

Average Adoption Costs in the United States

Updated: April 2019

There are several different adoption paths that LGBTQ+ people can consider to create a family. Each of these paths comes with associated costs making them more or less accessible to those with different levels of household income. To note, the costs below are listed as a range most often, as they do tend to vary based on region and clinic.



Foster-to-Adopt: Adopting through the foster care system can generally be accomplished for under \$2600, and often entirely for free, as these adoptions are through the public child welfare system.

Domestic Adoption: Adopting an infant domestically through either an adoption agency or an independent attorney ranges from \$20,000-\$45,000 depending on where you live and the agency or attorney you choose.

International Adoption: Adopting internationally, one of the most legally challenging options for LGBTQ+ people,

has varying costs depending on the birth country of the child. Often, these costs range from \$35,000- \$70,000.

Second or Step Parent Adoptions: Many LGBTQ+ parents choose to complete a step or second parent adoption to secure legal parental rights of the non-biological parent of the child(ren). The costs for this type of adoption vary depending on the requirements of the state, but often run between \$250-\$3,000. In some states, the home study can be waived (a savings of \$1,000-\$2,000), and forms can be filed with-



out an attorney (an average savings of \$1,000).

Affording Adoption

Depending on the route you pursue, there are different options available to help offset the costs of your adoption.

- **Federal Adoption Tax Credit:** the Federal Government offers a tax credit for qualifying adoption expenses of up to \$13,840 (as of tax year 2018) if your modified gross annual income is less than \$207,580. A portion of this credit is still available for those who make between \$207,580 and \$247,580. Check in with your tax preparer annually, as this credit should be adjusted each year based on cost of living.
- **Grants and Loans:** grants and loans do exist to help the LGBTQ+ community offset family building costs, though qualification for this type of assistance is often geographical and limited. Learn more at <https://www.familyequality.org/resources/lgbtq-family-building-grants/>
- **Special Needs Benefits:** Federal and state financial support is often available for the ongoing care of children with special needs. Your adoption agency will be able to guide you to state-specific support.
- **Employer-sponsored Adoption Assistance Programs:** Check in with your employer to determine if they offer reimbursement for adoption expenses, paid or unpaid leave time, or an Adoption Assistance Program which may be able to help with information and referral services.



- **Military Subsidies:** Active duty members of the military may be eligible for a one-time reimbursement of up to \$2,000 for domestic or international adoption expenses. If you adopt a child with a disability, that child may be eligible for up to \$1,000 per month in assistance under the military's Program for Persons with Disabilities.

To learn more about adoption for the LGBTQ+ community, please visit the following resources prepared by Family Equality. If you have any questions along your path to parenthood, please don't hesitate to reach out!

[Family Building via Adoption and Foster Care Glossary](#)

[Adoption Handbook](#)

[2019 LGBTQ Family Building Guide](#)

CITATIONS

[What is the cost of adoption from foster care?](#)

[Adoption in the US 2018: How Many? How Much? How Long Do They Take?](#)

[How Much Does Adoption Cost?](#)



Advancing Equality for
LGBTQ Families

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