

DOMESTIC

ADOPTION INFO PACKET

THE BARKER ADOPTION FOUNDATION



WELCOME

Hi There!

WELCOME TO BARKER ADOPTION FOUNDATION!

Here at Barker, we truly believe that every child deserves a safe and loving family. Founded in 1945, Barker is licensed in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. For 78 years Barker has had a reputation for ethical adoption services and increasingly, we are becoming nationally known as a model agency and the place to turn to learn about how best to serve the adoption community. Barker's commitment to lifelong services is what distinguishes us and is what many refer to as "the Barker difference."

To date, Barker has placed more than 8,000 children into the welcoming arms of adoptive parents and provided counseling and related support services to more than 30,000 women and their families who are considering placing a child for adoption. Barker welcomes adoption applications from couples and individuals of all ages, all religious and ethnic backgrounds, and all sexual orientations and gender expressions.

Every adoption is different. Our staff will be happy to work with you in determining which of our programs is best suited for you and your family. At each step, Barker will be there with the information and support you need.

[DOMESTIC INFANT
PROGRAM](#)

[APPLY NOW](#)

[POST ADOPTION
PROGRAM](#)



DEAR ADOPTIVE PARENT

Dear adoptive parent,

Thank you for your interest in The Barker Adoption Foundation. We are a non-profit adoption agency licensed in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia since 1945. Over the years, we have placed over 8,000 children with loving families, serving all participants in the adoption circle such as birth parents, adoptive parents, and persons who have been adopted.

We offer comprehensive adoption services, including domestic adoption and pregnancy counseling, as well as strong international programs. One key aspect of our services is the lifelong support we provide through counseling, support groups, educational and social activities, and informal discussion groups.

We welcome adoption applications from couples and individuals of all ages, religious and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations and gender expressions. However, each US state has its own specific adoption regulations, and each country has its own eligibility requirements that The Barker Adoption Foundation and the families we serve must abide by.

We appreciate your interest in The Barker Adoption Foundation and its mission, and we would be privileged to assist you as you seek to begin or enlarge your family. At each step, Barker will be there with the information and support you need. Our very best wishes as you consider this important life decision.



SUSAN HOLLAR LCSW-C, LICSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

FREE GENERAL & SPECIFIC INFORMATION MEETINGS EACH MONTH

We realize that adoption is a complex process, and we also know the tremendous joy it brings. While this is a time filled with many decisions and challenges, it may also be filled with hope and excitement. Becoming knowledgeable about adoption will help you make decisions that feel right for your family. To help you begin the process, we offer free monthly information sessions on both general and specific adoption issues. For those who desire a more in depth exploration of adoption paths in a one on one setting, we also offer paid pre-adoption consultations with our Program Directors and Staff.

Enclosed you will find additional information about all of our programs, including the free information seminars; estimated adoption-related fees, an application form; a bibliography with excellent resources about adoption; and a sample of Barker's key policies.

[VIEW OUR
CALENDAR](#)

[SIGN UP FOR A
ONE-ON-ONE
CONSULT](#)



OUR MISSION & VALUES

The Barker Adoption Foundation provides life-long services for all in the adoption triad and advocates for ethical, respectful, and child-centered adoption practices.

Our Values

Our mission is accomplished by practicing according to our core values, of which the following are key:

- **Child-centered focus:** While we serve all members in the constellation of adoption relationships, our primary client is the child, who has no voice and often no advocate. We understand that the child's needs lie at the intersection of birth parent and adoptive parent needs. The litmus test for all we do is whether we are acting in the child's best interest.
- **Integrity:** Barker strives to uphold the highest ethical standards of practice, acting with honesty and understanding and respecting the rights of all parties.
- **Inclusiveness:** Barker values diversity of perspective, culture, race, ethnicity, religion, economic circumstances, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, and marital status. We strive to remove barriers for clients who seek our programs and services, and we value and seek diversity in our board governance structure and staff composition.
- **Compassion:** Our expression of concern for clients extends beyond empathy to true compassion. Compassion moves us to actions that put resources in place that make a difference in the lives of our clients.
- **Innovation:** Although Barker is one of the oldest adoption agencies in the country, we value innovation that expands opportunities for our clients. We endeavor to anticipate challenges and be creative and proactive in our solutions. We initiate new programs where the need is compelling, and we use the latest social service research and new technologies to guide our practice.

**[VIEW OUR
POLICIES HERE](#)**

History

78 YEARS OF TRADITION AND GROWTH

The Barker Adoption Foundation has provided counseling to over 30,000 birth parents considering adoption and has placed over 8,000 children with adoptive parents during its 78 years of service.

- Barker was the first cooperative adoption agency in the United States. Its Board of Trustees is comprised of adoptive parents, birth parents, adopted persons, and members of the communities served by Barker.
- Barker has long been a leader in adoption education and in the promotion of sound adoption policies and practices. Barker's annual conferences have been a tradition for thirty years.
- Barker's international program, established in the mid-70s, has placed children from numerous countries, including Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, El Salvador, Vietnam, the Philippines, Guatemala, Nepal, and Paraguay. Current programs include China, India, and South Korea.
- Barker is an independent, nonprofit agency. The agency's financial support comes from adoption fees, fundraising events, individual donations, the Friends of Barker quasi-endowment, and foundation and corporate grants.

1945

Barker's story begins at the end of WWII, when founders Ruth and Richard Barker were approached by the US Army to support Women in Active Volunteer Service (WAVES) who were experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. Together, they worked to improve adoption practices, ensuring early placement of babies with their adoptive families and better protection for adopted children's legal rights.

1951

Barker structure was formalized and incorporated as the nation's first cooperative adoption agency.

Policies and practices are overseen by a 24 member Board of Trustees comprised of parents who have adopted through the agency, birth parents, adoptees, and other community members.

1976

Barker endeavored to adapt and diversify its services over the years to reflect the growing understanding of adoption, as well as to meet the needs of children. Barker began its first international program in Colombia and has supported the adoption of children from many countries including South Korea, Vietnam, China, Philippines, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Guatemala, India & Bulgaria.



1994

Barker hosts its inaugural Annual Adoption and foster care conference

1998

Barker acquired the American Adoption Agency

2001

Barker established a formal post-adoption department providing life-long services for birth parents, adoptive parents and adoptees

2006

Project Wait No Longer (PWNL) is launched to place older children living in foster care with permanent, loving, & stable adoptive families

2015

Barker added the option to use health insurance for qualifying post-adoption services

2019

Barker expanded pre-adoption and post-adoption services

2021

Barker expanded adult adoption services and counseling services while increasing community engagement



INFANT ADOPTION PROGRAM



INFANT ADOPTION ELIGIBILITY



MARITAL STATUS

Singles and married couples are welcome to apply. If married, you must be married for a minimum of one year at the time of application. Please note that more recently married couples (married less than one year) are also welcome to apply in cases where they have lived together for at least one year.

AGE OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

The minimum age of adoptive parents participating in the Domestic Infant Adoption Program is 25 years old.

AGE AT THE TIME OF APPLYING

If you are seeking to adopt a newborn through the Domestic Infant program, you must be 45 or younger at the time of application to wait in the In Area program. Families over 50 can be supported with a home study for placement considerations, must identify a placing agency before submitting an application to Barker.

TRAINING REQUIREMENT

Must complete the Pre-Adoption (N.T.D.C.) Training prior to starting the home study. [Register for Barker's next Pre-Adoption training by clicking here.](#)

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Adoptive parents interested in adopting an infant should be healthy, both physically and psychologically/emotionally, so that they are able to care for a child.

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP? SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TODAY

BARKER'S INFANT ADOPTION PROCESS



PROSPECTIVE PARENT GUIDANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- We encourage families who are interested in adopting to attend one of our monthly general information sessions. Following that session, you can contact a member of the Domestic team by email with general questions at calvaro@BarkerFoundation.org or if you want to explore your options further through a paid consultation, [click here](#).



APPLICATION

- If you decide The Barker Adoption Foundation is a good fit for your adoption plans, the next step is to submit an application. Our clinical team meets weekly to review all applications received.

INTAKE MEETING

- All applicants participate in intake meetings, which are both clinical and administrative in nature. During these meetings, Barker staff will:
 - Share information about Barker's comprehensive process
 - Communicate the needs of the children available for adoption
 - Explore your motivation and initial preparedness to become an adoptive parent.
 - Guide you on whether local placement, out of area placement or both can be a consideration for your family
 - Share, collect and revise paperwork requirements for the home study.

PREPARATION FOR HOME STUDY

- You will meet your dedicated Support Specialist who will work with you throughout the process, often from behind the scenes, all the way through the home study approval.
 - After you have completed the required training and documentation for a home study, you will be assigned a social worker who will explore questions, concerns and will help prepare you for adoptive parenting considerations.
 - In most cases, this same social worker will work with you during the post placement period where we continue to provide support and visits, generally for six months following placement.
- Support does not end here. [Post -Adoption Support](#)

[Fees and
Estimated Expenses](#)

INFANT ADOPTION OPTIONS



In-Area Plan

Families are invited to wait in Barker's In Area program AFTER home study approval, based on availability, eligibility, and program needs. Families waiting In-Area in our licensed states (DC/MD/VA) are presented to local expectant parents who are working with Barker to explore adoption as a parenting option. It is important for us to now define some key terms. An **expectant parent** is a parent who has not yet given birth, and therefore has not signed any adoption consent. A **birth parent** is someone who has signed an adoption consent. A **parent** is someone who has already given birth, and has not yet signed any adoption consent. Barker's Pregnancy Counselors work with expectant parents from any point in their pregnancy, or may meet a parent at the hospital upon or after delivery to make an adoption plan for their child. Our counselors work closely with birth/expectant parents to identify circumstances of their pregnancy as well as their core priorities in selecting an adoptive family.

Expectant and birth parents are a critical part of the selection process and are able to choose a family through scrapbooks or profile books. Often expectant parents want to meet adoptive families either before delivery or soon after. Because birth parents are provided a period of time to reconsider their decision to make an adoption plan (known as the revocation period) many birth parents will wait until after this revocation period is over before meeting the adoptive parents.

At times, adoptive parents may be invited to join birth parents in the hospital upon delivery or shortly after.

Following delivery, babies are placed in care with Barker Cradle Care families for the duration of the revocation period (30 days in Maryland, 7-10 days in Virginia, 14 days in Washington, D.C.). Cradle Care provides an important reflection period where qualified and loving families care for the newborn during the period when birth parents are able to resolve some of their grief and confirm their decision. Birth parents are able to forego Cradle Care and request direct placement of their child with the adoptive family.

Following placement, adoptive families begin the six month Post Placement Supervision and Support period as required in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, or longer if required by another state or agency. Beyond fulfilling a requirement, this period provides a helpful time to continue receiving support and guidance from your social worker about various resources or needs that most new parents have.

At the end of post placement period, adoptive parents can begin the process of finalization. Barker can refer parents to one of several local attorneys who specialize in adoption to represent them in their finalization.

INFANT ADOPTION OPTIONS



Working with a Placement Agency or Adoption Attorney in another part of the country

Many families adopt their child by working with an agency or attorney from another part of the country. Over 85% of Barker families work with an external agency while continuing to receive ongoing support from Barker for their home study, agency selection, child/parent profile review and feedback, match consultations, and post placement services. Waiting in other regions increases a family's opportunities to be seen by expectant parents who are considering adoption. Families receive guidance from their dedicated Clinical Support Specialist in selecting a placing agency or attorney.

There are many considerations in deciding whether an agency might be the right one for your family. Some of these factors include family composition, age of adoptive parents, race of adoptive parents, religious practices or beliefs, family ties in another state, or state laws regarding adoption, among others.

Families waiting Out of Area are considered in cases within their placing agency or from their attorney for which there is an alignment of family preferences and openness to the circumstances of the pregnancy. When a match occurs, the adoptive family will often travel to visit and meet the expectant or birth parent. Families are able to receive support as needed from their Clinical Support Specialist when they are preparing for their first meeting with the expectant or birth parent. When the baby is born, the adoptive family travels to take custody and awaits permission through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) to return home with the baby.

Barker staff will coordinate with your placement agency to obtain approval from the ICPC offices for the state in which the baby was born and/or where adoption consents were signed, and your state of residence which will permit you to bring your baby home. As the supervising agency, Barker and your Social Worker will provide Post Placement and ongoing support until finalization.

At the end of the post placement period, adoptive parents can begin the process of finalization. Families may be required to finalize in their child's birth state, and should check with their placing agency before initiating this process. If needed, Barker can refer parents to qualified attorneys in their home state to represent them in their finalization.

INFANT ADOPTION OPTIONS



Working directly with birth parents with support of an attorney

Prospective parents may choose to engage directly with expectant parents through specific outreach. Outreach may include informing extended family members, friends in other areas of the country, home town physicians, and more recently online portals that are geared specifically to introducing birth and expectant parents to adoptive parents. Other adoptive parents feel comfortable engaging a local adoption attorney to represent them and utilize the attorney's outreach efforts with birth parents.

Families who pursue this path in adoption generally feel more comfortable engaging with people and talking about their adoption plans. They speak directly to expectant parents as they get to know one another and decide if there is potential for a path forward. In all cases, the adoptive family will engage an attorney to represent them and to guide them through the specific state regulations involved in this kind of private adoption.

Families will continue to receive ongoing support throughout their process and participate in all required trainings and workshops. Barker will provide an adoption home study and all families receive assistance from a dedicated Support Specialist from application to finalization. They may also seek guidance from their Clinical Support Specialist when presented with a potential match or when preparing for their first meeting with expectant or birth parents. When the baby is born, the adoptive family travels to take custody and awaits permission through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) to return home with the baby.

Barker staff will coordinate with your attorney to obtain approval from the ICPC offices for the state in which the baby was born and/or where adoption consents were signed, and your state of residence which will permit you to bring your baby home. As the supervising agency, Barker and your Social Worker will provide Post Placement and ongoing support until finalization.

At the end of the post placement period, adoptive parents can begin the process of finalization. Families may be required to finalize in their child's birth state, and should check with their attorney before initiating this process.

INFANT ADOPTION CONCIDERATIONS

Regardless of the options pursued, Barker provides education, home study and support services to all of our families. Some families know immediately what option they will pursue when applying and many others begin exploring what option(s) is a best fit for them during their initial meetings. Most families decide which option(s) to pursue by the time their home study meetings begin.



Families from any community who are open to the specialized needs of waiting children, ages 0-8, are encouraged to learn more about Barker's Domestic Adoption Dual Program —>



APPROXIMATE DOMESTIC ADOPTION FEES

**To view the fees and estimated
expenses, please click the link
below**

DOMESTIC INFANT

[Fees and Estimated Expenses](#)



POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

- **After finalization. Support for a lifetime**

- Individual counseling
 - Facilitated support groups for adoptees and adoptive parents
 - Intermediary services for birth parents and adoptive parents in open and semi-open adoption arrangements
 - Non-identifying social and medical history reports
 - Search and reunion services for birth parents and adults adopted through Barker
 - A highly respected annual adoption and foster care conference that is open to adoptees, adoptive parents, birth parents, professionals, and anyone else touched by adoption
 - Community and school education programs to build greater awareness and understanding of adoption-related issues
 - Homeland tours geared toward teens and young adult adoptees traveling together with their parents
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- Another support we can offer is identifying a Barker parent/mentor who may be able to answer some of your questions – parent to parent.





CONNECT WITH US

Contact us:

Domestic Adoption:

info@barkerfoundation.org

Follow us:



@barkeradoptions



@barkeradoptions



@thebarkeradoptionfoundation

Office location:

7979 Old Georgetown Road, FL 1
Bethesda, MD 20814

Quick Links

[Register for an information session](#)

[Register for a 1:1 pre-adoption consultation](#)

[Register for our next Pre-Adoption Training Series](#)

[Complete an adoption application](#)