

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

**Read these instructions carefully to properly complete this form. If you need more space to complete an answer, use a separate sheet of paper. Write your name 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?**

On April 1, 2008, the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention) entered into force for the United States. Therefore, it is important to note that Form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition, and/or Form I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative, cannot be filed for the adoption of a child habitually residing in a Hague Adoption Convention country unless the adoption occurred before April 1, 2008, or meets the requirements for a grandfathered transition case (example: Form I-600A or Form I-600 was filed prior to April 1, 2008). For a list of Hague Adoption Convention countries and for additional information regarding grandfathered transition cases, see the U.S. Department of State's Web site at [www.adoption.state.gov](http://www.adoption.state.gov) and our Web site at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

This form is used to classify an alien orphan, habitually resident in a non-Hague Convention country, 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 death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from both parents.

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

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.

Form I-600 may be filed after the child's 16th birthday, but before the child's 18th birthday **only** if the orphan is the birth sibling of another foreign national child who has immigrated (or will immigrate) based on adoption by the same adoptive parents.

**B. Parent(s)**

The petition may be filed by a married U.S. citizen and spouse. Both the citizen and the spouse must sign the petition. The spouse does not need to be a U.S. citizen. However, if the spouse is not a U.S. citizen or a non-citizen U.S. national, and is residing in the United States, the spouse must hold a lawful status under the immigration laws; for example, status as a lawful permanent resident or in another lawful immigration status.

The petition may also be filed by an unmarried U.S. citizen. An unmarried U.S. citizen must be at least 25 years of age when the petition is filed. If the unmarried U.S. citizen was not yet 25 years of age at the time of the actual adoption, the U.S. citizen must wait until his or her 25<sup>th</sup> birthday to file the petition.

**C. Adoption abroad - child seen by and adopted by both parents**

If the child was adopted abroad, it must be established that both the married petitioner and his or her spouse, or the unmarried petitioner personally saw and observed the child prior to or during the adoption proceedings in order for the adoption to be considered full and final. The adoption decree must show that a married prospective adoptive parent and spouse adopted the child jointly.

**D. Adoption abroad - child not seen by or adopted by both parents**

If the child was adopted abroad, but the married petitioner and spouse or the unmarried petitioner did not see and observe the child in person prior to or

during the adoption proceeding, the child will be considered to be coming to the United States for adoption. The adoptive parents will then need to either adopt the child anew in their State of residence or else take whatever steps may be required by their State of residence to recognize the foreign adoption.

Also, if the married petitioner and spouse did not jointly adopt the child abroad, but one spouse did adopt the child, the child will be considered to be coming to the United States for adoption, and the spouse who did not adopt abroad will need to adopt the child in the United States.

### 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. 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 10 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 a U.S. Embassy;
3. An unexpired U.S. passport initially issued for 10 years; or
4. An original statement from a U.S. consular officer verifying the applicant's U.S. citizenship with a valid passport.

**NOTE:** If the petitioner is married, and the spouse lives in the United States, the petitioner must submit proof that the spouse is living in the United States lawfully. If the spouse is a U.S. citizen or non-citizen U.S. national, the petitioner may submit

the same type of evidence as the evidence to establish the petitioner's own U.S. citizenship. If the spouse is an alien who is residing in the United States, 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 child is an "orphan" as defined in section 101(b)(1)(F) and 8 CFR 204.3(b)**

1. If child of a sole parent, submit evidence that the birth mother is a sole parent, she is incapable of providing for the child's care, and she has irrevocably released the child for emigration and adoption in writing.
2. If child of a surviving parent, submit evidence that the other parent is deceased, the surviving mother or father is incapable of providing proper care for the child, and the surviving mother or father has irrevocably released the child for emigration and adoption in writing.

3. If the child does not qualify as the child of a sole or surviving parent, submit evidence that the child is an orphan because the child has no parent as a result of abandonment, loss, desertion, disappearance, or separation. The definitions in 8 CFR 204.3(b) indicate what must be established for each of these situations to apply. It is *not* necessary to establish that each parent is gone for the same reason. For example, if one parent has disappeared, and the other has abandoned the child, the child is an orphan.

**G. 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 cannot 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.

**H. Home study**

The home study must contain the home study preparer's specific approval of the prospective adoptive parent(s) for adoption and a discussion of the reasons for such approval, as well as any restrictions to the adoption. If you live in a State where an appropriate State authority must review and approve a home study, such review must be completed before the home study is submitted to USCIS. If you reside abroad, then an appropriate public or private adoption agency licensed in any State in the United States must review and favorably recommend the home study before it is submitted to USCIS.

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.

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, spouse, or any additional adult member of the household who is 18 years of age or older.

You must disclose any criminal history even if the record of the arrest, conviction, or other adverse criminal history has been expunged, sealed, pardoned, or subject to any other amelioration.

**NOTE:** You *must* include all information concerning any criminal history, even if an arrest, indictment, other criminal charge, or conviction has been expunged, sealed, pardoned, or ameliorated in any other way. Having committed any crime involving moral turpitude or a drug-related offense does not necessarily mean that the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be found not qualified to adopt a child. However, failure to disclose such information may result in the denial of this petition or any subsequent petition for a child.

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.

## Translations

Any document containing a foreign language submitted to USCIS must 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 form I-600 within the United States must file Form I-600 at the USCIS Dallas Lockbox facility. Form I-600 will then be routed to, and adjudicated at, the National Benefits Center.

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

The USCIS Dallas Lock box facility address is as follows:

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

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

For Express mail and courier deliveries:

**USCIS**  
**ATTN: Adoption**  
2501 S. State Highway 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 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 biometrics 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 of the petitioner's household, 18 years of age or older.

If necessary, USCIS may also take a photograph and signature of those named above as part of the biometrics 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, if necessary. Failure to appear to be fingerprinted or for other biometrics services when notified may result in denial of the petition.

#### Petitioners Residing Abroad

A completed Form FD-258, Applicant Fingerprint Card, is required for each individual requiring biometrics. The fingerprint card must be prepared by a U.S. Embassy or consulate, USCIS office, or U.S. military installation abroad. For additional information on obtaining fingerprints **or on paying the required biometric services fee** when filing outside the United States, consult the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate or USCIS overseas office.

### What Is the Filing Fee?

A fee of **\$720** must be submitted for filing Form I-600. However, a fee is not required for this petition if you filed an advance processing application (Form I-600A), and it was

approved (or an extension approved) within the previous 18 months, or is still pending, and this is the first Form I-600 filed based on that Form I-600A.

**NOTE:** To ensure proper filing of your petition, you must enclose a separate check or money order for each petition requiring filing and/or biometrics fees. Each check or money order must also include the biometrics fee for each prospective adoptive parent and adult household member requiring fingerprinting.

An additional biometric fee of **\$85** for fingerprinting every adult person living in the household 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 **\$975** (**\$720** for the petition and **\$255** for biometrics services for fingerprinting the three adults).

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:

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

**NOTE:** Spell out U.S. Department of Homeland Security; do not use the initials "USDHS" or "DHS."

#### How to Check If the Fees Are Correct

Form I-600 and biometrics 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 Web site at **www.uscis.gov**, select "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 biometrics services fee for USCIS to take your fingerprints, photograph, or signature, you can use the same procedure to obtain the correct biometrics fee.

## 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 at the time of filing Form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition, and must be at least 25 years of age at the time of filing Form I-600 on behalf of a child.

The request must be on Form I-600A and accompanied by the evidence requested on that form and the appropriate fee(s), if any.

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) Located or Identified

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

If a prospective petitioner goes abroad to adopt or locate a child, he or she may file Form I-600 at the USCIS office having jurisdiction over the place where the child resides, if there is a USCIS office located in that country. **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 at the time of filing.

For a list of USCIS overseas offices, see our Web site at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

If a prospective petitioner goes abroad to any country where there is no USCIS office, he or she may file Form I-600 at the U.S. Embassy or consulate having jurisdiction over the place where the child resides. **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 at the time of filing.

**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.

## Accommodations for Individuals With Disabilities and Impairments

USCIS is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities and impairments.

Accommodations vary with the disability and/or impairment and involve modifications to practices or procedures. For example, if you are:

1. Unable to use your hands, you may be permitted to take a test orally rather than in writing;

2. Hearing-impaired, you may be provided with a sign-language interpreter for a USCIS-sponsored training session; or
3. Unable to travel to a designated USCIS location for an interview, you may be visited at your home or a hospital.

If you believe that you, your spouse, and/or your household member need us to accommodate a disability and/or impairment, check "Yes" in Block III, Number 30 of Form I-600, then check any applicable box that describes the nature of your disability(ies) and/or impairment(s). Also, write the type(s) of accommodation(s) you are requesting on the line(s) provided. If you are requesting a sign-language interpreter, be sure to indicate which language. If you need more space, use a separate sheet of paper.

**NOTE:** All domestic USCIS facilities meet the Accessibility Guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, so you do not need to contact us to request an accommodation for physical access to a domestic USCIS office.

USCIS considers requests for accommodations on a case-by-case basis. Asking for an accommodation will not affect your eligibility for the benefit.

### 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 Products Division, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., 3rd Floor, Suite 3008, Washington, DC 20529-2210. OMB No. 1615-0028. **Do not mail your application to this address.**