

## **NEW LEGAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IN LIGHT OF LEGAL RIGHT FOR GAY AND LESBIAN FAMILIES TO MARRY**

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If you are not legally married and you are considering adoption, please postpone legal marriage until after you finalize your adoption. You, otherwise, will be precluded from international adoption and/or domestic adoption will be harder and/or more expensive (because of having to pay costs to relocate birthmother to Massachusetts.)

No licensed agency can lie about the fact of legal marriage in a homestudy. This must be included in the body of the homestudy, which is a 10-15 page document that describes your life, family, and adoption plans.

If you're not legally married, a homestudy agency can prepare a homestudy for one of you as a single parent. This isn't anyone's preference (politically or emotionally) but you want to be able to adopt a child who might be born to a mother in a state that will not let an agency place with a lesbian or gay couple.

If you are already legally married, our best information is that there are no international programs open. If we later learn of some, we will be overjoyed to tell you.

Domestic adoption is an option. Our agency would either find a match in a location where the adoption professionals can place with you as an open married couple (time will tell; this is new). OR We would give the birthmother her own attorney who would then advise her (most likely) that, if she wants to place with you, she should consider relocating to Massachusetts to give birth and place the child with you (through the agency) here. We are currently helping families in this mode and look forward to having more success stories to share in the days ahead.

We are certainly open to discussing your questions. Please call Marla Allisan JD, LICSW, Director at Full Circle: 413-587-0007.