

**Instructions for Form I-600A, Application
for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition****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 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?

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 and our Web site at www.uscis.gov.

This form is used by a U.S. citizen who plans to adopt a foreign-born child but does not have a specific child in mind. "Advance Processing" enables U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to adjudicate the application that relates to the qualifications of the applicant(s) as prospective adoptive parent(s).

Additionally, this form may be used in cases where the child is known and the prospective adoptive parent(s) are traveling to the country where the child is located. However, it is important that prospective adoptive parent(s) be aware that the child must remain in the foreign country where the child is located until the processing is completed.

NOTE: Form I-600A is not a petition to classify an orphan as an immediate relative. Form I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative, is used for that purpose.

What Are the Eligibility Requirements?**1. Eligibility for an advance processing application (Form I-600A)**

An application for advance processing may be filed by a married U.S. citizen and spouse. The spouse of the applicant does not need to be a U.S. citizen. However, he

or she must be in a lawful immigration status if residing in the United States. An application for advance processing may also be filed by an unmarried U.S. citizen who is at least 24 years of age provided that he or she will be at least 25 years of age at the time he or she files an orphan petition on behalf of a child.

2. Eligibility for an orphan petition (Form I-600)

In addition to the requirements concerning the citizenship and age of the applicant described in the above paragraph noted by **Number 1** when a child is located and identified, the following eligibility requirements apply:

A. Child

Under U.S. 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 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.

Form I-600 may not be filed on behalf of a child who is present in the United States unless that child is in parole status and has not been adopted in the United States.

Form I-600A may be filed at any time. Form I-600, however, must be filed before the child reaches 16 years of age with one exception. Form I-600 may be filed after the child's 16th birthday, but before the child's 18th birthday **only** if the child is the birth sibling of another foreign national child who has immigrated (or will immigrate) based on adoption by the same adoptive parents.

B. Adoption abroad - child seen by and adopted by both parents

If the child was adopted abroad, it must be established that both the married applicant and spouse, or the unmarried applicant, 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.

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

If the child is adopted abroad, but the married petitioner and spouse, or the unmarried petitioner, did not personally see and observe the child 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 a married petitioner and spouse do not jointly adopt the child abroad, but one spouse did adopt the child abroad, 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.

D. Preadoption requirements

If the child has not been adopted abroad, the applicant and spouse, or the unmarried applicant, must establish that the child will be adopted in the United States by the prospective adoptive parent (and spouse, if any) or by the unmarried prospective adoptive parent, and that preadoption requirements, if any, of the State of the child's proposed residence have been met.

General Instructions

Step 1. Fill Out Form I-600A

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.
3. Answer all questions fully and accurately. State that an item is not applicable with "N/A." If the answer is none, write "None."

Step 2. General Requirements

Initial Evidence

1. Proof of U. S. citizenship of the prospective adoptive parent(s)

- A. 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 2 months after birth and showing the date and place of the prospective adoptive parent'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, prospective adoptive parent's date of birth, or age at the time, the 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 prospective adoptive parent listed;
 4. **Affidavits** sworn to or affirmed by two persons who were living at the time and who have personal knowledge of the date and place of birth in the United States of the prospective adoptive parent. Each affidavit should contain the following information regarding the person making the affidavit: his or her full name, address, date, place of birth, and relationship to the prospective adoptive parent, if any, and full information concerning the event and complete details of how the affiant acquired knowledge of the birth; or
 5. **An unexpired U.S. passport** initially issued for 10 years.
- B. If the prospective adoptive parent 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 must 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.

2. Proof of marriage of applicant and spouse

The married applicant 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 applicant who was previously married, submit proof of termination of all prior marriages.

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

3. Home study

You must submit a home study prepared according to the requirements specified in 8 CFR 204.3(e) by a person who is authorized under 8 CFR 204.3(b) to prepare the home study. If you do not submit the home study with your Form I-600A, it must be submitted not more than one year after you file Form I-600A. The home study must have been completed or updated not more than 6 months before the date it is submitted to USCIS.

In order to prepare a home study, the person must be licensed or otherwise authorized under the law of the State of the child's proposed residence to prepare home studies for adoptions. The home study preparer may be a public agency with authority under State law for adoption matters, or a public or private adoption agency licensed in the State of the child's proposed residence. The home

study preparer may also be an individual, if the person is, as an individual, licensed or otherwise authorized to prepare home studies for adoption under the law of the State of the child's proposed residence.

If you live abroad and will adopt the child abroad, the home study may be prepared by an agency or individual who is licensed or authorized to prepare home studies under the law of the country in which you reside, or under the law of any State in the United States. In addition to having a home study preparer that meets this requirement, the home study, before it is submitted to USCIS, must be reviewed and favorably recommended by a public or private adoption agency licensed or otherwise authorized by any State of the United States to place children for adoption.

NOTE: USCIS does not enforce foreign licensing laws. So if your home study is prepared abroad by a home study preparer licensed in the United States and is reviewed and favorably recommended by a public or private adoption agency licensed in the United States, you may submit it to USCIS, and USCIS will accept it. The country in which you reside, however, may have its own laws concerning who may conduct adoption home studies in that country. You may want to verify whether a person licensed to conduct home studies in a State in the United States is permitted, under the law of the country in which you reside, to conduct home studies in that country.

The home study must provide an assessment of the capabilities of the prospective adoptive parent(s) to provide proper parental care to an adopted orphan in light of the requirements stated in 8 CFR 204.3(e). The home study must include a discussion of the following elements:

1. Personal interview(s) and home visit(s);

2. Assessment of the capabilities of the prospective adoptive parents to properly parent the orphan, including:

- A. Assessment of the physical, mental, and emotional capabilities of the prospective adoptive parents to properly parent the orphan;
- B. Assessment of the finances of the prospective adoptive parents;
- C. History of abuse or violence;
- D. Previous rejection for adoption or prior unfavorable home study; and
- E. Criminal history;

3. Living accommodations;
4. Handicapped or special needs orphan;
5. Summary of the counseling given and plans for post-placement counseling;
6. Specific approval of the prospective adoptive parents for adoption;
7. Home study preparer's certification and statement of authority to conduct home studies; and
8. Review of home study by the appropriate State agency, if required, and by a private or public adoption agency licensed in the United States, if you live abroad and will adopt abroad.

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 application and/or any subsequent petition for a child.

Translations

Any document containing a foreign language submitted to USCIS shall 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.

Where To File?

A prospective adoptive parent residing in the United States must file Form I-600A at the USCIS Dallas Lockbox facility. Form I-600A will then be routed to, and adjudicated at, the National Benefits Center.

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

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

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 A 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 "Forms."

Prospective Adoptive Parents Who Live Overseas and Wish to File Form I-600A

A prospective adoptive parent residing outside the United States must consult the nearest U.S. consulate for the overseas or stateside USCIS office designated to act on the application.

Filing a Second Form I-600A for Grandfathered Cases

A second Form I-600A for grandfathered cases (example: Form I-600A or I-600 was filed prior to April 1, 2008) must be filed with the Dallas Lockbox Facility. For more information, visit the USCIS Web site: www.uscis.gov.

Filing Other Form I-600A Requests

If you are requesting the one-time, no-fee extension of the Form I-600A approval; the one-time, no fee re-fingerprinting; or a change in the Form I-600A approval due to a significant change in your household, you must make these requests as instructed upon initial filing. For more information, visit the USCIS Web site: www.uscis.gov. Such requests must be mailed to the National Benefits Center at the following address.

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

National Benefits Center
Attn: Adoptions
P.O. Box 8025
Lee's Summit, MO 64002

For express mail and courier deliveries:

National Benefits Center
Attn: Adoptions
850 N.W. Chipman Road, Suite 5000
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

What Is the Filing Fee?

The filing fee for Form I-600A is **\$720**.

An additional biometrics fee of **\$85** is required for fingerprinting every adult person living in the household where the child will reside.

For example, if an application is filed by a married couple with one additional adult member in their household, the total fees that must be submitted would be **\$975 (\$720 for the petition and \$255 for the biometrics services fee for fingerprinting the three adults)**.

USCIS will allow for a one-time re-fingerprinting at no charge to the prospective adoptive parent(s) and any adult members of the household who are 18 years of age or older if the 15-month fingerprint validity has or will expire before the final adjudication of any related Form I-600 filed on behalf of a specific child.

NOTE: To ensure proper filing of your application, you must enclose a separate check or money order for each completed Form I-600A. The check or money order must also include the biometrics fee for each prospective adoptive parent and adult household member requiring fingerprinting.

Biometrics Services

As part of the USCIS biometrics services requirement, the following persons must be fingerprinted in connection with this application:

1. The married prospective adoptive parent and spouse, if applicable; and
2. Each additional adult household member 18 years of age or older.

If necessary, USCIS may also take each person's photograph and signature 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. Failure to appear to be fingerprinted or for other biometrics services may result in denial of this application.

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 biometric services fees when filing outside the United States, consult the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate or USCIS overseas office.

You may submit one check or money order for both the application and biometrics fees.

Use the following guidelines when you prepare your check or money order for the Form I-600A and the biometrics services fee:

1. The check or money order must be drawn on a bank or other financial institution located in the United States and must be payable in U.S. currency; and
2. Make the check or money order payable to **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**.

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

Notice to Those Making Payment by Check

If you send us a check, it will be converted into an electronic funds transfer (EFT). This means we will copy your check and use the account information on it to electronically debit your account for the amount of the check. The debit from your account will usually take 24 hours and will be shown on your regular account statement.

You will not receive your original check back. We will destroy your original check, but we will keep a copy of it. If the EFT cannot be processed for technical reasons, you authorize us to process the copy in place of your original check. If the EFT cannot be completed because of insufficient funds, we may try to make the transfer up to two times.

How to Check If the Fees Are Correct

The form and biometrics fees on this form 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 Internet 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-600A 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

What Should You Do After Locating or Identifying a Child or Children?

Form I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative, is filed when a child has been located and/or identified for the prospective adoptive parent(s). A new fee is not required if Form I-600 is filed within 18 months from the approval date of Form I-600A.

If approved in the home study for more than one child, the prospective adoptive parent(s) may file a petition for each of the additional children to the maximum number reflected in the Form I-600A approval notice. If the children are siblings, no additional filing fee is required. However, if the children are not siblings, an additional filing fee is required for each Form I-600 beyond the initial Form I-600.

A fee of **\$720** must be submitted for filing Form I-600. However, a fee is not required for Form I-600 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.

A fee is also not required if you requested the one-time, no fee extension of the approval of Form I-600A, and that request was approved.

NOTE: Approval of an advance processing application does not guarantee that the orphan petition(s) will be approved.

Form I-600 must be accompanied by all the evidence required by the instructions of that form, except when provided previously with Form I-600A.

Prospective adoptive parent(s) going abroad to adopt or locate a child may file Form I-600 with the USCIS office or U.S. Embassy or consulate having immigrant visa jurisdiction over where the child resides, unless the case is being retained at the USCIS office stateside. Form I-600 may only be filed abroad during the validity period of the Form I-600A approval (or extension of approval) and if the U.S. citizen petitioner is physically present in the child's country at the time of Form I-600 submission. If prospective adoptive parents wish to file Form I-600 stateside, the petition must be mailed to the Dallas Lockbox facility at the address listed in "**Where to File?**" on **Page 4** of these instructions.

Certification

The "Certification of Prospective Adoptive Parent" block of Form I-600A must be executed by the prospective adoptive parent. The spouse, if applicable, must execute the "**Certification of Married Prospective Adoptive Parent Spouse**" block on **Page 3** of the form. Failure to do so will result in the rejection of Form I-600A.

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

Initial Processing

Once Form I-600A 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-600A.

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

Extension of the Form I-600A Approval Period

If USCIS has approved your Form I-600A, and you have not yet filed Form I-600 based on that approval, you may make **one** request, without fee, to have USCIS extend the approval period of your Form I-600A an additional 18 months. You must submit a written request to the National Benefits Center. The request must be received no earlier than 90 days prior to the expiration of Form I-600A approval, but before Form I-600A approval notice expires. For instance, if your Form I-600A approval notice is valid until December 31, you may not file the request before October 3, but your request must be received at the USCIS office before no later than December 31.

The written request must explicitly request a one-time, no-charge extension to the current Form I-600A approval. You must submit an amended/updated home study and any other supporting documentation of any changes in the household. The home study amendment or update must address each issue under 8 CFR 204.3(e) and indicate whether anything has changed on any item. The home study must also address any changes to Form I-600A answers and must say whether approval is still recommended.

Requesting a Change of Country

If you had USCIS send the approved Form I-600A to the U.S. Department of State National Visa Center for a particular country, but now wish to adopt a child from a different country, you may make one request, without fee, to have a new approval notice sent to the U.S. Department of State National Visa Center for the new country. You must submit a written request to the National Benefits Center. You should also submit an updated or amended home study that addresses the change in country and whether the home study preparer recommends approval of the change and that also addresses any other changes since your Form I-600A was approved.

If you have already received one no-fee change of country, then you must submit a properly completed Form I-824, Application for Action on Approved Petition or Application, with the fee specified in 8 CFR 103.7(b), to obtain any additional change of country. You may also need to submit an updated or amended home study that addresses the change in country and whether the home study preparer recommends approval of the change and that also addresses any other changes since your Form I-600A was approved.

If you have already received one no-fee change of country, then you must submit a properly completed Form I-824, Application for Action on Approved Petition or Application, with the fee specified in 8 CFR 103.7(b), to obtain any additional change of country. You may also need to submit an updated or amended home study that addresses the change in country and whether the home study preparer recommends approval of the change and that also addresses any other changes since your Form I-600A was approved.

A Second Form I-600A Filing for a Grandfathered Case

If you have a current Form I-600A approval notice (or an extension of an approval notice) for an adoption in a Hague Convention country, and it is expiring, you may be eligible to continue with the orphan process by filing a second Form I-600A, with fee, while your current Form I-600A or extension remains valid. For more information, visit the “Frequently Asked Questions” concerning a grandfathered Form I-600A at www.uscis.gov.

USCIS Forms and Information

To order USCIS forms, call our toll-free number at **1-800-870-3676**. You can also get USCIS forms and information on immigration laws, regulations, and procedures by telephoning our National Customer Service Center at **1-800-375-5283** or visiting our Internet Web site at www.uscis.gov.

As an alternative to waiting in line for assistance at your local USCIS office, you can now schedule an appointment through our Internet-based system, **InfoPass**. To access the system, visit our Web site. Use the **InfoPass** appointment scheduler and follow the screen prompts to set up your appointment. **InfoPass** generates an electronic appointment notice that appears on the screen.

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 19 of Form I-600A, 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 Form I-600A, we will deny Form I-600A 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-600A.

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.**