



Journeys of the Heart's
**Marshall Island Child
Adoption Program**



The Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) has an adoption law that created a Central Adoption Authority (CAA). The CAA authorizes adoption agencies, works with birth parents and their extended families, and matches all adopting parents with available children.

JOH applauds this effort by the RMI to take control of their own adoption processes and children. The new adoption law calls for stricter penalties (jail and fines) for persons or agencies engaged in adoptions of Marshallese children on Hawaiian or other US states' soil. While unethical and illegal adoptions may continue, it is clear that the RMI's wishes and laws regarding adoption of her children need to be respected and obeyed.

The new process, which is meant to eliminate any coercion, fraud or profiteering, is straight forward. An expectant mother or mother approaches the CAA and goes through a series of interviews and steps designed to help the CAA assess and determine what outcome is in the best interest of the child. Adoption within the child's extended family or with another Marshallese family are the first choices. If it is determined that international adoption is in the best interest of a specific child, the CAA staff will choose a family to adopt the child.

Referral information will be given and consents signed by the birth mother. After all paperwork is completed (approximately 1-3 months) the adopting family will arrive in Majuro to adopt the child, meet the birth family, go to court and apply for the child's orphan visa with the US Embassy. Both adopting parents must travel. One parent and the adopted child do need to stay in Majuro for approximately 4-6 weeks until the visa is received. If necessary, the other parent may leave after 7-10 days. Total timeframe is approximately one year for referral and travel after your dossier is completed

The Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) Program is unique in the world of international adoption. It combines elements of an international adoption with travel to another country and aspects of a domestic adoption where a relationship with the birth mother and her extended family is developed and maintained.

Adopted children benefit from knowing that a birth mother loves and cares about them and by keeping connections to their origins. Journeys of the Heart requires the adopting parents to sign an agreement to send a minimum of pictures and a letter to the birth mother at least twice a year. This openness between the two families is an incredible gift for the child and one that many internationally adopted children will never receive. This program is for families who can sincerely embrace the idea of an open adoption with their child's birth family. The birth mother and her family generally welcome any contact including visits, phone calls or the required letters.

Adoptions occur from the islands because of poverty, high birth rate, and small land mass. Adoptions through kinship systems have occurred for centuries. JOH has had an international adoption program there since 1998. Infants and older children may become available although most children referred will be infants.

It is important to the Marshallese people and to JOH that the adopting family embraces and celebrates the culture of the child. There are several growing Marshallese communities throughout the US who have been welcoming to the adopted children and their families. Adopting parents living elsewhere will have to work harder to help the child achieve and maintain an ethnic identity.

The health issues of Marshallese children are similar to other international programs. Hepatitis B and sexually transmitted diseases are in the general population. HIV is usually tested for, but occasionally test kits are not available. A medical report is received and birth records are often available. One photo is usually available.

The Marshall Islands were used as a nuclear test site by the United States after World War II. Because of this testing, the islands have a higher than average incidence of specific cancers for the people who were alive at the time of the testing. Any family interested in this program should do their own research on this issue.

Married couples can apply to adopt in this program. Singles are currently not accepted into this program. Age and size of family are assessed on a case-by-case basis. RMI adoption law prohibits homosexuals from adopting their children; JOH is committed to respecting the adoption laws of each country we work in.

For more information please contact Journeys' Pacific Island Coordinator [Nancy Huskins](#). Email Nancy@journeysoftheheart.net or phone (330) 334-3645 10 AM to 2 PM Eastern Time.

SCHEDULE OF FEES JOURNEYS OF THE HEART REPUBLIC OF MARSHALL ISLANDS (RMI) PROGRAM

Oregon

| EXPENSE ITEM | AMOUNT | TO BE PAID |
|---|--|--|
| Application fee | \$300 | Send with application or submit online |
| Adoption preparation class-must be completed before home study is approved by JOH | \$150 per person | With contract |
| FBI fingerprint processing | Varies per card to law enforcement authorities and FBI | ASAP - prior to home study interviews |
| Home study | \$1,700 | With contract |
| Home study review (non-Journeys of the Heart home study) | \$300 | With contract |
| 3 Post placement reports at \$500 ea (4 th Post placement will be needed if the child is 18 months or older) | \$1,500-\$2,000 | With contract |
| Home Study updates-when required | \$400-\$800 each | Prior to social worker visit |
| Social Worker mileage and | Actual costs. Travel time in | Billed as home study and post |

| EXPENSE ITEM | AMOUNT | TO BE PAID |
|--|--|---|
| related travel expenses. | excess of 2 hours round trip will be billed at \$10 per hour | placement reports are completed; due upon receipt |
| First half of RMI program fee | \$3,000 | With contract |
| US CIS I-600A and fingerprinting | \$670 plus \$80/per adult - send money order or bank check to US Department of Homeland Security | After Journeys of the Heart approves home study |
| Attorney & Court Fees | \$3,500 | When dossier is submitted |
| In Country Program Fees | \$9,500 | At time of referral |
| RMI Central Adoption Authority Fee | \$3,000 | At time of referral - paid to Journeys of the Heart |
| Second half of RMI program fee | \$3,000 | At time of referral |
| Post placement report deposit-to be refunded when all supervised reports are completed as required | \$250 per report | At time of referral |
| Refundable Citizenship Fee (refunded when proof of citizenship is sent to JOH) | \$500 | At time of referral |
| International airfare | \$1,400-\$2,200 per adult | During adoption trip |
| Food and lodging | \$100-\$125/couple per day | During adoption trip |
| Medical exam and photos for visa, departure tax, docs | \$750 | During adoption trip |
| Child's immigrant visa | \$400 cash to US Embassy in Majuro | When submitting child's visa application |
| Express courier service to Manila | \$80 cash | When sending child's visa application |
| Child's re-adoption in your state (strongly recommended) | \$1,000 + Varies by state and attorney | After returning home |

All fees are subject to change. Sibling groups require extra fees. Shaded areas describe services and fees provided by non-Journeys of the Heart agencies or individuals. These items are subject to change without notice.