

How Much It Costs to Adopt a Child in California

By Her Lawyer on October 2nd, 2021

Adoption is the legal process that permanently grants adoptive parents parental rights. Here's how much it costs to adopt a child in California. Adoptive parents in California may be asked to cover birth parent expenses, such as adoption agency professional fees, medical costs for the birth of the child, counseling services, legal representation, or travel expenses. All of these costs depend on whether an international, domestic, public, or private adoption is pursued. In an independent adoption, it may cost adoptive parents money to select the birth parents of the child they intend to adopt. Birthparent expenses must be approved by a California court. Adoptive parents would only be asked to pay birth parents for expenses accumulated to provide for the child during the adoption process.

Related: [10 Steps to the California Adoption Process](#)

What Is The Average Cost of Adoption in California?

There are several forms of adoption available. Adoptive parents have the option of choosing an independent adoption if they are already acquainted with the child and their birth parents, an international adoption, or a public or private agency adoption [or a California Department of Social Services (CDSS) regional office]. Each type of adoption will have its own set of specific costs associated with it.

Related: [Adoption Costs in California](#)

Independent Adoptions

Fees for adopting a child independently depend on the situation and whether or not an attorney is used. The fees for completing and filing adoption forms remain the same as other types of adoption.

Public Agency Adoptions

If prospective adoptive parents select a public agency adoption, the agency or CDSS office will require a \$500 fee ahead of their submission of a favorable report to the court. A favorable report is obtained when the joint committee recommends to the General Assembly that the bill be passed. However, this fee can be reduced, deferred, or waived depending on the situation. There may also be additional fees associated with a court filing, medical examination, fingerprinting, or other costs that may arise at the beginning of the adoption process. Adoptive parents can expect that these costs will not exceed \$100-\$300.

If adoptive children qualify for the Adoption Assistance Program, they may also be eligible for the Non-recurring Adoption Expense Program, which repays adoption-related expenses back to the adoptive parents. However, the amount of repayment will not exceed \$400. Additional information about this program can be found [here](#).

Private Agency Adoptions

According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway, the average cost for an independent adoption can range between \$15,000 and \$40,000. It is important to remember that the fees associated with an independent adoption vary based on the private adoption agency being used. Typically, the cost for a family investigation and Independent Adoption Petition ([Form Adopt-200](#)) filing is \$4,500, and \$1,1550 if the family has been pre-placement evaluated. In order for a family to be pre-placement approved, they will need to satisfy all of the requirements in California Family Code Section [8811.5](#).

International Adoptions

The average cost for international adoptions ranges between \$20,000 and \$40,000.

These fees can be broken down into:

- Registration and application (\$1,000-\$2,000),
- Adoption program (assistance compiling a dossier, correspondence with international adoption authorities, counseling, education, and organization of a parent-child match) (\$8,000-\$18,000),
- Home study and adoptive family instruction (\$1,500-\$5,000),
- Documentation and authentication (translation of these materials, obtaining of a visa, passport, and birth certificate) (\$1,000-\$4,000),

- Travel (airfare, lodging, food, in-country transportation, number of trips needed) (\$5,000-\$15,000),
- Attorney fees (\$500-\$4,000),
- Additional fees (child's medical expenses, telephone communication rates, if the country requires orphanage donations etc.) (can vary).

Why Does It Cost So Much to Adopt a Child in California?

Adoption can be expensive because there are numerous costs that can accumulate based on the family's situation. In addition to the costs associated with the necessary paperwork for adoption, adoption agency services, birth parent expenses, medical expenses for the child, legal fees, travel expenses, and a plethora of costs that are unique to a particular adoption may arise. Adoptive parents should not only be aware of the costs associated with their child's adoption but also be prepared to financially support the child to the best of their abilities.

Adoptive parents may qualify for federal tax credit if the child has special needs or is in the custody of a public child welfare agency in California. International Revenue Services can be contacted for more information on the adoption tax benefit. There are some opportunities for financial assistance via the Adoption Assistance Program for children who are adopted through the foster care system.

Contact Us

If you have any more questions about how much it costs to adopt a child in California, [contact us](#). [Get your free consultation with one of our experienced Family Law Attorneys today!](#)

[How Much It Costs to Adopt a Child in California - Her Lawyer](#)