do not have electronic case management systems will be requested to provide the requested on-site review evidence by uploading the information as the document type "On-site Evidence" in the Documents section of the IAAME portal.

IAAME is cognizant of the fact there may be evidence related to documents including but not limited to financial records, personnel files, etc. which may not be able to be provided electronically given the volume of information. The assigned Lead Analyst for the review will discuss this evidence with the ASP to determine what evidence should be submitted and what evidence may wait until IAAME staff can be physically present on-site.



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On-Site Review Travel Expenses:

If travel related to an on-site review needs to be changed or cancelled, IAAME will make arrangements to obtain refunds, vouchers, credits, etc. IAAME would then rebook these expenses as needed when the on-site review portion of the renewal activities are rescheduled. IAAME will utilize the refunds, vouchers, and/or credits when rebooking these travel expenses and will invoice the ASP accordingly. Refunds will be provided to ASPs for rebooked travel, if applicable.

Post-Site Processing:

Any changes necessary to the post-site processing procedures for accreditation and approval renewals will be addressed on an as needed case by case basis and will be directly related to specific ASP circumstances related to the COVID-19 virus and the ASP's and IAAME's ability to complete work.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact your assigned IAAME Analyst.