

## ADOPTION RESOURCE GUIDE

**THIS IS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. MAYA'S HOPE IS NOT GIVING LEGAL ADVICE AND THIS IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A REPLACEMENT FOR COMPETENT LEGAL ADVICE.**

### **Intercountry Adoption of a Child from the Philippines**

The United States is now a full member of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption. The Convention governs all adoptions between the United States and the nearly 75 countries party to the Convention, including The Philippines.

The Hague Convention seeks to prevent the abduction, sale, or trafficking of children. It establishes international norms and procedures for processing inter-country adoption cases involving other Convention members, and protects the rights of children, birth parents, and adoptive parents while promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical practices among adoption service providers. For more information about the Convention, please [click here](#).

### **The Immigration and Nationality Act, section 101(b)(1)(G), in part, defines "child" as:**

- 1 The child is under the age of 16 on the filing date of the petition.
- 2 The child habitually resides in a Convention country.
- 3 The U.S. citizen habitually resides in the U.S. and either adopts child in a Convention country or brings the child to a Convention country for adoption.
- 4 Adoption abroad or custody abroad for U.S. adoption must be by the U.S. citizen and spouse jointly, or an unmarried U.S. citizen at least 25 years old as of the filing date of the petition.
- 5 The child's natural parents (or parent, in the case of a child who has one sole or surviving parent because of the death, disappearance, abandonment, or desertion by the other parent), or other persons or institutions that retain legal custody of the child, have freely given their written irrevocable consent to the termination of their legal relationship with the child and to the child's emigration and adoption.
- 6 If a child has two living natural parents, the natural parents are incapable of providing proper care for the child.
- 7 The purpose of the adoption is to form a bona fide parent-child relationship; the child's relationship with the natural parents has been terminated.

- 8 In the case of a child who has not been adopted, the prospective adoptive parents must ensure that: (i) the competent authority of the foreign state has approved the child's emigration to the United States for the purpose of adoption, (ii) the prospective adoptive parents have complied with the pre-adoption requirements of the child's proposed residence, if any, and (iii) no natural parent or prior adoptive parent of the child retains, by virtue of such parentage, any right, privilege, or status in connection with the child.
- 9 Release must be freely given and verified by the Central Authority of the child's country.

**The following procedures for inter-country adoptions now apply to any citizen or couples residing in the United States who wish to adopt a child in the Philippines:**

- Adoption cases must be handled by federally accredited adoption service providers (ASP). For a list of accredited service providers, [click here](#).
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rules require prospective adoptive parents to identify in their initial application the country from which they plan to adopt a child.
- Form I-800A must be filed prior to Form I-800.
- The matching of the child to the parents must be made by the Central Authority of the country where the child resides.
- A consular officer must determine whether the child meets the criteria of visa eligibility before the adoption is finalized or custody is granted in the country of origin. In cases where the adoption or grant of custody has met the requirements of the Convention and the Inter-country Adoption Act, consular officers in Convention countries will issue a Hague Adoption Certificate or Hague Custody Certificate and grant a visa. New visa categories, IH-3 and IH-4, will be used in Convention adoption cases.

If you have general questions on inter-country adoption or how current adoption procedures have changed under the Convention, call the Bureau of Consular Affairs in the United States at 202-736-9130. Or you may fax questions to 202-736-9080.

**Steps Required to Adopt a Child Under the Hague Convention**

**Step 1**

The prospective adoptive parents must file an Application for Determination of Suitability to Adopt a Child from a Convention Country (I-800A) with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) office having jurisdiction over their usual place of residence (see [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)). Adoptive parents must also submit the completed I-800A form, Supplement 1 (listing all adult members of the household), and related supplements and forms.

The filing fee is \$670. An additional biometrics fingerprint fee of \$80 must be paid for each person residing in the household who is 18 or older.

All Hague Convention adoption cases are processed by the USCIS National Benefits Center at the following address:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
P.O. Box 805695  
Chicago, IL 60680-4118

If the adoptive parents consent for USCIS to disclose information about their case to their Adoption Service Provider (ASP), they should complete Form I-800A, Supplement 2, Consent to Disclose Information. The adoptive parents may also arrange for the ASP to submit the approval notice, the accompanying home study, and other supporting evidence to the Central Authority in the Convention country in which the parents plan to adopt.

Note: Some states require a review of the home study by state authorities prior to submission to USCIS (e.g., Alabama, Colorado, Guam, Illinois, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). In such cases, the adoptive parents may file the Form I-800A without the home study, which can be forwarded to USCIS later.

## **Step 2**

The Convention country's Central Authority matches the prospective adoptive parents with a child. The Central Authority prepares a report that determines that: the child is adoptable, the envisaged placement is in the best interest of the child, the birth parent or legal custodian has freely consented in writing to the adoption, and no payment has been made to obtain the consent necessary for the adoption to be completed.

## **Step 3**

The adoptive parents file the Form I-800 petition with USCIS, including the Central Authority's report on the child. Form I-800 is used to determine whether the child qualifies as a Convention adoptee. The petition is provisionally approved in accordance with USCIS regulations and forwarded to the respective U.S. Embassy/Consulate via the National Visa Center (NVC) for further processing.

The adoptive parents must comply with the above procedures and file the Form I-800 before they adopt or obtain legal custody of the child. Also, Form I-800 must be filed before the expiration of the notice of the approval (or extension of) Form I-800A, and before the child's 16th birthday.

#### **Step 4**

Following the provisional approval by USCIS, the petition is forwarded to the National Visa Center (NVC). NVC notifies the respective Embassy/Consulate and forwards the Form I-800. The biographic data form (DS-230) and information regarding required photographs, medical report, birth certificate and visa fees are mailed to the adoptive parents. The parents, or the ASP acting on their behalf, should bring these documents to the Embassy/Consulate, where the Biographic Data Form DS-230 Part II is signed in the presence of a Consular Officer. The personal appearance of the child is required.

#### **Step 5**

After the Consular Officer reviews the application and determines no ineligibility exists, the Consular Officer issues a letter under Article 5 of the Hague Convention to the parents and the ASP, which must be forwarded to the Convention country's Central Authority. The letter states that the adoptive parents appear to be eligible for the adoption, and the child will most likely be authorized to enter and reside in the United States. The adoptive parents may now adopt or obtain legal custody of the child.

#### **Step 6**

The Intercountry Adoption Board of the Philippines (ICAB) certifies that the adoption or grant of legal custody has occurred in accordance with the Convention.

#### **Step 7**

The adoptive parents return to the Embassy/Consulate for the final interview. The child does not need to be present (unless not present at the first interview). The adoptive parents submit the ICAB certification to the Consular Officer as evidence that the adoption/legal custody has been completed. After verifying compliance with the Convention and Inter-country Adoption Act (IAA), the Consular Officer grants final approval of Form I-800 and issues a certificate stating that the adoption or the grant of legal custody meets the requirements of the Convention and the IAA.

Finally, an immigrant visa is issued to the child. At this point, the adoption process is complete and the adoptive parents may return to the U.S. with their adopted child.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have general questions on inter-country adoption or how current adoption procedures have changed under the Convention, call the Bureau of Consular Affairs in the United States at 202-736-9130. Or you may fax questions to 202-736-9080.

#### **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Office of Children's Issues, SA-29  
Hague Adoption Unit (HAC/HCD)  
2100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, 4th floor  
Washington, D.C. 20037

Email: [AdoptionUSCA@state.gov](mailto:AdoptionUSCA@state.gov) or [AskCI@state.gov](mailto:AskCI@state.gov)

Phone: 202-736-9089

Fax: 202-736-9080

#### **Domestic Adoptions (Not for Immigration Purposes)**

U.S. citizens residing in the Philippines who are interested in adopting a Filipino child through the Philippine Courts must meet the following conditions pursuant to Philippine adoption law:

- Be resident in the Philippines for at least three years prior to the filing of the adoption petition and maintain such residence until the adoption decree is entered by the Philippine court.
- Possess a certification of legal capacity to adopt issued by the appropriate government agency from your state of residence.

The Philippines government may waive these requirements in the following cases:

- A former Filipino citizen who seeks to adopt a relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity, as defined under Philippines law; or
- A person who seeks to adopt the legitimate son/daughter of his/her Filipino spouse

## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PARENTS ABOUT DOMESTIC ADOPTIONS

U.S immigration law has clear and specific provisions regarding qualifications for immigration. If you are attempting to bring someone who is not your child by birth, the following conditions must be met before that child can be eligible for an immigrant visa:

- The child must have been legally adopted before the age of 16 (or be the sibling of a child who was adopted by the same parents while under the age of 18). The adoption must be legal and final. Simply providing financially for the child does not satisfy the legal adoption requirement. To satisfy U.S. visa requirements, the child must have been legally adopted pursuant to a final decree issued by a court having jurisdiction over the matter.
- In addition to the adoption decree, there are two additional requirements:
- The adoptive parents must have had legal custody of the child for at least two years. “Legal custody” must be awarded by order of a court or recognized government entity. The start of legal custody begins the date the adoptive parents were granted legal custody of the child, or the date the adoption was finalized, which ever comes first. An informal custodial or guardianship document, such as a sworn affidavit signed before a notary public, is insufficient for this purpose.
- The child must have physically resided with the adoptive parents for at least two years prior to immigration. During this time, the adoptive parents must exercise primary parental control. Evidence must be presented to establish that the child and the adoptive parents had a bona fide parent-child relationship during any periods they resided separately.

Finally, the child must satisfy all primary documentary requirements for an immigrant visa, and provide the following documents to establish their legal status as a child of the petitioner:

- A certified copy of the adoption decree,
- A certified copy of the Certificate of Finality of the adoption,
- A certified copy of the child’s original birth certificate before the adoption,
- A certified copy of the child’s birth certificate amended after the adoption,
- The legal custody decree (if custody was awarded before the adoption),
- Evidence that the child resided with the adoptive parents for at least two years, during which time they exercised primary parental control, and
- If the child was adopted at age 16 or 17 years, evidence that the child was adopted together with, or subsequent to, the adoption of a natural sibling who was under age 16 by the same adoptive parent(s).

Source: <http://manila.usembassy.gov/wwwhadop.html>

## **REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**

### **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION: REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

##### **Procedures on Adoption**

##### **WHERE TO FILE THE APPLICATION**

The application shall be filed with the ICAB through the Central Authority (CA) on Inter-country Adoption or an ICAB accredited Foreign Adoption Agency (FAA) or Governmental Adoption Agency (GAA) in the country where the applicant resides.

##### **RELATIVE ADOPTION**

Relative Adoption as applies to inter-country adoption refers to the adoption of Filipino child/ren by relatives residing abroad within the fourth (4th) degree of consanguinity. Former Filipinos permanently residing abroad and/or foreigners intending to undertake either local adoption (the filing and the finalization of the adoption is done in the Philippines and have the intention of bringing the adoptive child to their country of residence) or through the inter-country adoption route MUST first secure the approval from the Central Authority or appropriate government agencies before filing any adoption petition. Adoption applicants from the USA must first secure their suitability and eligibility to adopt (I800A) from the USA Central Authority on Inter-C-ountry Adoption. Canada based adoption applicants obtain such approval from the Central Authority on Inter-country Adoption of the Province or Territory of residence.

##### **MODIFIED PROCEDURE FOR RELATIVE ADOPTION CASES**

##### **(AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON AUGUST 30, 2007)**

The Questionnaire for Relative Adoptive Applicants (ICAB Form No.2) which can be downloaded from this website shall be submitted by the prospective adoptive parents (PAPs) to the Central Authorities (CAs)/ Foreign Adoption Agencies (FAAs). The CAs/FAAs shall endorse to ICAB the completed Questionnaire for Relative Adoptive Applicants (QRAA) with the agency's assessment and recommendation on the prospective adoptive parents.

- 1 If the CA/FAA favorably recommends the PAPs, the ICAB social worker will then request the CA/FAA to proceed with the preparation of the PAPs' dossier. On the other hand, based on the significant data on the child as indicated in the QRAA, the assigned ICAB Social Worker will request the DSWD – Field Office (FO) to conduct the Child Study Report with supporting documents. Periodic follow-ups will be made with the DSWD-FO.(The time frame from request to ICAB's receipt of the report will be 3-6 months. In situations where the FO could not prepare the Child Study Report within the expected time frame in view of heavy adoption caseload, the ICAB social worker will assist in the conduct of the CSR).
- 2 Once the ICAB receives from the DSWD-FO the child's dossier and the complete adoption application dossier of the PAPs from the CA or FAA, the ICAB social worker will prepare an executive summary on the case with his/her recommendation on the child's adoptive placement for the disposition of the Board.

### **Fees, Charges and Assessments**

These fees are provided for by Article III Section 13 of the Inter-Country Adoption Act of 1995 (RA 8043) and Section 29 and 40 of the Amended Implementing Rules and Regulations on Inter-Country Adoption. Effective February 2007, the ICAB fees which applies to all adoption categories (Regular or Non-Relative, Relative, Special Needs, Special Home Finding, Summer Program and Medical Missions) are as follows :

<b>FEES</b>	<b>AMOUNT IN US DOLLARS</b>	<b>WHEN TO PAY</b>
Application Fee	<b>200.00</b>	Upon filing of the adoption application
Processing Fee	<b>2,000.00 for single placement 3,000.00 for sibling group of 2 or more</b> (as of October 13, 2007)	Upon acceptance of the matching proposal

Pre-adoptive placement costs	The amount varies from one child to another depending on what part of the Philippines the child comes from and what country he/she is going to. Some Embassies of the Receiving Countries charge visa fees and require visa medical examinations while others do not. The total amount will be quoted by the ICAB in the placement proposal.	Upon acceptance of the matching proposal
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- The finalized Local Adoption cases requiring ICAB’s ratification has its own schedule of fees.
- The ICAB also supports the request of the Association of the Child Caring Agencies of the Philippines (ACCAP) to increase its Child Care Support Fund (CCSF) from US\$ 500.00 to US\$ 1,000.00 per placement.
- These new fees will not affect prospective adoptive parents whose adoption applications were received by the ICAB prior to February 2007 and are currently awaiting approvals and child proposals. This means that once these families receive a match, they will still pay the processing fee of US\$ 900.00.
- All payments (except for the CCSF which shall be addressed to the child caring agency where the child came from) shall be in the form of a company check or international bank draft and shall be made payable to the Inter-country Adoption Board. Personal checks, travelers checks or cash WILL NOT be accepted.
- No adoption application will be processed and no Placement Authority will be issued unless the corresponding fees are received by the ICAB.

The following are the common Pre-Adoptive Cost of the Philippine Inter-country Adoption Program: (Exchange Rate: US\$1 = PhP45.00)

ITEM	PHp Cost	US\$ Cost
National Statistics Office Birth or Foundling Certificate	P400.00	\$8.89
E-Passport	P1,200.00	\$26.67
Commission on Filipino Overseas Certificate	P280.00	\$6.22

The following child's documents require authentication from the Philippine Supreme Court, Department of Health and Department of Foreign Affairs:

ITEM	PhP Cost	US\$ Cost
1. Birth or Foundling Certificate	P250/document	\$5.55/document
2. Deed of Voluntary Commitment or Declaration of Abandonment or DSWD Certificate of Child Legally Available for Adoption	P250/document	\$5.55/document
3. Placement Authority	P250/document	\$5.55/document
4. Placement Proposal	P250/document	\$5.55/document
5. Medical Evaluation Report/Medical Certificate		

in compliance to the requirements of the following Receiving Countries:

- 1 Belgium
- 2 France
- 3 Germany
- 4 Italy
- 5 The Netherlands
- 6 Spain

Other pre-travel/pre-adoptive cost such as visa pictures, visa medical fee, visa fee, authentication or legalization fee of documents varies according to the Receiving Country.

To inquire or follow-up with the ICAB, you can telephone, fax or e-mail: Phone: (632) 726-4568(632) 721-9781(632) 721-9782 Fax: (632) 727-2026 E-mail: [adoption@icab.gov.ph](mailto:adoption@icab.gov.ph)

These requirements and fees may change at any time.

Source: <http://www.dswd.gov.ph/faqs/intercountry-adoption-requirements-and-procedures/>

## THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is party to the *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention)*. Therefore all adoptions between The Philippines and the United States must meet the requirements of the Convention and U.S. law implementing the Convention.

*Note: Special transition provisions apply to adoptions initiated before April 1, 2008. **Learn more.***

**Updated: October 2008**

### **DISCLAIMER**

#### **WHO CAN ADOPT**

To bring an adopted child to United States from The Philippines, you must be found eligible to be an adoptive parent by the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government agency responsible for making this determination is the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). **Learn more.**

In addition to these U.S. requirements for adoptive parents, The Philippines also has the following requirements for adoptive parents:

- **Residency Requirements:** U.S. citizens interested in adopting a Filipino child while they are living in The Philippines must be residents of The Philippines for at least three years prior to the filing of the adoption petition, maintain such residence until the adoption is finalized, and possess a certificate of legal capacity to adopt issued by the appropriate agency from the state of residence. Prospective adoptive parents who meet these requirements should file a petition for adoption with the Philippines Court to begin the adoption process.

U.S. citizens not meeting these residency requirements will have to adopt through the Intercountry Adoption Board procedures.

The Philippines Government may waive these requirements if the prospective adoptive parent is a former Filipino citizen who seeks to adopt a relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity as defined by Philippines law, or the prospective adoptive parent is a person who seeks to adopt the legitimate child of his/her Filipino spouse.

- **Age Requirements:** There is no age limit for married prospective adoptive parents. Single prospective adoptive parents must be at least 24 years old at the time of filing the adoption petition.
- **Marriage Requirements:** If prospective adoptive parents are married, they must file jointly for adoption.
- **Income Requirements:** There are no minimum income requirements set by The Philippines. Prospective Adoptive Parents must prove financial stability.
- **Other Requirements:** Prospective adoptive parents must not have ever been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude. Parents must be in a position to provide proper care and support and to give necessary moral values and example to all his/her children, including the child to be adopted. Prospective adoptive parents agree to uphold the basic rights of the child as embodied under The Philippines laws and the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **WHO CAN ADOPT**

The Philippines has specific requirements that a child must meet in order to be eligible for adoption. You cannot adopt a child in The Philippines unless he or she meets the requirements.

In addition to these requirements, a child must meet the definition of an orphan under U.S. law for you to bring him or her home back to the United States. [Learn more](#) about these U.S. requirements.

*Note: The adoption of relatives is common in Philippine culture.*

## Eligibility Requirements:

- **Relinquishment Requirements:** A child is “committed” by way of the “Deed of Voluntary Commitment,” a document used by DSWD asking for signature from the biological parents prior to matching the child with a prospective adoptive parent. The document is essentially the consent of the parent(s), releasing the child to DSWD for subsequent adoption. In the event that the child is abandoned or neglected and no parent is available to sign the “Deed of Voluntary Commitment,” the DSWD instead obtains a commitment order from the court. This endorsement certifies that intercountry adoption is in the best interests of the child.

## HOW TO ADOPT

### The Philippine’s Adoption Authority

*The Inter-Country Adoption Board*

### The Process

Because The Philippines is party to the Hague Adoption Convention, adopting from The Philippines must follow a specific process designed to meet the Convention’s requirements. A brief summary of the Convention adoption process is given below. You must complete these steps in the following order so that your adoption meets all necessary legal requirements.

*Note: If you filed your I-600a with The Philippines before April 1, 2008, the Hague Adoption Convention may not apply to your adoption. Your adoption could continue to be processed in accordance with the immigration regulations for non-Convention adoptions. **Learn more.***

1. Choose an Accredited Adoption Service Provider
2. Apply to be Found Eligible to Adopt
3. Be Matched with a Child
4. Apply for the Child to be Found Eligible for Adoption
5. Adopt the Child (or Gain Legal Custody) in The Philippines
6. Bring your Child Home

## **1. Choose an Accredited Adoption Service Provider**

The first step in adopting a child from The Philippines is to select an adoption service provider in the United States that has been accredited. Only these agencies and attorneys can provide adoption services between the United States and The Philippines. [Learn more.](#)

## **2. Apply to be Found Eligible to Adopt**

After you choose an accredited adoption service provider, you apply to be found eligible to adopt (Form I-800A) by the U.S. Government, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). [Learn how.](#)

Once the U.S. Government determines that you are “eligible” and “suitable” to adopt, you or your agency will forward your information to the adoption authority in The Philippines. The Philippines’ adoption authority will review your application to determine whether you are also eligible to adopt under Philippine law.

## **3. Be Matched with a Child**

The Philippines adoption authority matches the prospective adoptive parents with a child. The Central Authority prepares a report that determines that: the child is adoptable, the envisaged placement is in the best interest of the child, the birth parent or legal custodian has freely consented in writing to the adoption, and no payment has been made to obtain the consent necessary for the adoption to be completed.

## **4. Apply for the Child to be Found Eligible for Adoption**

After you accept a referral to a child, you will apply to the U.S Government, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for provisional approval to adopt that particular child (Form I-800). USCIS will determine whether the child is eligible under U.S. law to be adopted and enter the United States. [Learn how.](#)

After this, your adoption service provider or you will submit a visa application to a Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy. The Consular Officer will review the child’s information and evaluate the child for possible visa ineligibilities. If the Consular Office determines that the child appears eligible to immigrate to the United States, he/she will notify the Philippines’ adoption authority (Article 5 letter). For Convention country adoptions, prospective adoptive

parent(s) may not proceed with the adoption or obtain custody for the purpose of adoption until this takes place.

*Remember: The Consular Officer will make a final decision about the immigrant visa later in the adoption process.*

## **5. Adopt the Child (or Gain Legal Custody) in The Philippines**

*Remember: Before you adopt (or gain legal custody of) a child in The Philippines, you must have completed the above four steps. Only after completing these steps, can you proceed to finalize the adoption or grant of custody for the purpose of adoption in The Philippines.*

The process for finalizing the adoption (or gaining legal custody) in The Philippines generally includes the following:

- **Role of The Court:** The Regional Trial Courts are responsible for domestic adoptions in The Philippines. This is where prospective adoptive parents file adoption petitions.
- **Adoption Application:** To start the Philippine adoption process, prospective adoptive parents or their accredited FAA must contact the Philippine Inter-country Adoption Board (ICAB).
  - Application: The prospective adoptive parents file an application with the ICAB through a United States adoption agency.
  - Endorsement of Child for Inter-Country Adoption: The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) should endorse to the ICAB a child who has been previously committed to the Philippine Government. See “Relinquishment of the Child” for a description of “committed.”
  - Matching: The Inter-Country Adoption Placement Committee matches the child with a person or couple interested in adopting and refers its proposal to ICAB for approval. If the match is approved, the concerned adoption agency in the United States shall be sent a notice of matching proposal.
  - The prospective adoptive parents shall notify the adoption agency in the United States of his/her decision within 15 days of receipt of the matching proposal. Note:

- The Philippine Inter-Country Adoption Act prohibits contact between the prospective adoptive parents and child's parents /guardians or custodians.
- Placement Authority: The ICAB shall issue the Placement Authority within five working days upon receipt of the prospective adoptive parents' acceptance of the matching proposal.
  - Application for Immigrant Visa: The child appears at the Embassy for his/her immigrant visa interview.
  - Child travels to the United States: The adoptive parents must escort the child from The Philippines to the United States.
  - Supervision of Trial Custody: Upon assuming custody of the child, the adoptive parents enter a six-month trial period where the accredited adoption agency in the United States monitors the child's welfare.
  - Petition for Adoption: After completion of the trial custody period, the adoptive parent should file a petition for adoption before the court in the United States.
  - Final Adoption Decree: The final U.S. adoption decree should be submitted to ICAB within a month after its issuance.
- **Time Frame:** Adoption processing depends upon many variables, including the availability of children to be matched with prospective adoptive parents, the number of prospective adoptive parents on the waiting list, and the caseload of social service agencies and the courts.
  - **Adoption Fees:** Fees can vary widely depending upon the adoption agency used.
  - **Documents Required:** The following documents, which must be written and officially translated into English, shall accompany the prospective adoptive parents' application for adoption:
    - Family and Home Study Reports on the family and home of the prospective adoptive parents;
    - Birth Certificates of prospective adoptive parents;
    - Marriage certificate or Decree of Absolute divorce, if applicable;

- Written consent of the prospective adoptive parents' biological or adopted children who are ten years of age or over, witnessed by the social worker after proper counseling;
- Physical and medical evaluation by a duly licensed physician and psychological evaluation by a psychologist
- Latest income tax return or any other documents showing financial capability;
- Clearance issued by the police or other proper Government agency of the place of residence;
- Character reference from the local church minister/priest, employer, or a non-relative member of the immediate community who have known the prospective adoptive parents for at least five (5) years;
- Certification from the U.S. Department of Justice or other appropriate Government agency that the prospective adoptive parents are qualified to adopt under their national law and that the child to be adopted is allowed to enter the country for trial custody and reside permanently once adopted; and
- Recent postcard-size pictures of the prospective adoptive parents and all immediate family.

*Note: Additional documents may be requested.*

## **6. Bringing Your Child Home**

Now that your adoption is complete (or you have obtained legal custody of the child), there are a few more steps to take before you can head home. Specifically, you need to apply for several documents for your child before he or she can travel to the United States:

### ***Birth Certificate***

You will first need to apply for a new birth certificate for your child, so that you can later apply for a passport. Your name will be added to the new birth certificate.

### ***Philippines Passport***

Your child is not yet a U.S. citizen, so he/she will need a travel document or Passport from Philippines.

### ***U.S. Immigrant Visa***

After you obtain the new birth certificate and passport for your child, you also need to apply for an U.S. visa from the United States Embassy for your child. After the adoption (or custody for purpose of adoption) is granted, visit the U.S Embassy for final review and approval of the child's I-600 petition and to obtain a visa for the child. This immigrant visa allows your child to travel home with you. As part of this process, the Consular Officer must be provided the "Panel Physician's" medical report on the child if it was not provided during the provisional approval stage. **Learn more.**

### **Child Citizenship Act**

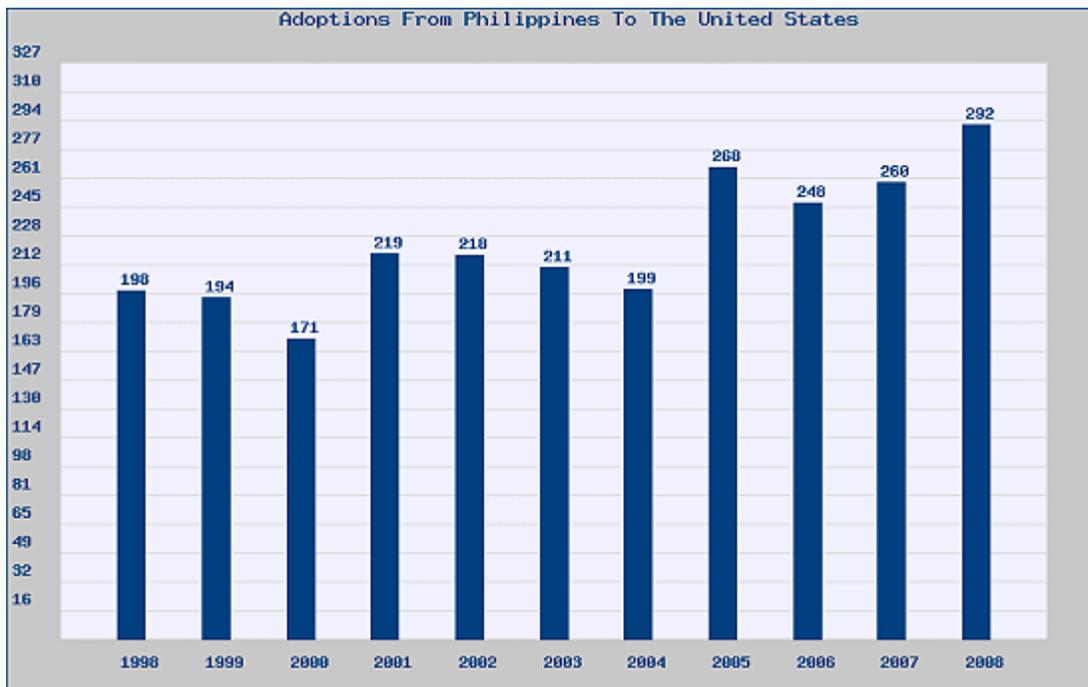
For adoptions finalized abroad: The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 allows your child to acquire American citizenship when he or she enters the United States as lawful permanent residents.

For adoptions to be finalized in the United States: The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 allows your child to typically acquire American citizenship when the U.S. state court issues the final adoption decree. We urge your family to finalize the adoption in a U.S. State court as quickly as possible.

\*Please be aware that if your child did not qualify to become a citizen upon entry to the United States, it is very important that you take the steps necessary so that your child does qualify as soon as possible. Failure to obtain citizenship for your child can impact many areas of his/her life including family travel, eligibility for education and education grants, and voting.

**Learn more** about the Child Citizenship Act.

## Statistics



## TRAVELING ABROAD

### Applying for Your U.S. Passport

A valid U.S. passport is required to enter and leave The Philippines. Only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue, or verify U.S. passports.

Getting or renewing a passport is easy. The [Passport Application Wizard](#) will help you determine which passport form you need, help you to complete the form online, estimate your payment, and generate the form for you to print—all in one place.

### Obtaining Your Visa

In addition to a U.S. passport, you also need to obtain a visa. A visa is an official document issued by a foreign country that formally allows you to visit. Where required, visas are attached to your passport and allow you to enter a foreign nation.

To find information about obtaining a visa for The Philippines, see the Department of State's [Country Specific Information](#).

## **Staying Safe on Your Trip**

Before you travel, it's always a good practice to investigate the local conditions, laws, political landscape, and culture of the country. The State Department is a good place to start.

The Department of State provides **Country Specific Information** for every country of the world about various issues, including the health conditions, crime, unusual currency or entry requirements, and any areas of instability.

## **Staying in Touch on Your Trip**

When traveling during the adoption process, we encourage you to register your trip with the Department of State. Travel registration makes it possible to contact you if necessary. Whether there's a family emergency in the United States, or a crisis in The Philippines, registration assists the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in reaching you.

Registration is free and can be done **online**.

## **AFTER ADOPTION**

### **What does The Philippines require of the adoptive parents after the adoption?**

According to Philippine law, after the adoptive parents escort the child to the United States and assume custody of the child, they enter a six-month trial period where the accredited adoption agency in the United States monitors the child's welfare. After adoptive parents complete the trial custody period, the adoptive parent should file a petition for adoption before the court in the U.S. The final U.S. adoption decree should be submitted to the ICAB within a month after its issuance.

### **What resources are available to assist families after the adoption?**

Many adoptive parents find it important to find support after the adoption. Take advantage of all the resources available to your family -- whether it's another adoptive family, a support group, an advocacy organization, or your religious or community services.

Here are some good places to start your support group search:

- **Adoption Services Support Groups for Adopting Persons**
- **North American Council on Adoptable Children**

**Note:** Inclusion of non-U.S. Government links does not imply endorsement of contents.

Source: [http://adopt.com/philippines/?comments\\_page=2#comments\\_anchor](http://adopt.com/philippines/?comments_page=2#comments_anchor)

## ADOPTION OF A CHILD FROM UKRAINE

### WHO CAN BE ADOPTED

In addition to U.S. immigration requirements, Ukraine has specific requirements that a child must meet in order to be eligible for adoption:

- **Relinquishment:** Ukrainian law does not contain a specific definition or concept of “relinquishment”.
- **Abandonment:** Section IV, Chapter 18, Articles 207-219 of the Ukrainian Family code provides detailed information regarding eligibility requirements for children to be eligible for intercountry adoption, including reference to abandonment.
- **Age of Adoptive Child:** Ukrainian law requires orphans to be at least five years old before they are eligible for intercountry adoption. The law exempts children with certain special needs, relative adoptions, and sibling adoptions.
- **Sibling Adoptions:** If all siblings are eligible for intercountry adoption, they normally cannot be separated by adoption. A separation by adoption can be approved in some cases, but this is usually a complicated and lengthy process.
- **Special Needs or Medical Conditions:** There are specific health problems that, when present, allow orphans under five years of age, as well as those who have not been on the central registry for one year, to be adopted. The current list of these health problems is available at: <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0352-12#n16> in Ukrainian; the English version is posted here: [http://photos.state.gov/libraries/ukraine/895/pdf/list\\_of\\_health\\_problems\\_eng\\_march2012.pdf](http://photos.state.gov/libraries/ukraine/895/pdf/list_of_health_problems_eng_march2012.pdf) (PDF, 183 KB). This list came into effect on March 2, 2012.
- **Waiting Period or Foster Care:** A child must be registered for at least one year with the central adoption authority before he or she becomes eligible for international adoption. It is possible to adopt a child from foster care, but it is a complicated and lengthy process.

**CAUTION:** Prospective adoptive parents should be aware that not all children in orphanages or children's homes are adoptable. In many countries, birth parents place their child(ren) temporarily in an orphanage or children's home due to financial or other hardship, with the intention of returning for the child when they are able to do so. In such cases, the birth parent(s) rarely would have relinquished their parental rights or consented to their children's adoption.

## **ADOPTION PROCEDURES**

### **Registering With the DFC**

Prospective adopting parents must first register with the Department for Family and Children (DFC) under the Ministry for Social Policy of Ukraine (see Documentary Requirements below). The DFC processes the documents submitted by adopting parents and enters them into their database within twenty working days. Once an application is approved, the prospective adopting parents will receive an invitation to visit the DFC. When adopting parents arrive in Ukraine, the DFC shows them information about orphans available for international adoption within the parents' specified age range. DFC then issues a letter of referral to allow the prospective parents to visit orphanages to meet and establish contact with a child. Along with the letter of referral, adopting parents will be given their documents, bound, numbered, sealed, and signed by an official in charge of the DFC, with a separate sheet specifying the number of pages and the prospective parents' registration file code.

DFC representatives will not meet with prospective adopting parents who arrive in Ukraine without an appointment or on a day other than when they are scheduled for an appointment. Please visit our [Documentary Requirements page](#) for the full list of required documents.

### **Meeting a Child**

The DFC, the central adoption authority in Ukraine, maintains the database of adoptable children available for both domestic and intercountry adoptions, and will help you meet and identify an eligible child to adopt. If you are eligible to adopt, and the DFC approves your application, you will receive an appointment (invitation) to visit the DFC. At this appointment DFC officials will show you information about orphans eligible for intercountry adoption, and

issue a letter of referral to allow you to visit an orphanage to meet and establish contact with a child, and check his or her medical records.

As of December 1, 2008 the DFC will allow only three appointments to each adoptive family to look at the children's files. If you have not chosen a child after the third appointment, your adoption dossier will be returned to you immediately. You will need to submit a notarized statement to request a second/third appointment with your dossier to the DFC and then they officially have ten business days to respond with the date of your second/third appointment. The DFC also limits the number of adoption referrals issued to each family to two referrals.

Each family must decide for itself whether or not it will be able to meet the needs of a particular child and provide a permanent family placement for the referred child.

#### **Pre-Adoption Medical Examination**

While meeting a child at the orphanage, you will be shown his/her medical history. If any doubts arise, or if you would like to get more details on the child's health condition, you may request an additional medical check-up of the child (including blood tests etc.). According to the law, every prospective parent has the right for additional pre-adoption medical examination of the child conducted by a private physician in the presence of the orphanage staff member.

The panel physicians of the Clinical Hospital of Ministry of Health of Ukraine in Kyiv have expressed their readiness to perform pre-adoption medical examinations. Please check with them directly on their services and fees.

Parents should make every effort to thoroughly understand the medical conditions diagnosed by local physicians. Please be sure the facilitator and/or interpreter you hire are competent to translate and explain complex medical diagnoses. Knowledge of the child's medical conditions is required for the I-604 interview at U.S. Embassy in Kyiv. Parents should verify that medical reports from the orphanage are thorough and reflect all information provided to the Ukrainian court for the hearing.

## **Court Hearing**

After prospective adopting parents identify a child for adoption, the file for the case is presented to a judge in the region where the child lives. The power to approve or deny an adoption remains solely with an individual judge. The judge's decision, in turn, is based on a review of various documents of each individual adoption case during the court hearing.

As a general rule, the judge's decision is announced and issued the day of the hearing. However, it does not take effect for ten days. During the ten-day period, the adoption can be appealed, which the Embassy understands is rare. If an application for appeal is submitted to the court within ten days after the court hearing, an additional period of 20 days is added for filing the actual appeal case with all the supporting documents with the court. The waivers of appeal period are rarely granted in cases when there is clear evidence that a delay in executing the court decision is not in the best interest of the child (for example, damage to health).

Once the decision takes effect, the new adopting parents are granted parental rights and legal responsibility for the child.

Adopting parents must attend the hearing. In cases where one of the parents cannot be present at the hearing (e.g. major surgery, disability etc.), a judge may permit one parent to provide a power of attorney for the other parent.

## **Obtaining the Post-Adoption Birth Certificate and a Travel Document**

The local RAGS office (Ukrainian abbreviation for Office of Vital Records) issues a post-adoption certificate of birth for an adopted child based on the final court decree and the original (pre-adoption) birth certificate. The pre-adoption birth certificate is not be returned to the adopting parents, so parents should make sure that they make a copy of the pre-adoption birth certificate before handing it over to the RAGS authorities.

Adopting parents should make sure that there are no discrepancies in the spelling of names of the parents and children in the court decree. If noticed, please ask the court clerk to correct them immediately. Failure to do so may cause delays in issuing the post-adoption birth certificate and in authenticating Ukrainian documents.

Once the post-adoption birth certificate is obtained, parents may apply for a passport for their child at the local VVIR (Ukrainian abbreviation for Office of Visas and Registration). Parents are required to present a written and notarized statement requesting that the travel document be issued. The post-adoption birth certificate, final court decree, and 4 passport-size photos of the child have to be submitted along with the statement. The new name of the adopted child in the travel document is spelled in English transliterated from Ukrainian, so it may look different from what appears on the parents' passport. There is no need for concern as long as the child's name in Ukrainian on the travel document is the same as in the court decree. However, parents can request that the correct English spelling be noted on the blank page in the passport.

At the time the passport is issued, a special, mandatory stamp is put in it showing that the child is departing Ukraine for permanent residence abroad. It is called a "PMZh-stamp" for the words "permanent residence" in Ukrainian. Although under Ukrainian law immigration authorities have up to ten working days to issue passports for adopted children, they are often issued earlier, especially if the child requires medical care.

## **APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING**

U.S. Embassy Kyiv requires advance appointments for all adoption cases. This is necessary due to the resource and technical requirements of the immigrant visa process for adoptions. **The two day appointment system** covers document intake on the first business day and a full visa interview on the next business day. The immigrant visa will be processed to conclusion on the second business day, barring unforeseen circumstances. Also, when planning your visit to the Embassy's Consular Section please note that **no adoption processing will take place on the last Friday of the month and that in all cases, appointments are required.** Additionally, the Consular Section is closed on Ukrainian and U.S. holidays. Please click on the enclosed link to see the holiday calendar: <http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>.

When you are ready to finalize your adoption and apply for an immigrant visa for your child, please e-mail us at [kyivadoptions@state.gov](mailto:kyivadoptions@state.gov) to schedule your two day appointment. We will schedule you for the next available time slot, and we will e-mail you back with the confirmed appointment date/time. We schedule appointments between 10:00 a.m. and noon only. Our

e-mail confirmation will contain a checklist of what documents you should bring as well as all forms you should complete. Please prepare all documents and complete all forms in advance, **but do not sign them** (as signatures must be made in a consular officer's presence). Document intake will occur on the first appointment day and the consular interview will take place on the next business day. (Note that if you are scheduled to submit your documents on a Friday, you will interview the next Monday, or the next business day if that Monday is a holiday. Also, no appointments will be scheduled on the last Friday of the month.) We generally are able to print and return visas by close of business on the second appointment day. However, we urge you not make final travel plans until you have a passport with a printed U.S. immigrant visa for your child in your possession. If we encounter a technical or other problem which prevents immediate visa issuance, and you have already made firm travel plans, you may be severely inconvenienced.

**Other Reminders:** If one parent needs to sign the I-600 and Acknowledgement of Health Problems forms and wishes to leave Ukraine before the final interview, this service will also be available by **appointment only**. Please email [kyivadoptions@state.gov](mailto:kyivadoptions@state.gov) and we will schedule you for 1:45 p.m. on our soonest available slot and send you a confirmation e-mail that will contain both I-600 and Acknowledgement of Health Problems forms to complete (but not sign) in advance.

**NOTE:** Access to the Consular Section will be strictly limited to families who have received e-mail confirmation from us for an appointment on a specific date and time. Please do not assume you have an appointment for a specific date or time, even if you requested it in your e-mail, *unless you receive confirmation* of that date and time from us. We will respond to you and provide you by email with the earliest available appointment date after we receive your request.

## **U.S. IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS**

A child adopted by a U.S. citizen must obtain an *immigrant* visa before he or she can enter the U.S.. The child must be an orphan, as defined by U.S. immigration regulations. There are two distinct categories of immigrant visas available to orphans adopted by U.S. citizens. The two categories are Immediate Relative-3 (IR-3) and IR-4. An IR-3 is issued when a child is adopted

under the laws of a foreign country. An IR-4 is issued when a child will be adopted in the United States (U.S. parents have custody of a child to take him or her to the United States to be adopted in the United States). An IR-4 is also issued when state pre-adoption requirements require that a child be adopted in that state or if both parents have not seen the child. The Department of State strongly advised U.S. citizens to verify that a particular child is an orphan according to U.S. immigration law and regulations before proceeding with an adoption. A consular officer will not be able to issue a visa to an adopted child if he or she does not meet the definition of legal orphan.

**An Orphan.** If an adopted child has not resided with and been in the legal custody of the adopting parent for at least two years (or if the child has not yet even been adopted), the child must qualify under section 101(b)(1)(F) of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act in order to apply for an immigrant visa. The main requirements of this section are as follows:

- The child must be under the age of 16\*\* at the time an I-600 Petition is filed with the DHS on his or her behalf.
- The child meets the U.S. immigration law definition of "orphan" either because:
  - (a) The child has no parents because of the death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation from or loss of both parents\*\*\* ; or
  - (b) The sole or surviving parent is incapable of providing proper care and has, in writing, irrevocably released the child for emigration and adoption.
- The adopting parents must have completed a full and final adoption of the child (for IR-3) or must have legal custody of the child to take the child to the United States for immigration and adoption (for IR-4).

\*\* A child adopted at age 16 or 17 will also qualify, provided he or she is a natural sibling of a child adopted, or who will be adopted, under the age of 16 by the same adopting parents.

\*\*\* Prospective adopting parents should note that the terms "disappearance of both parents," "abandonment by both parents," "desertion by both parents," "separation from both parents," "loss from both parents," "sole" and "surviving" parent all have specific legal meanings defined in section 204.3(b) of Title 8 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. Whether a child qualifies as an orphan under any of these categories is determined by reference to the U.S. regulatory definitions and not by any local (foreign) law designations that may be used to identify a child as orphaned.

The adopting parent(s) must meet the following DHS requirements in order to file the I-600 petition for the immigrant visa for an adopted child:

- If the adopting or prospective adopting parent is married, his or her spouse must also be a party to the adoption;
- If the adopting or prospective adopting parent is single, he or she must be at least 25 years of age;
- The adopting or prospective adopting parent must be a U.S. citizen.

### **NEW PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING AND TREATING TUBERCULOSES**

Effective April 1, 2013 the U.S. Embassy's panel physicians in Ukraine will start using the Center for Disease Control (CDC) 2007 Tuberculosis Technical Instructions, which are required procedures for screening for all immigrant visa applicants, including adopted children. These include requirements that may impact the pace at which some adoption cases can be concluded. Adoptive parents should take note of the following information in their adoption planning.

For most children under 2 years of age, there will be no change in the testing procedure because no Tuberculin Skin Test (TST) will be required for this age group. However, if the child shows signs of tuberculosis when examined by a panel physician, the child will require additional screening for tuberculosis that may take up to a minimum of 8 weeks to complete.

All children between 2-14 years of age require a new Tuberculin Skin Test according to CDC specifications. The results of TST reaction will be measured in 48-72 hours. Applicants 2-14 years of age with a documented previous history of tuberculosis disease should have a chest X-Ray, even if their TST <10 mm.

If the TST reaction is more than 10 mm the child will need a chest X-Ray to check for abnormalities. The results of chest X-Ray readings are available the same day. All children found to have abnormal chest X-Rays will require a new screening procedure for tuberculosis –

sputum smears and cultures. Sputum smear results are normally available within three days of last specimen collection. Sputum cultures require a minimum of 8 weeks to complete. Applicants 10 years of age or younger who require sputum cultures may travel to the United States immediately after sputum smear analysis and while culture results are pending.

If the panel physician receives positive sputum test results from the laboratory, the case will require Drug Susceptibility Testing (DST). DST will impose additional delay of 45 to 60 days in the processing of such cases. After DST is complete the children who have active tuberculosis will be required to submit to six months of Directly Observed Therapy (DOT).

Adoptive parents should be aware of these possible delays and consider them when planning.

The CDC is implementing these 2007 TB Technical Instructions worldwide in order to better identify and treat immigrant visa applicants with active tuberculosis. The requirements will be in effect in all countries effective October 1, 2013. United States immigration law requires the medical examination for immigration purposes to be conducted only by approved panel physicians, prior to the issuance of an immigrant visa. It is the CDC's responsibility to protect U.S. Citizens from infectious diseases and the U.S. Embassy is required to follow all CDC guidelines. These requirements will greatly improve the Embassy's ability to identify visa applicants with active TB, and to ensure they receive the most effective treatment for their condition before they are granted visas. Panel physicians who conduct medical examinations are required to verify that immigrant visa applicants have met all of medical evaluation requirements.

## **FINGERPRINTS**

An I-600 petition can be approved only if the petitioners (and all adult members of their household) have unexpired FBI fingerprint clearances. Though fingerprint are taken and checked by the FBI at the time prospective adopting parents file an I-600A, they are valid only for 15 months and must be re-done if the 15 months have expired. The validity period for the I-600A is 18 months and is not tied to the fingerprint checks. Thus, it is possible for adopting parents to have a valid I-600A and expired fingerprint checks at the same time. Prospective

adopting parents should verify that their fingerprint check are current and will not expire before traveling to Ukraine to adopt. If the fingerprints are about to expire soon, prospective adopting parents should contact their USCIS office and have their fingerprints retaken. If your fingerprints are not valid when you come to file the I-600 petition in Kyiv, the Embassy staff will have to take them and send them to the FBI for the background check, which will delay an adopting family's return to the United States by several days.

### **The Orphan Investigation**

One part of the petition process which CIS cannot complete in advance is the "orphan investigation." **An orphan investigation Form I-604 Report on Overseas Orphan Investigation is required in all orphan adoption cases** - even if an I-600 has already been approved - and serves to verify that the child is an orphan as defined by U.S. immigration law. A consular officer at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine conducts this investigation and completes this questionnaire at the time of the immigrant visa interview. The consular officer reviews the Ukrainian documentation and adopting parents' knowledge of the circumstances of the adoption and health of the child.

### **AGE AND CIVIL STATUS REQUIREMENTS**

**Age Requirements:** Under a Ukrainian law which came into effect on October 4, 2011 prospective adoptive parents must be at least 21 years old, and at least 15 years older than the adopted child (**the 45-year maximum age difference requirement has been eliminated**). In case of adoption of an 18-year old child, the minimum age difference between the adopted child and the adopting parent must be at least 18 years. If only one of the adoptive parents complies with these age requirements, the adoption can be completed in the eligible parent's name only (classified as IR4 visa type). If the child is being adopted by a relative, the age difference is not considered.

**Marriage Requirements:** Foreign citizens must be married in order to be eligible to adopt from Ukraine.

**Residential Requirements:** There are no residency requirements to adopt in Ukraine.

**Time frame:** It takes anywhere between three to twelve months after adopting parents submit their dossier to the Department for Family and Children until the appointment date. Parents can also expect a three to four week wait between the initial filing of the adoption in the local

court and issuance of the final adoption decree (see also [ADOPTION PROCEDURES/Court Hearing](#)).

**Adoption Agencies And Attorneys:** Since the current Ukrainian law does not allow adoption intermediaries, no private interpreters/facilitators will be allowed to interpret during the **meetings of prospecting parents with the DFC**. You can still use the private interpreters/facilitators for other stages of the adoption process.

Prospective adopting parents can protect themselves by openly discussing all fees and expenses in great detail before hiring a facilitator or interpreter. Discuss recommendations with adoption agencies and with other families who hired these individuals in the past. Prospective adopting parents are advised to fully research any adoption agency or facilitator they plan to use for adoption services. For U.S.- based agencies, it is suggested that prospective adopting parents contact the Better Business Bureau and licensing office of the Department of Health and Family Services in the state where the agency is located. The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv has a list of translators known to work in Ukraine. These are general translation service providers and do not necessarily have experience with adoptions. Neither the U.S. Embassy nor the Department of State can vouch for the efficacy or professionalism of any agent, facilitator, or interpreter.

The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv has received reports of questionable practices during the adoption process by adopting parents. Please see Important Notice Regarding Adoption Agents and Facilitators at the Web site for the Bureau of Consular Affairs at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

## **ADOPTION AUTHORITY**

**Department for Family and Children (DFC) under the Ministry for Social Policy of Ukraine**

**14 Desyatynna Street**

**Kyiv, Ukraine 01025**

**Tel/Fax # (380)(44) 278-4045**

**[http://www.mlsp.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/category?cat\\_id=138169](http://www.mlsp.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/category?cat_id=138169)**

The DFC, a part of the Ministry of Social Policy, is the only legal Ukrainian authority for adoptions. It maintains the database of adoptable children available for both domestic and international adoptions. The DFC is involved in the international adoption process from the

moment prospective parents apply for registration until an adoption hearing is held in court. The Department for Family and Children has a policy of direct contact with prospective adopting parents. Translators or interpreters are available on the staff of the DFC.

**SOURCE:** <http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/adoption.html>