

International Child Welfare - International Social Services

(Revised 10/20/23)

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Forms

The following forms are referenced in this policy:

- 04-309 International Liaisons Office Referral (CWS/CMS Template)

Background

International Social Services- United States of America (ISS-USA) is a worldwide non-profit organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, and is recognized by the United Nations. ISS-USA provides case management services to support decisions in the best interest of children. They collaborate with governmental and non-governmental social services organizations in the U.S. and around the world. ISS-USA will also provide phone consultations regardless of intention to refer for services.

The Child and Family Well-Being, Office of Child Safety (OCS), International Liaison's Office (ILO) serves as the liaison between the social worker (SW), ISS-USA and other countries.

Policy

Families involved with OCS occasionally will need coordination with other countries, for services abroad such as, but not limited to, placement, records, and resources. The SW will consult with the ILO if a family involved with OCS requires coordination of services.

For placement in Mexico, refer to Placement of a Child in Mexico or Outside the United States.

Agencies

The following agencies practice international social services:

Agency	Country Served
International Social Services United States of America Branch, Inc. (ISS-USA) 1120 N. Charles St., Suite 300 Baltimore, Maryland 21201 Telephone: (443) 451-1200 Fax: (443) 451-1220 Email: iss-usa@iss-usa.org	ISS-USA has branches in over 100 countries. If a request is received for an area not currently served, ISS-USA will attempt to establish a relationship.
El Sistema de Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF)	Mexico only.

ISS-USA Services

To obtain services from ISS-USA, the SW will submit a 04-309 to the International Liaison.

ISS-USA provides the following cross-border services:

- Child welfare checks in another country when there is no immediate allegation, or suspicion, of abuse or neglect, or concern, about a child's wellbeing.
 - Community resource assessment including availability of medical, psychiatric, occupational, or educational services that a child or an adult might require in order to live safely and/or develop appropriately.
 - Criminal background/child abuse registry check when available from the other country.
 - DNA testing and coordination with individuals to locate nearby facilities that provide DNA testing and arrange for results to be shared with the requesting agency.
 - Document tracing including birth and death certificates, adoption records, etc.
 - Document tracing for records of claims of abuse, family violence or trafficking including location of documents to support allegations of abuse, hospital records and arrest records.
 - Drug testing and coordination with a child's relative or potential caregiver to obtain drug testing if there is a history of substance use.
 - Facilitation of cross-border family team meetings, visitation, or court appearance.
 - Home safety assessment including an in-person walk through of a family's home to establish structural and physical safety of the home, and in some cases, to verify information gathered from virtual home assessments.
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ISS-USA Services

- Home study for parental custody or reunification including information about the parent as well as the living environment, financial stability, and other applicable information.
- Home study for possible relative placement or visitation.
- Post placement case management including connecting family with follow-up services.
- Post placement follow-up including a brief written report as to the child's health, safety and well-being and how they are adjusting to their new environment.
- Psychological assessments of potential caregivers.

The ISS-USA will provide a Statement of Work (SOW) outlining the description of services and fees for service to the SW. The SW will include the supervisor in the communication with ISS-USA. The SW must obtain the regional manager's approval and signature of the SOW. The SW will return the signed copy to ISS-USA for services to be initiated.

NOTE: No fees will be arranged without manager approval. See CWS Payments. Any request to initiate and/or negotiate an ISS-USA referral will be sent to the manager in writing through the chain of command.

DIF

Child Welfare Services has established a relationship with DIF. All requests for services will be submitted to ILO via the 04-309 to request services. DIF can provide the following services:

- Conduct home evaluations and assist with placement in a parent's or relative's home
- Conduct parent searches and notice parents of Juvenile Court hearings
- Assist in obtaining criminal background
- Attempt to obtain birth and death certificates, if the date of registration is known and other data is sufficient to obtain them
- Follow-up on case services through courtesy home visits
- Arrange a place for visits between parents/relatives who live in Tijuana and children who live in San Diego

Additional services or requests can be discussed with the ILO.

Alignment with SET

This policy aligns with SET [Value 1](#) and the guiding principle of always maintaining the primary focus on children's best interests and with SET [Value 3](#) and the guiding principle of continual focus on children's wellbeing while they are in our care and actively striving to preserve their connections to culture.
