

**Center for Adoption Research
University of Massachusetts**

**Adoption in Massachusetts:
Private and Public Agency
Placements and Practices in 2001-2002**

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¹ The Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS) is the public child welfare agency of the Commonwealth responsible for the care and protection of children and the determination of appropriate permanent placement plans for children in foster care. Central office: 24 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Statewide adoption information telephone number 1-800-KIDS-508. Website: <http://www.state.ma.us/dss/>. See Appendix A for a complete listing of the 6 regional and 26 area DSS offices.

Legislation

In 1999, HB 4900 37 [an act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2000 for the maintenance of the departments, boards, commissions, institutions, and certain activities of the Commonwealth, for interest, sinking fund and serial bond requirements and for certain permanent improvements, 1999 Mass. Acts, ch. 127] amended M.G.L. 28A § 10 (c)(8) to require reports by placement agencies detailing the number and nature of adoptions processed during each calendar quarter to be filed with the *Center for Adoption Research* at the University of Massachusetts. At that time, the legislature recognized that there was no statewide, consolidated picture of common practices, services, fees, or the numbers of different kinds of adoptions processed in Massachusetts. Therefore, the Center began collecting data to develop an archive of adoption practices in Massachusetts. Legislators believed that gathering information about adoption in Massachusetts would be a valuable resource for policy development related to adoption, and would benefit consumers and providers of adoption services.

Executive Summary

In August 2003, the *Center for Adoption Research* at the University of Massachusetts surveyed all licensed Massachusetts private adoption agencies regarding the number and types of adoption placements and adoption placement practices for the calendar years 2001 and 2002. In Massachusetts, only the Department of Social Services (DSS) and licensed private adoption agencies are authorized to place children for adoption. The licensing authority for the Commonwealth is the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS). Adoption in Massachusetts falls into three broad categories: public adoption from foster care through DSS, domestic private adoption, and international private adoption. The following types of adoption placement programs are offered by private adoption agencies licensed in Massachusetts: (a) domestic infant adoption using agency resources or networking with other programs or resources; (b) domestic infant adoption, in which prospective adoptive parents have identified birth parent(s) and an adoption agency supervises and coordinates the activities required to place a child with the prospective parent(s) and to complete the legal finalization of the adoption; and (c) international adoption using agency programs or by networking with other programs.

In 2001, there were 2343 adoptions finalized in Massachusetts. Of those, 1522 adoptions were finalized through private adoption agencies, and 821 adoptions were finalized through DSS, with 110 of these conducted by private agencies contracted by DSS. In 2002, there were 2478 adoptions finalized in Massachusetts. Of those, 1736 adoptions were finalized through private adoption agencies, and 742 adoptions were finalized through DSS, with 104 of these conducted by private agencies contracted by DSS. In both 2001 and 2002, international adoptions accounted for almost 80% of finalized private adoptions reported in Massachusetts. China, Russia, and South Korea were the three most common sending countries for international adoptions in Massachusetts.

Adoptions by single people and homosexual couples are legal in Massachusetts. Eighty-four percent of private adoption agencies in Massachusetts offer services to single prospective adoptive parents. In 2001, 15% of private adoption placements were made to single parents, and in 2002, 14% were made to single parents. The majority of these adoptions were international adoptions (at least 90%). Moreover, 54% of Massachusetts'

private adoption agencies offer services to gay and lesbian couples. In 2001, 4% of the private adoption placements were made with gay or lesbian couples. The majority of these (82%) were international adoption placements. In 2002, 2% of the private adoption placements were made with gay or lesbian couples with 71% being international adoption placements.

The average wait for an adoption placement by a Massachusetts adoption agency, once a home study is completed and approved, ranges from 2 to 19 months. The cost of adoption in Massachusetts varies tremendously. The most expensive placements are domestic infant adoptions arranged using agency resources, and international adoptions involving networking with other agencies. Costs for these types of adoption were as much as \$36,000. There are no fees associated with adopting children through the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Adoption related services provided by Massachusetts private adoption agencies vary by agency and type of placement program. The most commonly reported services were individual or group informational meetings, educational programs, counseling for birth parents and adoptive parent support groups. The least common were therapeutic day services and support groups for adults who were adopted.

The trend in domestic adoption practice is one of increasing contact between birth families and adoptive families, and sharing of information throughout the adoption process. In addition, 45% of agencies with international adoption placement programs indicated that they require post finalization updates from adoptive families be sent to authorities in the sending countries.

In the future, the *Center for Adoption Research* will continue to collect data about adoption practices in Massachusetts on an annual basis. To date, there are no comprehensive national statistics on the nature and number of adoptions in the U.S. The information gathered from Massachusetts private adoption agencies and DSS will identify emerging trends in adoption and provide practical information that will benefit consumers of adoption services, professionals, and policymakers.

Introduction

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, only licensed adoption agencies may legally place children for adoption. The Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS), as licensing authority for adoption agencies, regulates adoption agencies in accordance with Massachusetts' statute. Information regarding the regulations governing adoption and the requirements for agency licensure, as well as a listing of licensed agencies, is available from the OCCS.²

The *Center for Adoption Research* designed a survey to collect data from private agencies providing private domestic and private international adoption placement services. The *Center for Adoption Research* in collaboration with the Department of Social Services (DSS) developed a survey to collect data regarding adoption through DSS and its private contract agencies for this report. This survey also collected information from the private agencies contracted by DSS to make permanent placements for eligible children who are under the care and protection of the state.

In accordance with the 1999 legislative mandate, preliminary adoption placement data collected from Massachusetts licensed private adoption agencies for the years 1999 and 2000 were summarized in a report, which can be found at www.centerforadoptionresearch.org. In August of 2003, all currently licensed private adoption agencies conducting domestic and international adoption placements were contacted via U.S. mail and were asked to report the number of adoption placements made by the agency in 2001 and 2002, including information on transracial adoptions, single

² The Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services is the licensing authority for all adoption agencies in the Commonwealth. Central Office: One Ashburton Place, Room 1105, Boston, MA 02108, Phone: (617) 626-2000. Website <http://www.qualitychildcare.org/index.html>. See Appendix B for a complete listing of the 46 licensed private adoption agencies in Massachusetts as of January 2004.

parent adoptions, and co-parent adoptions by identified homosexual couples. In addition to reporting on types of adoption placement programs offered and current adoption placement practices, agencies were asked to provide full contact information, including addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, website addresses, directors' names (executive and program), an agency contact person, and hours of operation. Current information for all licensed private adoption agencies is provided in Appendix B of this report.³ Agencies that neglected to return the completed surveys by November 30, 2003 were sent a letter (and a duplicate survey) requesting the necessary information, and were reminded of their licensure requirement to report to the *Center for Adoption Research* the nature and number of adoption placements made by them. Those agencies that did not respond following this request were contacted via phone. Any agency that did not respond by March 15, 2004 was reported to the OCCS.

The following is a descriptive summary of the findings detailed in these survey categories.

- Agency Information
- Types of Placement Programs
- Finalized Adoptions Reported in 2001 and 2002
- DSS Contract Private Agency Placements in 2001 and 2002
- Reported Single Parent and Co-Parent (Gay/Lesbian) Adoptions
- Average Length of Wait for Adoption Placements
- Fees Charged to Adoptive Parents
- Adoption Related Services Provided
- Contact and Communication Practices: Openness in Adoption

³ It is likely that some agency information has changed since this survey was conducted, some agencies may have ceased operations and new agencies may have begun to operate.

Results

Agency Information

Forty-six Massachusetts licensed adoption agencies that provided private domestic or international adoption placement services in 2001 and 2002 were identified. Of the 46 private licensed agencies contacted⁴, 44 agencies responded to the survey, yielding a 96% response rate. As of March 15, 2004, only two agencies did not comply. Of the agencies that responded, 82% indicated how many years the agency had been licensed in Massachusetts. The number of years licensed ranged from 1 year to 137 years ($M = 28.5$ yrs, $SD = 36$ yrs). Eight agencies did not indicate number of years licensed, and therefore, could not be included in the reported range or average number of years licensed. All responding agencies provided full contact information, and 31 agencies (70%) reported having websites. Moreover, 14 of the 46 identified agencies (30%) reported having contractual relationships with DSS to provide adoption placement services for children in foster care with a permanency plan of adoption, and provided specific data about those placements. Information regarding the nature and number of placements made by these agencies for DSS is reported.

Types of Placement Programs

Agencies were asked to report the type of adoption placement services they offered to adoptive parents. Table 1 provides definitions for the different types of adoption placement services available. Table 2 reflects the number of agencies that offer the different types of adoption placement programs. The most common type of adoption

⁴ Refers to only private licensed adoption agencies identified as having active private domestic or international adoption programs at the time of survey administration in August 2003.

placement program offered by private Massachusetts agencies in 2002 was domestic infant adoption, which can be divided into three categories: domestic infant adoptions using only agency resources; domestic infant adoptions that are identified by the prospective adoptive parents and finalized through the agency; and domestic infant adoption accomplished by networking with other programs. International adoption through networking with other programs and international adoption using agency programs were the next most common types of placement programs offered by Massachusetts adoption agencies respectively. Of those agencies providing domestic infant adoption programs, 55% indicated that they provided private interim foster care services when necessary. Of those agencies, 35% stated that the agency *sometimes* provided the service, while 65% indicated that they *very rarely* needed to provide interim foster care. None of the agencies indicated that this service was *frequently* needed. For those that provided the service, the number of days infants were in interim foster care ranged from 1 to 30 days, with an average length of stay of 12 days.

Fourteen agencies reported having international adoption programs within the agency: 25% work with China, 18% with Ukraine, 16% with Russia and Guatemala, 11% with India, 9% with South Korea and Vietnam, approximately 7% with Cambodia and Colombia, and about 5% with Kazakhstan, Philippines, Romania, Ecuador, and Bulgaria. Other countries that agencies reported as potential sending countries for their international adoption programs included Albania, Ethiopia, Haiti, Hong Kong, Lithuania, Moldova, Nepal, Peru, and Sierra Leone.

Agencies were also asked to report which of their placement programs received the greatest number of inquiries from prospective adoptive parents in 2002. Twenty percent of

the agencies reported that the agency’s program for domestic infant adoption placement received the most consumer interest, 20% reported international adoption placement using the agencies’ programs, and 18% reported primary interest in international programs requiring networking with other agencies.

Table 1. Definitions of Placement Programs

Placement Program	Definition
1. Domestic Infant with Agency Resources (DIA)	The agency matches birth parents with prospective adoptive parents, coordinates, and finalizes the adoption.
2. Domestic Infant Parent Identified/Agency Assisted (DIPI)	Prospective adoptive parents have an identified birth mother (parents) and use the assistance of a licensed agency to coordinate and finalize the adoption process.
3. Domestic Infant by Networking with Other Programs (DIN)	The agency uses outside resources to both match prospective adoptive parents with birth parents and to manage the adoption process.
4. International with Agency’s Program (IA)	The agency has an internal international adoption program and coordinates all services needed for adoptions from specific countries with which the agency conducts adoptions.
5. International by Networking with Other Programs (IN)	The agency does not have an internal international adoption program, but coordinates with other agencies, organizations, or facilitators throughout the U.S. and abroad with programs in specific countries. The agency works with parents to complete the requirements for adoption in MA, and other resources are used to coordinate the services to complete the adoption in a specific foreign country.
6. DSS Contracted Agencies (DSS Contracts)	Agencies who have a contract with the Department of Social Services to find adoptive homes for children in foster care who are free for adoption.

Table 2. Massachusetts Agency Placement Programs

	DI	DIPI	DIN	IA	IN	DSS Contracts
Number of Agencies	26	29	26	14	26	14
Percentage	59%	66%	59%	32%	59%	32%

Finalized Adoptions Reported in 2001 and 2002

Agency respondents were asked to indicate how many finalized adoptions they completed in the calendar years 2001 and 2002. In total, there were 1522 reported adoptions finalized in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2001. In 2002, 1736 reported adoptions were finalized⁵. Please note: these numbers do not include those adoptions finalized through DSS and the private agencies contracted by DSS to find adoptive homes for children in foster care. The Department of Social Services reports that 821 adoptions were finalized in fiscal year 2001 and 742 adoptions in fiscal year 2002. Of these, 110 in 2001 (13%) and 104 in 2002 (14%) were processed by private agencies contracted by DSS. Figure 1 illustrates the number of adoptions per year for each type of adoption placement program. International adoption comprised the largest number of private adoptions in both 2001 and 2002, accounting for approximately 80% of all finalized adoptions reported from the responding private agencies (see Figure 2 for reported placements for each country). Please note, not every responding agency provided a breakdown of the number of placements for each applicable country. Therefore, the total number of international adoption placements per year does not correspond with the per country numbers. The second most common type of private adoption in both 2001 and

⁵ These numbers do not include adoption finalized from the 2 agencies that failed to report. In addition, two other agencies did not provide finalization numbers for the specific types of adoption placement programs as requested. As a result, the totals from the specific types of placements do not correspond to the overall total of all adoptions finalized in 2001 and 2002.

2002 was domestic infant adoption that relied on agency resources, which accounted for about 13% of placements. In 2001, 15% of the domestic adoptions (47) were identified as transracial adoption, and in 2002, 17% of the domestic adoptions (53) were identified as transracial adoptions. Moreover, in 2001 and 2002 respectively, 59% (189) and 70% (222) of the domestic adoption placements were conducted under the Interstate Compact for Placing Children (ICPC) law for adoption placements in other states.

In addition to the number of adoptions finalized by each agency in the years 2001 and 2002, agencies were asked to report on the number of birth parents they worked with to make domestic adoption placement plans in 2001 and 2002. In 2001, 223 birth parents worked with Massachusetts agencies to place children for adoption. Of those birth parents, 41% placed their child with an adoptive parent who lived outside of Massachusetts. In 2002, 208 birth parents placed a child for adoption, with 39% placing their children with adoptive parents who were not Massachusetts residents. Agencies were also asked to report the number of out of state birth parents with whom they worked to place a child with a Massachusetts resident. In 2001, 104 birth parents who were not Massachusetts residents placed a child with a Massachusetts resident. In 2002, there were 105 who did so. In Massachusetts, birth parents have the right to independent legal consultation. In 2001, agencies reported that 58 birth parents were referred for independent legal counsel concerning their adoption plan; there were 51 birth parents referred in 2002. Finally, 48% of the applicable agencies reported working with adoptive parents who were residents of other states.

DSS Contract Private Agency Placements in 2001 and 2002

The Massachusetts Department of Social Services contracts with private adoption agencies to facilitate the permanent placement of children from foster care who are legally free for adoption (i.e., children whose birth parents' parental rights have been terminated) into adoptive homes. Of the 44 agencies who responded to the survey, 14 indicated that they provided foster care adoption placements for DSS. The number of years as a MA licensed agency ranged from 4 to 137 years, with an average of 54 years. Seventy-nine percent of the agencies provided services for infant and young child placements, older child placements, and sibling group placements for children living in foster care who are legally free for adoption. Seventy-one percent provided placement services for children in foster care with serious emotional and/or behavioral problems that typically require specialized foster care placements. Fifty-seven percent provided placement services for children in foster care who were born with medical conditions that require intensive, specialized care, usually including constant medical treatment and monitoring (i.e., the medically fragile). Only 42% provide placement services for children who are currently living in group care (i.e., residential care) who are legally free for adoption. In 2001, there were 69 foster care adoption placements reported by agencies contracted by DSS, and in 2002, there were 77 placements reported. See Table 3 for a breakdown of the adoptions reported by gender of the child, race of the child, type of placements, and instances of transracial adoptions from the responding private agencies contracted by DSS.

Please note that the overall totals reported by private agencies contracted by DSS are not in line with those reported by DSS. We believe this discrepancy is related to at least two reporting agencies that did not disclose the actual number of placements they

finalized in 2001 and 2002. Thus, for an accurate count of foster care adoptions finalized by private agencies in 2001 and 2002 please refer to the numbers reported by DSS (see page 6) and those in Figure 1.

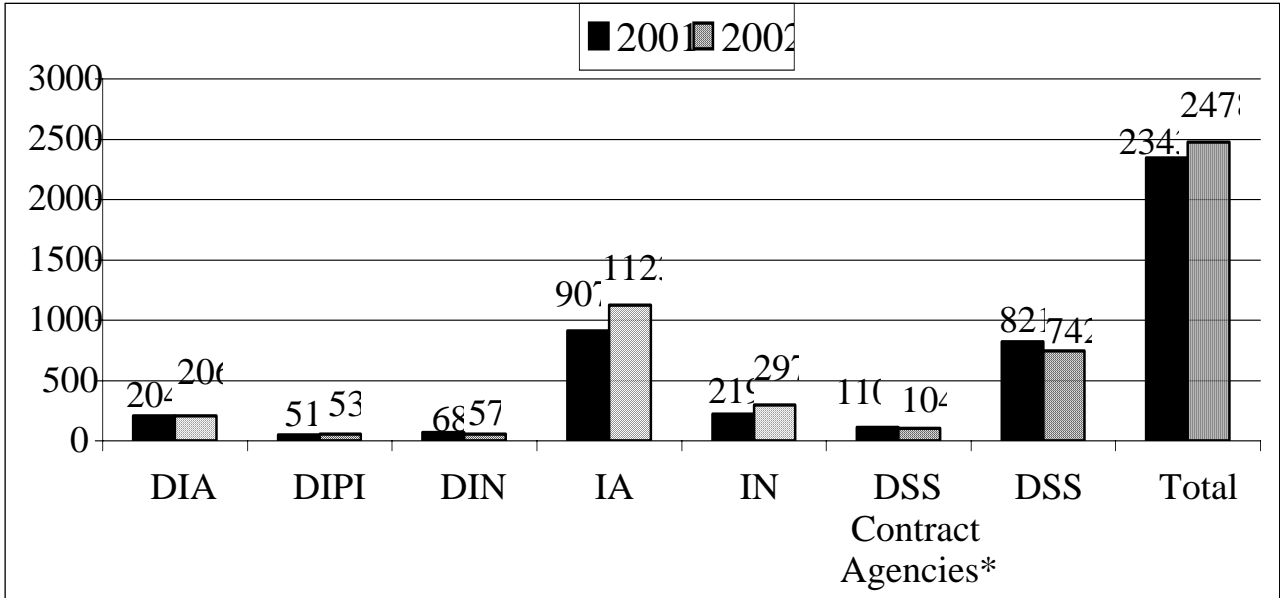


Figure 1. Number of Finalized Private & Public Agency Adoptions for 2001 and 2002
*Included in DSS totals

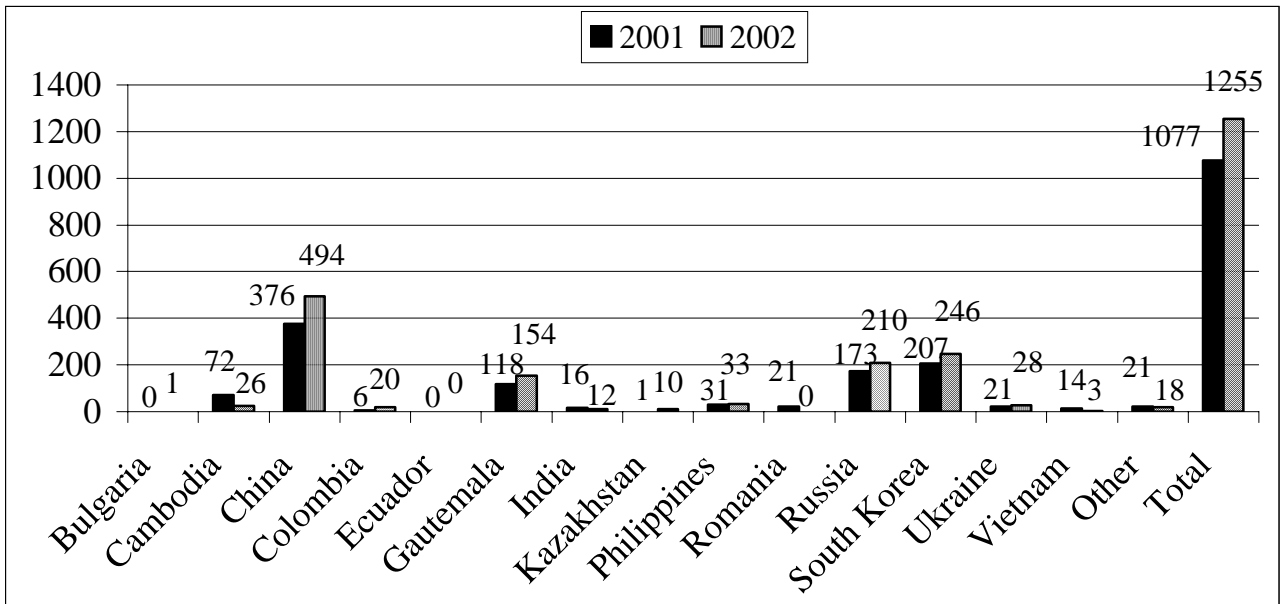


Figure 2. Number of Finalized International Adoptions for 2001 and 2002 by Country

Table 3. DSS Adoptions Processed by Contracted Private Agencies

	Number of Adoption Placements 2001		Number of Adoption Placements 2002	
Age Range of Children	<i>Under 1 yr</i>	5	<i>Under 1 yr</i>	6
	<i>1-5 yrs</i>	25	<i>1-5 yrs</i>	34
	<i>6-10 yrs</i>	30	<i>6-10 yrs</i>	28
	<i>11-15 yrs</i>	9	<i>11-15 yrs</i>	9
	<i>16-18 yrs</i>	0	<i>16-18 yrs</i>	0
Gender of Children*	<i>Male</i>	36	<i>Male</i>	39
	<i>Female</i>	22	<i>Female</i>	35
Race of Children*	<i>Caucasian</i>	39	<i>Caucasian</i>	33
	<i>African-American</i>	14	<i>African-American</i>	25
	<i>Hispanic</i>	15	<i>Hispanic</i>	13
	<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	0	<i>Asian/Pacific Islander</i>	0
	<i>Other</i>	0	<i>Other</i>	6
Sibling Groups	8		17	
Specialized	24		20	
Medically Fragile	2		0	
Residential Care	0		0	
Transracial Adoptions	8		18	
Total Placements	69		77	

* Please note: One agency failed to report specific numbers for gender and race of children, and therefore, these totals do not correspond with overall total placements.

Reported Single Parent and Co-Parent (Gay/Lesbian) Adoptions

For the first time, the *Center for Adoption Research* collected data from agencies about the number of single parent adoption placements, and co-parent adoptions by gay or lesbian couples conducted by private adoption agencies. Massachusetts allows legal

adoption by homosexuals as individuals and as co-parents. Agencies were asked if they offered services for single people, and gay and lesbian couples as prospective adoptive parents, and were asked to report the number of adoption placements that were made with these parents.

Single Parent Adoptions

Eighty-four percent of the reporting agencies indicated that they offer services for single prospective adoptive parents, 7% stated that they did not provide these services, and 9% did not respond to the question. In 2001, there were 222 reported adoptions (15%) by single parents. The majority were international adoptions (90%), while the remainder were domestic infant adoptions (23). In 2002, there were 237 reported adoptions (14%) by single parents. The majority again were international adoptions (95%), while the remainder were domestic infant adoptions (13). In both 2001 and 2002, the majority of single parents adopted children from China and Russia. See Figure 3 for detailed information regarding each sending country.

Agencies were also asked to report the number of interstate adoption placements and domestic transracial adoption placements made to single parents in 2001 and 2002. In 2001, there were 14 interstate adoption placements and 15 domestic transracial placements reported, while in 2002, there were 12 interstate adoption placements and 6 domestic transracial adoption placements reported. In addition to reporting the number of single parent adoptions, agencies were asked to report how many of those single parents self-identified as gay or lesbian. In 2001, 10 single female parents identified themselves as lesbian and 3 single male parents identified themselves as gay. In 2002, 5 single female

parents identified themselves as lesbian, and 4 single male parents identified themselves as gay.

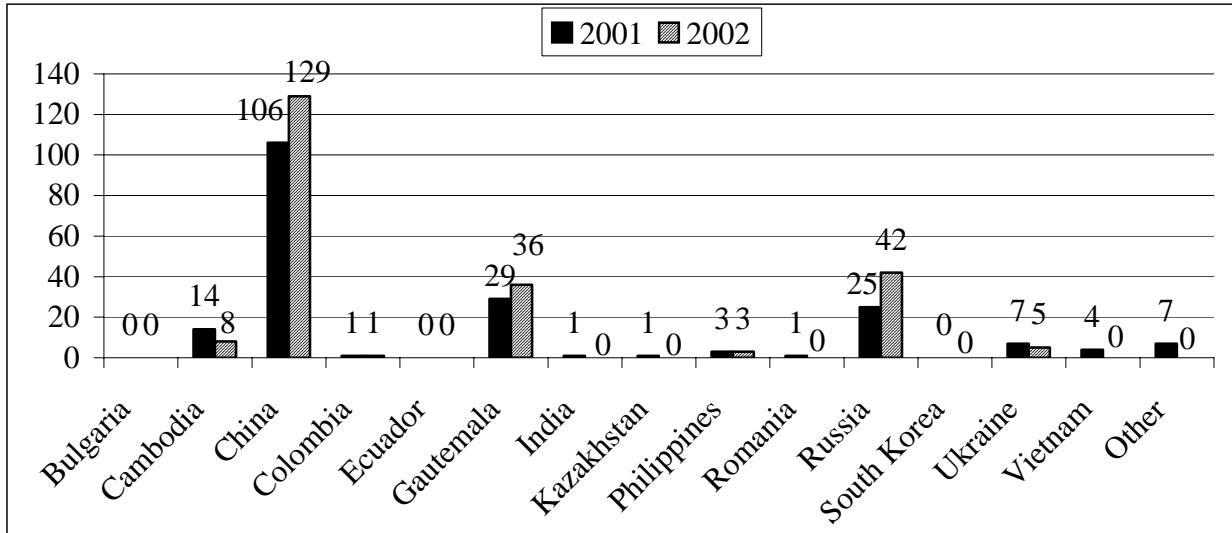


Figure 3. Number of Single Parent Finalized International Adoptions for 2001 and 2002 by Country

Co-Parent (Gay/Lesbian) Adoptions

Fifty-four percent of the agencies reported offering services to gay and lesbian couples or co-parents, while 32% did not, and 14% did not provide an answer as to whether they offered such services. In 2001, there were 62 adoption placements (4%) made to gay or lesbian co-parents, and 82% (51) of those were international adoptions from Cambodia (23), China (10), Guatemala (5), Russia (7), Ukraine (4), Belize (1), and Vietnam (1). Additionally, in 2001, there were 11 domestic placements, with 8 being interstate adoption placements, and 5 identified as domestic transracial placements made to gay or lesbian co-parents. In 2002, there were 28 placements (2%) made to gay or lesbian co-parents, with 71% (20) being international adoptions from Cambodia (11), China (1), Guatemala (3), Russia (4) and Ukraine (1). In addition, there were 8 domestic placements,

with 7 being interstate adoption placements, and 2 identified as domestic transracial placements.

Average Length of Wait for Adoption Placements

In addition to the number of adoptions finalized by private Massachusetts adoption agencies in 2001 and 2002, the *Center for Adoption Research* collected data on the shortest and longest length of wait for the placement of a child with their adoptive parents, calculated from the completion of the home study. Once parents have an approved home study, they become eligible to have a child placed for adoption with them. Because the length of wait can vary dramatically for the different types of domestic adoptions as well as international adoptions from various countries, averages were calculated regarding the shortest wait and the longest wait for parents in 2002. In general, the averages ranged from 2 months to 19 months (see Figure 4). The shortest reported wait for placement of a child was less than 1 month, and the longest was 66 months; both were reported for domestic infant adoptions using agency resources. It is important to note that several factors can affect the length of wait from completion and approval of the home study to the actual placement of the child with the adoptive parents. On average, the shortest wait was for infant domestic adoptions where the prospective adoptive parents had already identified a birth parent(s).

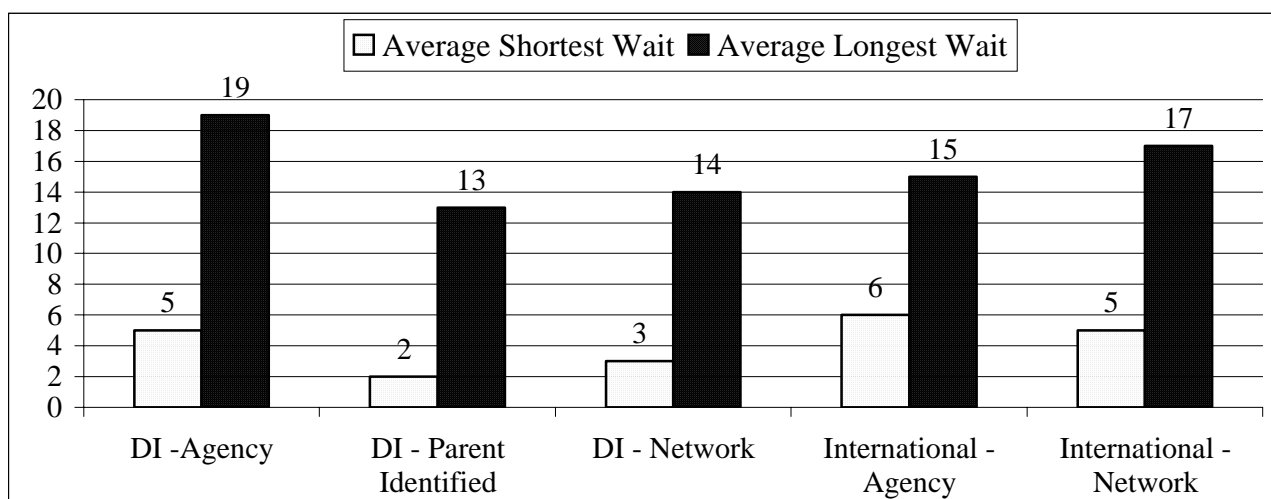


Figure 4. Average Shortest and Longest Wait (in Months) from Completion of Home Study to Placement of Child with Adoptive Parents in 2002

Fees Charged to Adoptive Parents

The cost of adoption in Massachusetts varies considerably depending on the type of adoption placement, and can differ for each agency. For example, there are no fees charged to parents who adopt from DSS. Forty-one percent of agencies reported setting fees on a sliding scale based on income; others report having fixed fees, but provide fee adjustments in special circumstances. This survey was designed to capture the range of fees charged to adoptive parents by different agencies for the different types of placement programs. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the reported range of low and high fees charged to adoptive parents for adoptions in 2002. The most costly type of adoption placement service was domestic infant adoption with agency resources. The highest cost reported for this type of adoption was \$36,000 for complete placement services, from application through legalization of the adoption. The next most expensive were domestic infant adoption by networking with other programs, and international adoption with agencies networking with other programs, cited as costing adoptive parents as much as \$35,000 for complete adoption services (see Figures 5 & 6 for averages). International adoptions using

agency programs were reported to cost as much as \$29,000. It is important to note that the international adoption fees reported may or may not include the cost of travel incurred by the adoptive parents, and the cost of the required documents (e.g., dossier). Practices associated with adopting a child from another country vary for each sending country (and for each agency); therefore, it is not feasible to calculate a total cost of international adoption placements, which are inclusive of all costs incurred by parents for travel, lodging, and other miscellaneous fees (e.g., medical evaluations, immunizations). For example, parents will either travel to the child's country of origin to pick up their child (e.g., China) or can have the child escorted to the United States by an agent of the foreign entity or the Massachusetts agency (e.g., South Korea). Moreover, the length of required stay in each country varies. This results in a range of costs associated with travel and lodging. Domestic infant adoptions where the prospective parents identified the birth parent(s) and used a Massachusetts agency to complete the adoption process were reported to cost as much as \$15,000.

Table 4 reflects the range of fees charged for the different components of domestic infant adoption (e.g., application, home study, placement) and provides the most frequently reported cost for each component. Table 5 provides the same information for international adoptions. Fourteen percent of the responding agencies reported combining their costs into one fee, and therefore, could not provide specific breakdowns of the various component fees. As a result, the data reported here includes only those agencies providing specific fees charged for identified components of adoption related services. Because numerical averages are sensitive to extreme values of the overall data, the mode or most frequently occurring value, and the median (i.e., a measure of the center of the data) were used in

addition to averages for each component fee. In addition, 2 agencies reported charging prospective adoptive parents between \$85-\$500/hour (average = \$295/hr) for specific component adoption services needed to complete either parent identified or network adoptions. Per hour fees were based on a sliding scale relative to applicant's income.

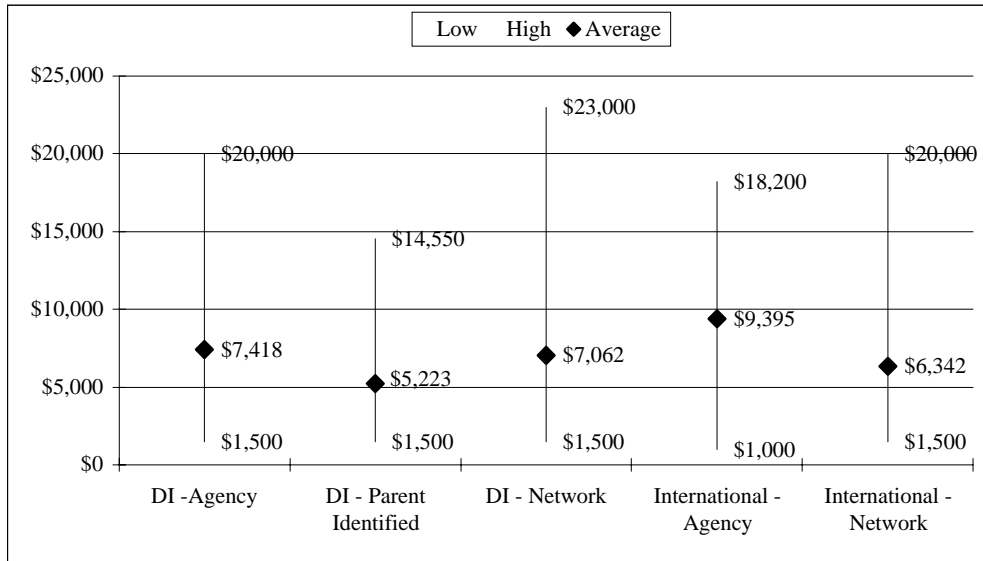


Figure 5. Range of Lowest Fees Charged to Adoptive Parents in 2002

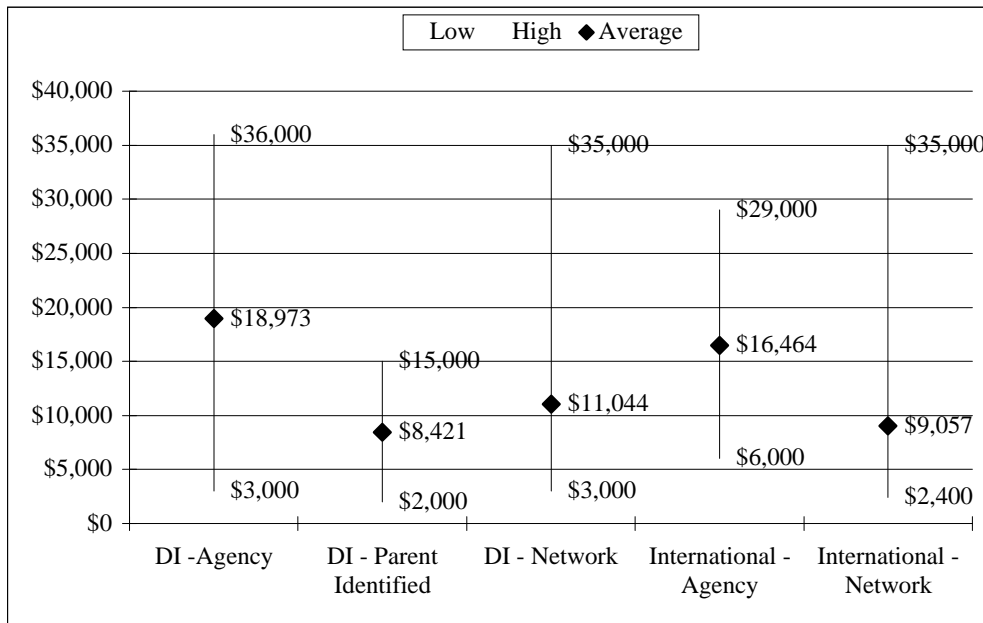


Figure 6. Range of Highest Fees Charged to Adoptive Parents in 2002

Table 4. Domestic Infant Programs: Ranges and Averages of Component Fees

Component Type	Agency's Resources	Parent Identified/ Agency Assisted	Networking with other Programs
Application	\$0-\$500 Average = \$239 Mode = \$250 Median = \$238	\$0-\$2,000 Average = \$305 Mode = \$250 Median = \$200	\$200-\$500 Average = \$222 Mode = \$200 Median = \$250
Home study	\$200-\$4,400 Average = \$1,968 Mode = \$2,000 Median = \$2,000	\$1,000-\$4,400 Average = \$2,234 Mode = \$2,000 Median = \$2,500	\$1,000-\$4,400 Average = \$2,119 Mode = \$2,000 Median = \$2,000
Placement	\$150-\$27,000 Average = \$9,197 Mode = \$5,000 Median = \$7,000	\$0-\$30,500 Average = \$5,013 Mode = \$5,000 Median = \$3,000	\$0-\$7,000 Average = \$2,172 Mode = \$1,000 Median = \$1,250
Post Placement	\$0-\$5,000 Average = \$1,411 Mode = \$1,500 Median = \$1,500	\$200-\$5,000 Average = \$1,540 Mode = \$1,500 Median = \$1,500	\$800-\$5,000 Average = \$1,535 Mode = \$1,500 Median = \$1,200
Legal Fees	\$0-\$1,500 Average = \$990 Mode = \$1,500 Median = \$1,050	\$500-\$1,500 Average = \$913 Mode = \$850 Median = \$500	\$0-\$1,500 Average = \$650 Mode = \$500 Median = \$500
Birth Parent Expenses	\$0-\$4,000 Average = \$2,283 Mode = * Median = \$2,600	\$1,000-\$3,500 Average = \$2,167 Mode = \$1,000 Median = \$2,000	Birth Parent Fees Charged by Networking Agency
ICPC (Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children)	\$0-\$1,500 Average = \$555 Mode = * Median = \$500	\$0-\$1,500 Average = \$714 Mode = \$500 Median = \$500	\$0-\$1,000 Average = \$500 Mode = * Median = \$500

* Multiple frequent values were given; therefore an exact mode could not be determined.

Table 5. International Programs: Ranges and Averages of Component Fees

	Agency Programs	Networking with other Programs/Agents
Application	\$0-\$500 Average = \$204 Mode = \$250 Median = \$200	\$0-\$500 Average = \$21 Mode = \$250 Median = \$200
Home study	\$1,000-\$4,400 Average = \$1939 Mode = \$1,000 Median = \$1,775	\$1,000-\$3,000 Average = \$1,995 Mode = \$2,000 Median = \$2,000
Country Fees	\$6,500-\$20,000 Average = \$17,333 Mode = \$14,500 Median = \$17,500	\$0-\$25,000 Average = \$10,167 Mode = * Median = \$5,500
Post Placement	\$150-\$5,500 Average = \$1346 Mode = \$1,500 Median = \$1,200	\$800-\$11,000 Average = \$1,831 Mode = \$1,500 Median = \$1,500
Legal Fees	\$57-\$2,300 Average = \$801 Mode = * Median = \$500	\$250-\$1,500 Average = \$590 Mode = \$500 Median = \$500

* Multiple frequent values were given; therefore an exact mode could not be determined.

Adoption Related Services Provided

Agencies were also asked to report whether they offered any of 24 services commonly provided by adoption agencies or identified as important services by parties involved in the adoption process. Table 6 illustrates the percentage of agencies offering these 24 services for both pre-placement and post-placement. The most frequent service offered by agencies was a pre-placement informational or orientation meeting for interested individuals, with 80% of agencies providing this service. The second most frequent offering was group informational meetings (70%). The majority of agencies offered individual, family, and birth parent counseling services, and more than one-third offered individual and group educational programming or support groups for adoptive parents. At least 60% of the responding agencies provide referrals for other services in

both pre-placement and post-placement situations. Further, almost half of the responding agencies indicated that they offered services, both counseling and intermediary, for both search and reunion issues for adoption.

Table 6. Percentage of Agencies Offering Adoption Services to Families

Type of Service	Pre-placement	Post-placement
Information/Orientation Meetings – Individual	80%	23%
Information/Orientation Meetings – Group	70%	16%
Educational Programs – Individual	43%	21%
Educational Programs – Group	48%	41%
Birth Parent Counseling	55%	50%
Birth Parent Support Groups	11%	14%
Birth Parent Housing	11%	7%
Birth Parent Living Expenses	41%	23%
Individual and Family Counseling	55%	50%
Parent Training For Special Needs Adoption	48%	25%
Adoptive Parent Support Groups	39%	36%
Support Groups for Children who were Adopted	14%	14%
Support Groups for Adults who were Adopted	2%	2%
Intermediary Services Relating to Search in Adoption	NA	50%
Counseling Services Relating to Search in Adoption	NA	57%
Intermediary Services Relating to Reunion in Adoption	NA	46%
Counseling Services Relating to Reunion in Adoption	NA	48%
Support Groups for Adoptive Families (including children)	5%	27%

Table 6. continued

Type of Service	Pre-placement	Post-placement
Crisis Intervention	34%	37%
Mentor Families	18%	18%
Recreational/Social Activities	27%	39%
Advocacy	36%	34%
Referrals to Other Services	68%	61%

Contact and Communication Practices: Openness in Adoption

Over the past three decades, adoption practices relating to communication between birth and adoptive families have undergone a major transformation. For most of the 20th century, the most common type of domestic adoption was confidential adoption, which meant that little, if any, information was exchanged between parties involved in the adoption process. Information from birth parents and adoptive parents was held in confidence by the agency, and minimal information was shared between the parties. Today, the more common types of domestic adoption practice are those that involve some level of communication and/or sharing of information between birth parents and adoptive families; this is referred to as openness in adoption. To identify the current practices related to openness of Massachusetts' adoption agencies, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether five identified practices were common or not for their agency, and whether they facilitated any pre- and post-placement and post-finalization communication and/or direct contact between birth and adoptive families.

Table 7 represents the responses from the agencies regarding the five specified practices and is ordered from most common to least common practices. The most common

contact and communication practice conducted by Massachusetts agencies is exchanging non-identifying letters and photos between birth parents and adoptive families, with 47% of agencies facilitating this type of contact. The least common practice by Massachusetts agencies (with 53% reporting) is when there is no contact between birth parent and adoptive families, and no agreements are made for updates or communication through the agency. Please note that in many international adoption placements it is not possible to provide any contact, communication, or direct updates. On the other hand, 72% of the domestic programs indicated that they facilitate communication and/or direct contact between birth families and adoptive families, when possible, after the adoption is finalized (see Table 8). Of those agencies, 65% have a formal requirement for updates provided by the adoptive parents for the birth parents, 5% have no specific terms for the requirement, 32% allow the parties to negotiate their own terms, and 63% have specific terms for the requirement. Of the 63% who have specific terms, 14% indicated that updates are required until the child is 10 years old and 86% required updates until the child is 18 years old.

In addition, 45% of agencies with international programs indicated that they require post finalization update information from adoptive families to be sent to authorities, orphanages, or other official entities in the child's country of origin (see Table 9 for required number of years for reported international countries). Agencies that conduct international adoptions were also asked to indicate whether they facilitated any post finalization communication between birth and adoptive families. Only 17% of the reporting agencies indicated that they did so. Of those, only one agency had a formal requirement for updates provided by adoptive parents for birth parents until the child is 18 years old; the others allow the parties to negotiate their own terms.

Table 7. Common and Uncommon Practices Related to Contact and Communication*

Type of Practice	Very Common	Common	Uncommon	Very Uncommon	Not Applicable
1. No contact between birth parents and adoptive families, no agreement for update or communication through agency	13%	9%	25%	53%	0%
2. Non-identifying exchange of photos and letters	47%	19%	16%	16%	3%
3. Non-identifying face to face meetings between birth and adoptive families	31%	28%	22%	16%	3%
4. Identifying information exchanged (i.e., full names and addresses)	6%	13%	41%	34%	6%
5. Placement including formal plan for ongoing contact after finalization	26%	29%	16%	26%	3%

*Indicates percentage of agencies

Table 8. Percentage of Programs Offering Post-finalization Communication Services

Placement Programs	Facilitate Post Finalization Communication between Birth & Adoptive Parents
Domestic Infant with Agency Resources, Parent Identified/Agency Assisted, and Networking with Other Programs	72%
International with Agency’s Program and Networking with Other Programs	45%

Table 9. Number of Years of Post Finalization Updates Required for International Adoptions

Country	Minimum Reported Time	Maximum Reported Time
Bulgaria	1 yr	2yrs
Cambodia	6 months	18 yrs
China	1 yr	3 yrs
Colombia	6 months	18 yrs
Ecuador	4 yrs	4 yrs
Guatemala	6 months	3 yrs
India	6 months	18 yrs
Kazakhstan	3 yrs	3 yrs
Philippines	6 months	6 months
Romania	1 yr	2 yrs
Russia	3 yrs	3 yrs
South Korea	6 months	3 yrs
Ukraine	6 months	3 yrs
Vietnam	6 months	18 yrs
Other	1 yrs	3yrs

Summary of Findings

The overall picture of domestic and international private adoption practices in Massachusetts is summarized below:

- The most common adoption placement program offered by Massachusetts adoption agencies is domestic infant adoption, in which prospective adoptive parents have an identified birth parent(s) and use the assistance of a Massachusetts agency to coordinate and finalize the adoption process. Domestic infant adoption using agency resources or networking, and international adoption placements networking with other programs were the next most common reported types of programs offered by Massachusetts agencies.
- In 2001, private domestic infant and international adoption agencies reported that 1522 adoptions were finalized, and in 2002, reported that 1736 adoptions were finalized.
- The Department of Social Services finalized 821 adoptions from foster care in fiscal year 2001, with 110 of those conducted by private agencies contracted by

DSS, and 742 adoptions from foster care in fiscal year 2002, with 104 conducted by private agencies contracted by DSS.

- The overall total number of finalized adoptions in Massachusetts in 2001, was 2343 and in 2002, it was 2478.
- International adoptions accounted for the largest number of private adoptions in both 2001 and 2002, making up approximately 80% of all finalized adoptions reported from the responding private agencies.
 - China, South Korea, and Russia are the three countries through which private adoption agencies in Massachusetts predominately arranged international adoption placements in 2001 and 2002⁶.
- The majority of private adoption agencies in Massachusetts offer services to single prospective adoptive parents (84%) and to gay and lesbian couples (54%).
- In 2001, 15% (222) of the private adoptions finalized were for single parents and 4% (62) were adoptions finalized with gay or lesbian couples. In 2002, 14% (237) of the private adoptions finalized were for single parents and 2% (28) were private adoptions finalized with gay or lesbian couples. The majority of these placements were international adoptions.
- The average wait for an adoption placement, once the home study was completed, ranged from 2 to 19 months.
- The cost of adoption in Massachusetts varies tremendously; the most costly are domestic infant adoptions via agency resources, and international adoptions via networking with other agencies. As previously noted, there are no fees associated with adopting children through the Department of Social Services.
- Adoption-related services vary from agency to agency, and by type of placement program. Pre-placement informational meetings are the most customary, while support groups for adults who were adopted and therapeutic day services are the least prevalent.

⁶ The Department of State data indicates the largest number of international children adopted by US citizens in 2001 and 2002 were from China and Russia. Together, these countries account for more than 50% of US international adoptions in 2001 and 2002.

- Current adoption practices in domestic adoptions provide more opportunities for contact between birth families and adoptive families, with an overall trend to share more information in the adoption process. Additionally, 45% of agencies with international adoption placement programs indicated that they require post finalization updates from adoptive families to authorities in the sending countries.

Future Directions

Beginning in June 2004, data will be collected from agencies on an annual basis. Currently, in conjunction with private adoption agencies in Massachusetts, the *Center for Adoption Research* is collecting demographic information on people who have adopted a child through a Massachusetts agency in 2004. With this information we can begin to develop demographic profiles of people who adopt in Massachusetts. This information will be included in future reports. To date, no comprehensive data has been collected on the nature and number of adoptions in the U.S., or about people who chose adoption as a means for creating or expanding their families. We are working to develop a confidential web-based survey instrument, which will alleviate demands on reporting agencies, and improve the *Center for Adoption Research's* efficiency in analyzing and reporting results to elected officials, adoption professionals, and the general public. The information we gather will provide concrete information for consumers of adoption services and develop awareness of the emerging adoption trends in Massachusetts so that the Commonwealth can better serve children and families.

Appendix A

Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Statewide Adoption Information 1-800-KIDS-508

Central Office

24 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210
(617) 748-2000

Western Massachusetts

Western Regional Office

1537 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 452-3350

Holyoke Area Office

261 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 493-2600

Pittsfield Area Office

53 Eagle Street, 2nd Floor
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 236-1800

Springfield Area Office

1537 Main Street, 4th Floor
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 452-3200

Greenfield Area Office

One Arch Place, 1st Floor
Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 775-5000

Northampton Social Service Center

1 Prince Street
Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 584-1698

Robert Van Wart Center

112 Industry Avenue
Springfield, MA 01104
(413) 205-0500

Central Massachusetts

Central Regional Office

340 Main Street, Suite 720
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 929-2130

Worcester Area Office

340 Main Street, Suite 525
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 929-2000

North Central Area Office

215 Hamilton Street
Leominster, MA 01453
(978) 466-1500

South Central/Blackstone Valley Area Office

185 Church Street
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-1000

Appendix A

Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Northeastern Massachusetts

Northeast Regional Office

Everett Mills
15 Union Street, 2nd Floor
Lawrence, MA 01840
(978) 557-2700

Cape Ann Area Office

45 Congress Street, Building 4
Salem, MA 01970
(978) 825-3800

Haverhill/Cape Ann Area Office

3 Ferry Street
Bradford, MA 01835
(978) 469-8800

Lawrence Area Office

Everett Mills
15 Union St., 2nd Floor
Lawrence, MA 01840
(978) 557-2500

Lowell Area Office

33 East Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 275-6800

Lynn Area Office

20 Wheeler Street
Lynn, MA 01902
(781) 477-1600

Metro Massachusetts

Metro Regional Office

30 Mystic Street
Arlington, MA 02474
(781) 641-8500

Arlington Area Office

30 Mystic Street
Arlington, MA 02474
(781) 641-8500

Cambridge/Somerville Area Office

810 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 520-8700

Coastal Area Office

541 Main Street
South Weymouth, MA 02190
(781) 682-0800

Framingham Area Office

63 Fountain Street
Framingham, MA 01702
(508) 424-0100

Malden Area Office

22 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148
(781) 388-7100

Appendix A

Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Southeastern Massachusetts

Southeast Regional Office

141 Main Street
Brockton, MA 02401
(508) 894-3700

Brockton Area Office

110 Mulberry Street
Brockton, MA 02302
(508) 894-3700

Fall River Area Office

1567 North Main Street
Fall River, MA 02720
(508) 235-9800

Plymouth Area Office

61 Industrial Park Road
Plymouth, MA 02360
(508) 732-6200

Attleboro Area Office

67 Mechanic Street
Attleboro, MA 02703
(508) 431-9500

Cape & Islands/Plymouth Area Office

32 Commercial Street
South Yarmouth, MA 02664
(508) 760-0200

New Bedford Area Office

100 North Front Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 910-1000

Boston Area

Boston Regional Office

38 Wareham Street, 1st Floor
Boston, MA 02118
(617) 574-8550

Harbor Area Office

45 Spruce Street
Chelsea, MA 02150
(617) 660-3400

Park Street Area Office

The Esquire Building
50 Park Street
Dorchester, MA 02122
(617) 822-4700

Dimock Street Area Office

30 Dimock Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
(617) 989-2800

Hyde Park Area Office

1530 River Street
Hyde Park, MA 02136
(617) 360-2500

William E. Warren Center Area Office

38 Wareham Street
Boston, MA 02118
(617) 574-8400

Appendix B

Licensed Private Adoption Agencies in Massachusetts

A Red Thread Adoption

681 Washington Street, Suite 12
Norwood, MA 02062
781-762-2428
888-871-9699
Leah O'Leary, Director

AAA Full Circle Adoption

39 Main Street
Northampton, MA 01060
413-587-0007
Marla Allisan, Director

Act of Love Adoptions

6 Huron Drive
Natick, MA 01760
508-651-7614
Jackie Fleischman, Director

Adoption Choices of Jewish Family Services Metrowest

475 Franklin Street
Framingham, MA 01702
508-875-3100
Dale Eldridge & Raquel Woodard, Directors

Adoption Options of Jewish Family Service

366 Winthrop Street
Rehoboth, MA 02769
800-3376513
Betsy Alper

Adoption Resource Associates

262 Upland Road
Cambridge, MA 02140
617-492-8888
Laura Nemeyer, Director

Adoption Resource Center at Brightside

480 West Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
413-496-9491
Claudia Coplin

Adoption Resource Center Children's Legal Services, Inc.

18 Tremont Street, Suite 527
Boston, MA 02108
617-227-3232 x 12
Henry Bock, Director

Adoption Resources Jewish Family & Children's Services

1340 Centre Street, suite 200
Newton, MA 02459
617-332-2218
Janice Hirsch, MSW, Director

Adoption with Love

188 Needham Street, Suite 220
Newton, MA 02464
617-964-4357
Amy Cohen, Director

Appendix B

Licensed Private Adoption Agencies in Massachusetts

**Adoptions and Aid
International Massachusetts
Jewish Family Services
of the North Shore**
17 Front Street
Salem, MA 01970
978-741-7878
Ann Woodfork, LSW, Director

Angel Adoptions
11 Dix Street
Waltham, MA 02453
781-899-9222
Laura Weingast, Executive-Director

Bethany Christian Services
1538 Turnpike Street, Route 114
N. Andover, MA 01845
978-794-9800
Pamela Wood

Bright Futures Adoption Center
5 Broadview St.
Acton, MA 01720
978-263-5400
Karen Cheyney, Director

**Cambridge Family & Children
Services**
60 Gore Street
Cambridge, MA 02141
617-876-4210
Lisa Funaro, Adoption Director

Catholic Charities North Shore
55 Lynn Shore Drive
Lynn, MA 01902
781-593-2312
Erin Heenan

American International Children's Alliance
100 Cummings Center, Suite 330A
Beverly, MA 01915
781-631-7900
Kim Menard, Executive Director

Beacon Adoption Center
66 Lake Buel Road
Great Barrington, MA 02130
413-528-2749
Deborah McCurdy, Adoption Supervisor

Boston Adoption Bureau, Inc.
14 Beacon Street, #616
Boston, MA 02108
617-227-1336
Marilyn Speiser, Executive Director

Brightside for Families and Children
2112 Riverdale Street
W. Springfield, MA 01089
413-788-4315
Jane Cohen, Director

Catholic Charities Greater Boston
Laboure Center, 275 West Broadway
South Boston, MA 02127
617-268-9670
Christina Daly Morgan, Director

Catholic Charities of Worcester
10 Hammond Street
Worcester, MA 01610
800-232-0843
978-343-4879
Rosalind Carito

Appendix B

Licensed Private Adoption Agencies in Massachusetts

Catholic Social Services of Fall River

1600 Bay Street
Fall River, MA 02724-1216
508-674-4681
Mary-Lou Mancini

Child Adoption Associates, Inc.

846 Wellman Avenue
North Chelmsford, MA 01863
781-929-1313
Ida Rozhitskaya

Child and Family Services

800 Purchase Street, 4th Floor
New Bedford, MA 02740
508-990-0894
Melissa Caron

Children's Aid and Family Service

8 Trumbull Road
Northampton, MA 01060
413-584-5690
Sue Woglom

Children's Friend, Inc.

21 Cedar Street
Worcester, MA 01609
508-753-5425
Veronica Listerud, Head Coordinator

**Children's International
Adoption Project**

15 Standish Avenue
Plymouth, MA 02360
508-747-3331
Nancy Conant

Children's International Choice, Inc.

25 Main Street, Suite 4
Wayland, MA 01778
508-650-9190
Elizabeth Kendrick

Children's Services of Roxbury, Inc.

2406 Washington Street
Roxbury, MA 02119
617-989-9438
Angelina Ojimba

China Adoption With Love, Inc.

251 Harvard Street, #17 & #19
Brookline, MA 02146
617-731-0798
800-888-9812
Lillian Zhang, Executive Director

**Communities for People
Special Adoption Family Services**

418 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
617-628-0451x530
Susan Rooney

Dare Family Services

17 Poplar Street
Roslindale, MA 02131
617-469-2311
Marguerite Murphy

Dare Family Services

Two Electronics Avenue, Suite 28
Danvers, MA 01923
978-750-0751
Susan Diamantopoulos

Appendix B

Licensed Private Adoption Agencies in Massachusetts

Downey Side

999 Liberty Street
Springfield, MA 01104
413-781-2123
Carle Sargent, Program Director

Florence Crittenton League

119 Hall Street
Lowell, MA 01854
978-452-9671
Ilze Keegan, Director

Gift of Life Adoption Services, Inc.

1087 Newman Avenue
Seekonk, MA 02771
508-761-5661
Donna Ricci, Director

Hope Worldwide New England, Inc.

12 Essex Street
Andover, MA 01810
978-470-2121
Julia Hannon, Director

Jewish Family Services of Western Massachusetts

15 Lenox Street
Springfield, MA 01108
413-737-2601
Susan Phillips, Director

Jewish Family Services of Worcester

646 Salisbury Street
Worcester, MA 01609
508-755-3101
Janet Eckler

LDS Family Services

385 Concord Avenue, Suite 100
Belmont, MA 02478
800-735-0149
David Covey, Director

Love the Children

2 Perry Drive
Duxbury, MA 01609
781-934-0063
Jean McInerney, MA Case Worker

Lutheran Social Services of New England, Inc.

20 Hamilton Street
Worcester, MA 01604
508-791-4488
Sue Uryasz

MAPS International

400 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
617-267-2222
Stephanie Mitchell, Director

Appendix B

Licensed Private Adoption Agencies in Massachusetts

Merrimack Valley Catholic Charities

439 South Union St.
Lawrence, MA 01843
978-685-5930
Dorothy Duval, Director

Southeastern Adoption Services

8 Prospect Drive
Matapoisett, MA 02739
508-758-4801
Beverly Baccelli, Director

The Alliance for Children, Inc.

55 William Street, Suite G10
Wellesley, MA 02481
781-431-7148
Filis Casey, Executive Director

The Home for Little Wanderers

271 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
617-267-3700
Paula Wisnewski, Director

United Homes for Children

1147 Main Street, Suite 209-210
Tewksbury, MA 01876
978-640-0089
Ed Malone, Director

Wide Horizons for Children, Inc.

38 Edge Hill Road
Waltham, MA 02451
781-894-5330
Sarah Mraz