



Intercountry Adoption Accreditation and Maintenance Entity Policy Manual

Policy Name:	Accreditation and Approval
Policy Number:	003
Origination Date:	February 7, 2018 with Department of State Approval March 23, 2018
Revision Date:	March 7, 2019 with Department of State Approval on March 18, 2019; August 1, 2022 with Department of State Approval on August 29, 2022
Effective Date:	December 1, 2022

Policy: This policy governs IAAME’s requirements for accreditation/approval, acceptance of applications for accreditation or approval, conducting accreditation or approval review, assessment of substantial compliance, and accreditation or approval decisions.

A. Overview

1. An applicant who intends to provide adoption services or an accredited agency (agency) or approved person (person) who provides adoption services and who is within IAAME’s jurisdiction as addressed in IAAME Policy 002 may be eligible to apply for accreditation or approval with IAAME.
 - a) For initial applicants, IAAME confirms, prior to the applicant submitting an Application Part A, that it is properly licensed or intends to be properly licensed by State law to provide adoption services.
 - b) For renewal applicants, the agency or person submits evidence it is properly licensed by State law to provide adoption services as part of its Application Part A.
2. In order for an initial applicant approved, it must demonstrate its ability to comply with the standards set forth in 22 CFR 96, Subpart F and the provisions of 96.25(c) and 96.27(e) and (f). In order for a renewal applicant to maintain its accreditation or approval, it must demonstrate it is in substantial compliance with the standards set forth in 22 CFR 96, Subpart F and the provisions of 96.25(c) and 96.27(e) and (f). The burden of demonstrating substantial compliance is on the initial or renewal applicant.



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- a) Pursuant to 22 CFR 96.25 (c), IAAME may deny an initial applicant's accreditation or approval or may take an adverse action against a renewal applicant if it fails to provide requested documents or information, or to make employees available as requested.
 - b) Pursuant to 22 CFR 96.27 (e), when an initial applicant was previously denied accreditation or approval, withdrew its application in anticipation of denial, or is reapplying for accreditation or approval after Denial, Cancellation, Refusal to Renew, or Temporary Debarment, IAAME may take the reasons underlying such actions into account when evaluating the applicant for accreditation or approval, and may deny accreditation or approval on the basis of the previous action.
 - c) Pursuant to 22 CFR 96.27 (f), if an initial or renewal applicant that has an ownership or control interest in the applicant, as that term is defined in section 1124 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a-3), has been Debarred pursuant to §96.85, IAAME may take into account the reasons underlying the Debarment when evaluating the applicant, and may deny accreditation or approval or Refuse to Renew accreditation or approval on the basis of the Debarment.
3. For renewal applicants, agencies or persons must demonstrate its compliance with the standards through actual performance, unless IAAME determines it is still necessary to measure capacity because adequate evidence of actual performance is not available.
 4. For initial applicants, the accreditation or approval process, including the final decision, must be completed within two (2) years from the date of the submission of the Application Part A.
 5. For renewal applicants, the accreditation or approval process, including the final decision, must be completed prior to the applicant's expiration date.
 6. An applicant may request in writing to withdraw its application for accreditation or approval at any point during the process up until IAAME has made the final accreditation or approval decision.
 7. It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine its ability to achieve substantial compliance prior to making an application and paying accompanying fees, as fees are non-refundable.
 8. An application for initial accreditation or approval or renewal of accreditation or approval does not guarantee the applicant will be accredited or approved.



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B. Substantial Compliance System

1. IAAME assesses the applicant's substantial compliance with the standards in 22 CFR 96, Subpart F utilizing the following rating indicators:
 - a) **Full Compliance** - The relevant policies, procedures, and performance fully meet the Standard as written and conform to the principles of the Hague Adoption Convention (the Convention). All elements or requirements are evident in performance with extremely rare or no exceptions. Exceptions in compliance do not affect, in any way, consistency with the aims of the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, the regulations, organizational performance, or quality of service.
 - b) **Substantial Compliance** - Performance exhibits a high level of compliance with accreditation Standards. The majority of the Standard's requirements are met, but one or more factors need clarification or augmentation. Policies and procedures have sufficient detail, are consistently applied, and personnel are adequately informed of policies and procedures. Evaluators are able to verify performance is in compliance with the Standard and/or the organization can describe how it meets the Standard. Any minor inconsistencies and underdeveloped policies or performance noted do not jeopardize persons served, overall performance, or consistency with the aims of the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, or the regulations in any way.
 - c) **Partial Compliance** - A significant aspect of the organization's operations or service delivery deviates from the Standard's requirements or from written material, or capacity is at a basic level. Policies or procedures lack sufficient detail and/or are not consistently applied; personnel are inadequately informed of policies and procedures. Evaluators are unable to verify consistent performance in compliance with the Standard and/or the organization can only anecdotally describe how it meets the Standard. Performance, as is, may compromise care of persons served, imperil organizational functioning, or be inconsistent with the aims of the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, or the regulations.
 - d) **Non-Compliance** - Any Standard for which an ASP does not receive the required rating described above (1, 2 or 3) will be rated as non-compliant.



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2. Within the Substantial Compliance System, each standard is assigned a weight as outlined below.

- a) **Mandatory Standards** represent practices that are essential to fulfillment of the aims of the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, and the regulations, and have the greatest impact in preventing risks to children and families. Mandatory is the highest weight assigned to regulation Standards. An agency or person must achieve a rating of full compliance on all Mandatory Standards to receive accreditation/approval or renewal of accreditation/approval.

Mandatory Standards: 96.30 (a), 96.30 (b), 96.30 (c), 96.30 (d), 96.31 (a), 96.31 (b), 96.33 (b), 96.33 (c), 96.34 (a), 96.34 (b), 96.34 (c), 96.35 (a), 96.35 (b), 96.35 (c), 96.35 (d), 96.36 (a), 96.36 (b), 96.39 (e), 96.42 (e), 96.49 (j) and 96.53 (c)

- b) **Critical Standards** represent practices that have a significant impact on fulfillment of the aims of the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, and the regulations. Critical is a high weight assigned to regulation Standards. A majority of the accreditation Standards have a weight of Critical. An agency or person must achieve a rating of Full or Substantial Compliance on all Critical Standards to receive accreditation/approval or renewal of accreditation/approval.

Critical Standards: 96.32 (a), 96.32 (b), 96.32 (c), 96.32 (d), 96.32 (e), 96.33 (a), 96.33 (d), 96.33 (e), 96.33 (f), 96.33 (g), 96.33 (h), 96.33 (i), 96.34 (d), 96.34 (e), 96.34 (f), 96.35 (e), 96.37 (a), 96.37 (b), 96.37 (c), 96.37 (d), 96.37 (e), 96.37 (f), 96.37 (g), 96.38 (a), 96.38 (b), 96.38 (c), 96.39 (a), 96.39 (c), 96.39 (d), 96.39 (f), 96.40 (a), 96.40 (b), 96.40 (c), 96.40 (d), 96.40 (e), 96.40 (f), 96.40 (g), 96.40 (h), 96.41 (a), 96.41 (b), 96.41 (c), 96.41 (d), 96.41 (e), 96.41 (f), 96.41 (g), 96.41 (h), 96.42 (a), 96.42 (b), 96.42 (c), 96.42 (d), 96.43 (a), 96.44 (a), 96.44 (b), 96.45 (a), 96.45 (b), 96.46 (a), 96.46 (b), 96.46 (c), 96.47 (a), 96.47 (b), 96.47 (c), 96.47 (d), 96.48(a), 96.48 (b), 96.48 (c), 96.48 (e), 96.48 (f), 96.48 (g), 96.48 (h), 96.49 (a), 96.49 (b), 96.49 (c), 96.49 (d), 96.49 (e), 96.49 (f), 96.49 (g), 96.49 (h), 96.49 (i), 96.49 (k), 96.50 (a), 96.50 (b), 96.50 (c), 96.50 (d), 96.50 (e), 96.50 (f), 96.50 (g), 96.50 (h), 96.51 (a), 96.51 (b), 96.51 (c), 96.51 (d), 96.52 (a), 96.52 (b), 96.52 (c), 96.52 (e), 96.53 (a), 96.53 (b), 96.53 (d), 96.53 (e), 96.54 (a), 96.54 (b), 96.54 (c), 96.54 (d), 96.54 (f), 96.54 (g), 96.54 (h), 96.54 (j), 96.54 (k), 96.55 (a), 96.55 (b), 96.55 (d), 96.55 (e) and 96.55 (f)



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- c) **Foundational Standards:** Foundational Standards are important to the operation of a well-functioning adoption program. They derive from and support compliance with the Convention, the IAA, the UAA, and the regulations. Foundational is a weight below that of Mandatory and Critical. An agency or person must achieve a rating of partial compliance or higher on all Foundational Standards to receive accreditation/approval or renewal of accreditation/approval.

Foundational Standards: 96.38 (d), 96.39 (b), 96.43 (b), 96.43 (c), 96.43 (d), 96.48 (d), 96.52 (d), 96.54 (e), 96.54 (i), and 96.55 (c)

3. Substantial compliance is when an applicant achieves at least the minimum rating required for each standard in 22 CFR 96, Subpart F.
- a) In order to be accredited or approved, the applicant must:
- i. Receive ratings of Full Compliance on 100 percent of all applicable Mandatory Standards;
 - ii. Receive ratings of Full or Substantial Compliance on 100 percent of all applicable Critical Standards; and
 - iii. Receive ratings of Partial Compliance or higher on 100 percent of all applicable Foundational Standards.

C. Application Part A

1. Initial applicants for accreditation or approval should contact IAAME via the Contact form on the IAAME website at www.iaame.net. The initial applicant should select "I am interested in becoming an Adoption Service Provider" and provide the required information.
- a) Within five (5) business days of receipt of the Contact form, IAAME contacts the applicant to confirm eligibility and discuss the application process. IAAME establishes a Portal account for the applicant where the applicant completes the Application Part A. IAAME also provides the applicant with instruction on how to pay the Application Fee.
2. Application Part A – Initial Applicant includes:
- a) Name of Applicant (including doing business as name, if applicable)
 - b) Services the applicant intends to provide: incoming, outgoing, or both
 - c) Information on if the applicant intends to act as a primary provider, to include the countries in which the applicant intends to provide adoption services as a primary provider
 - d) Contact information for primary location
 - e) Number of locations
 - f) How the applicant wishes to pay the accreditation or approval fee



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- g) Disclosure of suitability information as set forth in 22 CFR 96.35
 - h) Certificate of incorporation or other evidence of legal formation, if applicable
 - i) Copy of 501(c)(3) status letter and/or evidence of State approval of non-profit status, if applicable
 - j) License(s) or evidence of application for a license for the primary location, and for all secondary locations, as applicable
3. For renewal, agencies and persons are contacted by IAAME approximately fifteen (15) months prior its expiration date to confirm whether the agency or person intends to submit an application for renewal. If the agency or person indicates it intends to submit an application, IAAME initiates an Application Part A in the Portal. IAAME also provides the agency or person with instruction on how to pay the Application Fee.
4. Application Part A – Renewal Applicant includes:
- a) Number of placements for which the agency or person acted as a primary provider for the last 24 months preceding the date of submission of Application Part A
 - b) Disclosure of suitability information as set forth in 22 CFR 96.35
5. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the Application Part A, IAAME contacts the applicant to schedule an Intake Call. The Intake Call is conducted to:
- a) Provide the name and contact information of the staff assigned to the applicant
 - b) Review the Application Part A and request any additional information
 - c) Review adoption service(s) provided or intended to be provided by the applicant, including whether the applicant intends to act as a primary provider
 - d) Discuss the Application Part B process, on-site review, and final decision phase
 - e) Establish dates for the Application Part B submission, the on-site review, and technical support calls as needed.
 - f) Discuss fee(s), the way in which the fee(s) will be paid, and the date(s) by which the fee(s) is to be paid
 - g) Address any questions of the applicant
6. Within five (5) business days of the Intake Call, IAAME provides the Memorandum of Agreement to the applicant for signature and confirms in writing the dates discussed during the Intake Call.

D. Application Part B

- 1. In order to complete the Application Part B, applicants must provide evidence for each of the standards in 22 CFR Part 96, Subpart F.
- 2. The Tables of Evidence indicate which evidence is to be submitted within the Application Part B or will be requested for the on-site review.



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3. The Application Part B must be submitted no less than three (3) months prior to the scheduled on-site review.
4. A minimum of two IAAME staff review the Application Part B. Based on review of the Application Part B and prior to the on-site review, IAAME provides, as applicable:
 - a) List of additional evidence needed during the on-site review
 - b) List of individuals to be interviewed during the on-site review
 - c) List of other sites to be visited as a part of the on-site review
 - d) A request for the applicant to provide a private and confidential space for IAAME staff while on-site
 - e) A draft agenda for the applicant's review, feedback, and approval
 - f) List of case and personnel records for review
5. IAAME and the applicant will communicate as needed to address questions and plan for the on-site review.

E. On-site Review

1. For initial applicants, IAAME works with the applicant to schedule the dates of the on-site review.
2. For renewal applicants, the on-site review is scheduled approximately five (5) months prior to the applicant's expiration date.
3. IAAME determines the length of the on-site review and the number of IAAME staff for the review based on:
 - a) The number of adoption cases the applicant handles
 - b) The number of sites IAAME determines it needs to visit
 - c) The number of individuals working for the applicant and at each site
4. An entrance meeting occurs at the beginning of every on-site review. This meeting provides an opportunity for introductions and for IAAME to discuss the on-site review activities with the applicant.
5. During the on-site review, IAAME follows the set agenda to complete the on-site activities including case and personnel records review, additional evidence review, and individual and group interviews. Interviews include only IAAME staff and those identified on the on-site review agenda. No other individuals may attend scheduled interviews unless it is mutually agreed upon by IAAME and the applicant.



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6. A closing meeting occurs at the end of every on-site review. This meeting provides an overview of the on-site review activities conducted and an explanation of the next steps with the applicant.

F. Assessment and Decision

1. IAAME utilizes a standardized rating tool to assess the applicant's substantial compliance through capacity and/or performance, as applicable. This tool includes:
 - a) All standards pursuant to 22 CFR Part 96, Subpart F
 - b) The weight for each standard (Mandatory, Critical, or Foundational)
 - c) A rating for each standard indicating whether the standard is in Full Compliance, Substantial Compliance, Partial Compliance, or Non-Compliance, pursuant to the Substantial Compliance System
2. IAAME utilizes the applicant's Application Parts A and B, interviews, case record reviews, personnel record reviews, and other requested evidence to assess the applicant's compliance. From the assessment, IAAME determines a rating and justification for each standard.
3. IAAME determines if the applicant is in substantial compliance with the standards.
 - a) If the applicant is determined to be in substantial compliance, within five (5) business days of the decision, IAAME provides a written notice of the decision, the accreditation or approval report, and an electronic accreditation or approval certificate. The applicant will be provided a hard copy of the certificate within thirty (30) business days of the decision.
 - b) If the applicant is determined not to be in substantial compliance, within five (5) business days of the decision, IAAME provides:
 - i. A written notice which includes the decision on the applicant's substantial compliance, the decision to impose or hold in abeyance an adverse action (for renewals only), and the decision to defer the accreditation or approval decision.
 - ii. A Notice of Deficiencies (Notice) which includes the rating and justification for each standard for which the applicant was found to be deficient.
 - iii. A request to schedule an exit meeting to review the applicant's areas of strengths, the Notice, and an explanation of next steps.
 - c) For initial applicants, the applicant must provide evidence of compliance or evidence the finding was based on error for each of the standards for which it was determined to be deficient. This process must be completed within the two (2) year timeframe outlined above.



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- d) For renewal applicants, in the event the decision is to impose or to hold in abeyance adverse action, the actions within Policy 006 apply. An applicant may not be renewed while the applicant is under imposed adverse action or has an adverse action held in abeyance. This process may not extend beyond the date of the applicant's expiration date.
4. If the applicant is successful in addressing the areas of deficiencies or has provided evidence to demonstrate the decision was based on error, IAAME makes a final recommendation on granting the applicant's accreditation or approval.
5. If the applicant is not successful in addressing the areas of deficiency or has not provided evidence to demonstrate the decision was based on error:
 - a) For initial applicants, IAAME denies the application for accreditation or approval. IAAME provides the applicant a Notice of Denial, which includes instructions for petitioning for reconsideration of the decision.
 - b) For renewal applicants, IAAME imposes an adverse action as applicable which includes Refusal to Renew or Cancellation.
6. IAAME may deny an initial applicant or Suspend or Cancel an agency's accreditation or person's approval if, at any time, it determines there is evidence demonstrating fraud, gross misconduct, and/or illegal activity.

G. Re-Application

1. Pursuant to 22 CFR 96.27 (e), if an agency or person has previously been denied accreditation or approval, has withdrawn its application in anticipation of denial, or is reapplying for accreditation or approval after Cancellation, Refusal to Renew, or Temporary Debarment, IAAME may take the reasons underlying such actions into account when evaluating the agency or person for accreditation or approval, and may deny accreditation or approval on the basis of the previous action.
2. An applicant who has been denied accreditation or approval may reapply to IAAME after a period of six (6) months. This allows the applicant time to address the deficiencies which led to the denial. The applicant may contact IAAME after the six (6) month period via the online Contact form. IAAME reserves the right to deny the applicant's request if IAAME determines the issues that led to the original denial have not been adequately addressed.

H. Extensions

1. IAAME is authorized to grant extensions only for the purpose of staggering, as described in 22 CFR 96.60 (b). Extensions may be granted for a period of up to one (1) year if the extension will not cause the agency's accreditation or person's approval to exceed five (5) years in total. IAAME may only offer extensions to agencies or persons who:



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- a) remain in substantial compliance with applicable standards in 22 CFR 96, Subpart F
 - b) have no pending complaint investigations or adverse actions
 - c) have not undergone a change in corporate or internal structure (such as a merger or change in Chief Executive or Financial Officer, or equivalent) during the current accreditation or approval cycle
2. When IAAME grants an extension of accreditation or approval, the agency or person is provided with an updated expiration date, a letter granting the extension, and a new certificate.

I. Reporting

1. IAAME notifies the Department of State via email of accreditation and approval decisions within two (2) business days of the decision.
2. IAAME posts on its website the name, address, and contact information for each agency and person IAAME has accredited or approved as required by 22 CFR 96.91 (a)(1).
3. On a quarterly basis IAAME posts information on any denial of accreditation or approval as required by 22 CFR 96.91 (a)(2).
4. IAAME maintains the accreditation and approval status and the expiration date for all agencies and persons in its jurisdiction in the Adoption Tracking Service (ATS) and Portal.

J. Public Requests for Information

IAAME only releases information in accordance with applicable state and Federal law, including the regulations in 22 CFR Part 96.