

# Instructions for I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative

Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

## Instructions

Read these instructions carefully to properly complete this form. If you need more space to complete an answer, use a separate sheet(s) of paper. Write your name and Alien Registration Number (A-Number), if any, at the top of each sheet of paper and indicate the part and number of the item to which the answer refers.

### What Is the Purpose of This Form?

To classify an alien orphan who is or will be adopted by a U.S. citizen as an immediate relative of the U.S. citizen to allow the child to enter the United States. The petition is filed by the U.S. citizen who is adopting the child.

### Who May File This Form I-600?

#### 1. Eligibility

##### A. Child

Under immigration law, an orphan is an alien child who has no parents because of the death or disappearance of abandonment, or desertion by, or separation or loss from both parents.

An orphan is also an alien child who has only one parent, who is not capable of taking care of the orphan, and who has in writing irrevocably released the alien for emigration and adoption.

A petition to classify an alien as an orphan may not be filed on behalf of a child in the United States, unless that child is in parole status and has not been adopted in the United States.

The petition must be filed before the child reaches 16 years of age.

##### B. Parent(s)

The petition may be filed by a married U.S. citizen and spouse or unmarried U.S. citizen at least 25 years of age. The spouse does not need to be a U.S. citizen but must be in lawful immigration status.

##### C. Adoption Abroad

If the orphan was adopted abroad, the married petitioner and spouse, or the unmarried petitioner must establish that the child was personally seen and observed prior to or during the adoption proceedings. The adoption decree must show that a married petitioner and spouse adopted the child jointly or that

an unmarried petitioner was at least 25 years of age at the time of the adoption.

##### D. Proxy Adoption Abroad

If both the petitioner and spouse or the unmarried petitioner did not personally see and observe the child prior to or during the adoption proceedings abroad, the petitioner (and spouse, if married) must submit a statement indicating the petitioner's (and, if married, the spouse's) willingness and intent to readopt the child in the United States.

If requested by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the petitioner must submit a statement by an official of the State in which the child will reside that readoption is permissible in that State. In addition, evidence of compliance with the preadoption requirements, if any, of that State must be submitted.

##### E. Preadoption Requirements

If the orphan has not been adopted abroad, the petitioner and spouse, or the unmarried petitioner, must establish that:

1. The child will be adopted in the United States by the petitioner and spouse jointly, or by the unmarried petitioner; and
2. The preadoption requirements, if any, of the State of the orphan's proposed residence have been met.

#### 2. Filing Petition for Known Child

An orphan petition for a child who has been identified must be submitted on a completed Form I-600 with the certification of the petitioner executed and required fee. If the petitioner is married, Form I-600 must also be signed by the petitioner's spouse.

The petition must be accompanied by the following:

##### A. Proof of U.S. Citizenship of the Petitioner

If a U.S. citizen by birth in the United States, submit a copy of the birth certificate, issued by the civil registrar, vital statistics office, or other civil authority.

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If a birth certificate is not available, submit a statement from the appropriate civil authority certifying that a birth certificate is not available. In such a situation, secondary evidence must be submitted, including:

1. **Church records** bearing the seal of the church showing the baptism, dedication, or comparable rite occurred within two months after birth and showing the date and place of the petitioner's birth, date of the religious ceremony, and the names of the parents;
2. **School records** issued by the authority (preferably the first school attended) showing the date of admission to the school, the petitioner's birth date, or age at the time, place of birth, and the names of the parents;
3. **Census records** (State or Federal) showing the name, place of birth, date of birth or age of the petitioner listed;
4. **Affidavits.** If a required document cannot be obtained, you must submit either an original written statement from the governmental agency that should have the record, verifying that the record does not exist, or a citation to the U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual indicating that records are generally not available. Only then you may submit written affidavits sworn to or affirmed by two persons who were living at the time and who have personal knowledge of the event. Each affidavit must contain the affiant's full name, address, date and place of birth, and signature. The affidavit must also explain the affiant's relationship to you, full information concerning event, and complete details of how the affiant acquired the information.
5. An unexpired **U.S. passport**, initially issued for ten years, may also be submitted as proof of U.S. citizenship.

If the petitioner was born outside the United States, submit a copy of one of the following:

1. Certificate of Naturalization or Certificate of Citizenship issued by USCIS.
2. Form FS-240, Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States, issued by an U.S. Embassy;
3. An unexpired U.S. passport initially issued for ten years; or
4. An original statement from a U.S. consular officer verifying the applicant's U.S. citizenship with a valid passport.

**NOTE:** Proof of lawful immigration status of the petitioner's spouse, if applicable, must be submitted. If the spouse is not a U.S. citizen, proof of the spouse's lawful immigration status, such as Form I-551, Permanent Resident Card; Form I-94, Arrival-Departure Record; or a copy of the biographic pages of the spouse's passport and the nonimmigrant visa pages showing an admission stamp may be submitted.

#### **B. Proof of Marriage of Petitioner and Spouse**

The married petitioner must submit a copy of the certificate of marriage and proof of termination of all prior marriages of himself or herself and spouse. In the case of an unmarried petitioner who was previously married, submit proof of termination of all prior marriages.

**NOTE:** If any change occurs in the petitioner's marital status while the case is pending, immediately notify the USCIS office where the petition was filed.

#### **C. Proof of Age of Orphan**

The petitioner should submit a copy of the orphan's birth certificate if obtainable; if not obtainable, submit an explanation together with the best available evidence of birth.

#### **D. Copies of the death certificate(s) of the child's parent(s) if applicable.**

**E. A certified copy of adoption decree together with certified translation,** if the orphan has been lawfully adopted abroad.

**F. Evidence that the sole or surviving parent is incapable of providing for the orphan's care** and has in writing irrevocably released the orphan for immigration and adoption, providing the orphan has only one parent.

**G. Evidence that the orphan has been unconditionally abandoned to an orphanage,** if the orphan has been placed in an orphanage by his or her parent or parents.

**H. Evidence that the preadoption requirements, if any of the State of the orphan's proposed residence have been met, if the child is to be adopted in the United States.**

If you can not submit this evidence upon initial filing of the petition under the laws of the State of proposed residence, it may be submitted later. The petition, however, will not be approved without it.

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## I. Home Study

The home study must include a statement or attachment recommending or approving the adoption or proposed adoption and be signed by an official of the responsible State agency in the State of the proposed residence or of an agency authorized by that State. In the case of a child adopted abroad, the statement or attachment must be signed by an official of an appropriate public or private adoption agency that is licensed in the United States.

The home study must be prepared by an entity (individual or organization) licensed or otherwise authorized under the law of the State of the orphan's proposed residence to conduct research and preparation for a home study, including the required personal interviews.

If the recommending entity is licensed, the recommendation must state that it is licensed, where it is licensed, its license number, if any, and the period of validity of the license.

However, the research, including the interview and the preparation of the home study, may be done by an individual or group in the United States or abroad that is satisfactory to the recommending entity.

A responsible State agency or licensed agency may accept a home study made by an unlicensed or foreign agency and use that home study as a basis for a favorable recommendation.

The home study must provide an assessment of the capabilities of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to properly parent the orphan and must include a discussion of the following areas:

1. An explanation regarding any history of abuse or violence or any complaints, charges, citations, arrests, convictions, prison terms, pardons, and rehabilitation decrees for breaking or violating any law or ordinance by the petitioner(s) or any additional adult member of the household who is 18 years of age or older.

**NOTE:** Having committed any crime of moral turpitude or a drug-related offense does not necessarily mean that a petitioner or petitioner's spouse will be found ineligible to adopt an orphan. However, failure to disclose such information may result in denial of this petition or any subsequent petition for an orphan.

2. An assessment of the financial ability of the petitioner and petitioner's spouse, if applicable.
3. A detailed description of the living accommodations where the petitioner and petitioner's spouse currently reside(s).
4. If the petitioner and petitioner's spouse are residing abroad at the time of the home study, a description of the living accommodations where the child will reside in the United States with the petitioner and petitioner's spouse, if known.
5. An assessment of the physical, mental, and emotional capabilities of the petitioner and petitioner's spouse in relation to rearing and educating the child.

### Filing Petition for Known Child Without Full Documentation on Child or Home Study

When a child has been identified but the documentary evidence relating to the child or the home study is not yet available, an orphan petition may be filed without that evidence or home study.

The evidence outlined in Instructions **2A** and **2B** (Proof of U.S. Citizenship of the Petitioner and Proof of Marriage of Petitioner and Spouse), however, must be submitted.

**If the necessary evidence relating to the child or the home study is not submitted within one year from the date of submission of the petition, the petition will be considered abandoned, and the fee will not be refunded. Any further proceeding will require the filing of a new petition.**

### Translations

Any document containing a foreign language submitted to USCIS will be accompanied by a full English language translation, which the translator has certified as complete and accurate, and by the translator's certification that he or she is competent to translate from the foreign language into English.

### Copies

Unless specifically required that an original document be filed with an application or petition, an ordinary legible photocopy may be submitted. Original documents submitted when not required will remain a part of the record, even if the submission was not required.

## General Instructions

1. Type or print legibly in black ink.
2. If extra space is needed to complete any item, attach a continuation sheet, indicate the item number, and date and sign each sheet.

## Where To File?

A petitioner wishing to file the Form I-600 within the United States must file the petition with the USCIS Dallas Lockbox facility. Form I-600 will then be routed to, and adjudicated at, the USCIS field office having jurisdiction over his or her place of residence.

Form I-600 must be mailed to one of the USCIS Dallas Lockbox facility addresses listed below.

For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries, use:

**USCIS**  
P.O. Box 660088  
Dallas, TX 75266

For private couriers (non-USPS), use:

**USCIS**  
ATTN: Adoption  
2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business  
Suite 400  
Lewisville, TX 75067

**E-Notification:** If you are filing your Form I-600 at the USCIS Dallas Lockbox facility, you may elect to receive an email and/or text message notifying you that your application has been accepted. You must complete Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance, and clip it to the first page of your application. To download a copy of Form G-1145, including the instructions, click on the link [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) "Forms."

## Petitioners Wishing to File Form I-600 Abroad

A petitioner wishing to file the Form I-600 abroad must do so at the USCIS overseas office, U.S. Embassy or consulate designated to act on the petition. **NOTE:** In order to file Form I-600 abroad, the petitioner must have an approved and valid Form I-600A and be physically present in the child's country.

## Biometrics Services

As part of USCIS biometric services requirements, the following persons must be fingerprinted in connection with this petition:

1. The petitioner and petitioner's spouse, if applicable, and
2. Each additional adult member the petitioner's household, 18 years of age or older. **NOTE:** Submit a copy of the birth certificate of each household member over 18 years of age.

If necessary, USCIS may also take a photograph and signature of those named above as part of the biometric services.

## Petitioners Residing in the United States

After filing this petition, USCIS will notify each person in writing of the time and location where he or she must go to be fingerprinted. Failure to appear to be fingerprinted or for other biometric services may result in denial of the petition.

## Petitioners Residing Abroad

Completed fingerprint cards (Forms FD-258) must be submitted with the petition. Do not bend, fold, or crease completed fingerprint cards. Fingerprint cards must be prepared by a U.S. Embassy or consulate, USCIS office, or military installation.

## What Is the Filing Fee?

A fee of **\$670** must be submitted for filing this petition. However, a fee is not required for this petition if you filed Form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing or Orphan Petition, within the previous 18 months, and it was approved or is still pending.

An additional biometric fee of **\$80** for fingerprinting every adult person living in the household in the United States where the child will reside must also be submitted.

For example, if a petition is filed by a married couple residing in the United States with one additional adult member in their household, the total fee that must be submitted would be **\$910** (**\$670** for the petition and **\$240** for biometric services for fingerprinting the three adults).

**NOTE:** If the prospective adoptive parents and any other adult members of the household reside abroad at the time of filing, they are exempt from paying the USCIS biometric services fee. However, they may have to pay the fingerprinting fee charged by the U.S. consular office or military installation.

When more than one petition is submitted by the same petitioner on behalf of orphans who are siblings, only one fee for Form I-600 and biometric services is required, unless re-fingerprinting is ordered. If the orphans are not siblings, a separate filing fee must be submitted for each additional Form I-600.

The fee will not be refunded whether the petition is approved or not. **Do not mail cash.** All checks or money orders, whether U.S. or foreign, must be payable in U.S. currency at a financial institution in the United States. When a check is drawn on the account of a person other than yourself, write your name on the face of the check. If the check is not honored, USCIS will charge you **\$30**.

Pay by check or money order in the exact amount. Make the check or money order payable to the **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**, unless:

- A.** If you live in Guam, make it payable to **Treasurer, Guam**.
- B.** If you live in the U.S. Virgin Islands, make it payable to **Commissioner of Finance of the Virgin Islands**.

### How to Check If the Fees Are Correct

Form I-600 and biometric fees are current as of the edition date appearing in the lower right corner of this page. However, because USCIS fees change periodically, you can verify if the fees are correct by following one of the steps below:

- 1.** Visit our website at **www.uscis.gov**, select "Immigration Forms," and check the appropriate fee;
- 2.** Review the Fee Schedule included in your form package, if you called us to request the form; or
- 3.** Telephone our National Customer Service Center at **1-800-375-5283** and ask for the fee information.

**NOTE:** If your Form I-600 requires payment of a biometric service fee for USCIS to take your fingerprints, photograph, or signature, you can use the same procedure to obtain the correct biometric fee.

## Address Changes

If you change your address and you have an application or petition pending with USCIS, you may change your address on-line at **www.uscis.gov**, click on "Change your address with USCIS," and follow the prompts, or you may complete and mail Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card, to:

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Change of Address  
P.O. Box 7134  
London, KY 40742-7134**

For commercial overnight or fast freight services only, mail to:

**U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Change of Address  
1084-I South Laurel Road  
London, KY 40744**

## Processing Information

### Submitting Advance Processing Application for Orphan Child Not Yet Identified

A prospective petitioner may request advance processing when the child has not been identified or when the prospective petitioner or spouse are going abroad to locate or adopt a child.

If unmarried, the prospective petitioner must be at least 24 years of age, provided that he or she will be at least 25 years of age at the time of the adoption and the completed petition on behalf of a child is filed.

The request must be on Form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition, and accompanied by the evidence requested on that form.

A separate Form I-600 must be filed for each child after a child(ren) is located or identified. If only one Form I-600 is filed, a new fee is not required, provided the form is filed while Form I-600A is pending or within 18 months of the approval of Form I-600A.

### Child(ren) is Located or Identified

A separate Form I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative, must be filed for each child.

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Generally, Form I-600 should be submitted at the USCIS office where Form I-600A was filed.

If a prospective petitioner goes abroad to adopt or locate a child in one of the countries noted below, he or she should file Form I-600 at the USCIS office having jurisdiction over the place where the child is residing or will be located, unless the case is retained in a USCIS office in the United States.

USCIS has offices in the following countries: Austria, China, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti Honduras, India, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, and Vietnam.

If a prospective petitioner goes abroad to any country not listed above to adopt or locate a child, he or she should file Form I-600 at the U.S. Embassy or consulate having jurisdiction over the place where the child is residing or will be located, unless the case is retained in a USCIS office in the United States.

**Any Form I-600 that is not signed or accompanied by the correct fee will be rejected with a notice that Form I-600 is deficient.** You may correct the deficiency and resubmit Form I-600. Form I-600 is not considered properly filed until accepted by USCIS.

### Initial Processing

Once Form I-600 has been accepted, it will be checked for completeness, including submission of the required initial evidence. If you do not completely fill out the form or file it without required initial evidence, you will not establish a basis for eligibility, and we may deny your Form I-600.

### Requests for More Information or Interview

We may request more information or evidence, or we may request that you appear at a USCIS office for an interview. We may also request that you submit the originals of any copy. We will return these originals when they are no longer required.

### Decision

The decision on Form I-600 involves a determination of whether you have established eligibility for the requested benefit. You will be notified of the decision in writing.

## Penalties

If you knowingly and willfully falsify or conceal a material fact or submit a false document with your Form I-600, we will deny your Form I-600 and may deny any other immigration benefit.

In addition, you will face severe penalties provided by law and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

## Privacy Act Notice

We ask for the information on this form, and associated evidence, to determine if you have established eligibility for the immigration benefit for which you are filing. Our legal right to ask for this information can be found in the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended. We may provide this information to other government agencies. Failure to provide this information, and any requested evidence, may delay a final decision or result in denial of your Form I-600.

## Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions and completing and submitting the form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Regulatory Management Division, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., 3rd Floor, Suite 3008, Washington, DC 20529. OMB No. 1615-0028. **Do not mail your application to this address.**