

# Instructions for I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition

## Instructions

Please read these instructions carefully to properly complete this form. If you need more space to complete an answer, use a separate sheet(s) of paper. Write your name and Alien Registration Number (A #), 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?

This form is used by a U.S. citizen who plans to adopt a foreign-born orphan but does not have a specific child in mind. "Advance Processing" enables USCIS to first adjudicate the application that relates to the qualifications of the applicant(s) as a 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 he or she is located until the processing is completed.

**NOTE:** This Form I-600A application 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 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. 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 at the time of adoption and the filing of an orphan petition on behalf of a child.

#### 2. Eligibility for 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 will 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 orphan and who has, in writing, irrevocably released the orphan for emigration and adoption.

A petition to classify an alien as an orphan (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.

The petition must be filed before the child's 16th birthday.

##### B. Adoption abroad.

If the orphan 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. The adoption decree must show that a married prospective adoptive parent and spouse adopted the child jointly or that an unmarried prospective parent was at least 25 years of age at the time of the adoption and filing of Form I-600.

##### C. Proxy adoption abroad.

If both the applicant and spouse or the unmarried applicant did not personally see and observe the child prior to or during the adoption proceedings abroad the applicant (and spouse, if married) must submit a statement indicating the applicant's (and, if married the spouse's) willingness and intent to readopt the child in the United States. If requested, the applicant must submit a statement by an official of the state in which the child will reside that readoption is permissible in that State. In addition, evidence must be submitted to show compliance with the preadoption requirements, if any, of that State.

##### D. Preadoption requirements.

If the orphan 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 applicant and spouse jointly or by the unmarried prospective applicant, and that the preadoption requirements, if any, of the State of the orphan's proposed residence have been met.

## General Instructions.

### Step 1. Fill Out the 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 two 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 and 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 ten years, may also be submitted as proof of U.S. citizenship.

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 the by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS);
2. Form FS-240, Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States, issued by an American embassy;
3. An unexpired U.S. passport initially issued for ten years; or
4. An original statement from a U.S. consular officer verifying the applicant's U.S. citizenship with a valid passport.

**NOTE:** Proof of the lawful immigration status of the applicant's spouse, if applicable, must be submitted. If the spouse is not a U.S. citizen, proof of her or his 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 the 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 must, before it is submitted to USCIS, be reviewed and favorably recommended by a public adoption agency in any State in the United States or by a private agency licensed or otherwise authorized in any State 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 and/or violence.
  - D. Previous rejection for adoption or prior unfavorable home study.
  - 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.
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 of moral turpitude or a drug-related offense does not necessarily mean that the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be found not qualified to adopt an orphan. However, failure to disclose such information may result in denial of this application and/or any subsequent petition for an orphan.

**Translations.** Any document containing foreign language submitted to the Service 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 should send the completed application to the USCIS office having jurisdiction over his or her place of residence. A prospective adoptive parent residing outside the United States should consult the nearest American consulate for the overseas or stateside USCIS office designated to act on the application.

### What Is the Filing Fee?

The filing fee for a Form I-600A is **\$670.00**.

In addition to the fee for the application, there is a **\$80.00** biometric services fee for fingerprinting every adult person living in the household in the United States where the child will reside.

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For example, if an application is filed by a married couple residing in the United States with one additional adult member in their household, the total fees that must be submitted would be **\$910.00** (**\$670.00** for the petition and **\$240.00** for the biometric services fees for fingerprinting the three adults).

USCIS will allow for a one time re-fingerprinting at no-charge to the prospective adoptive parents and household members, who are at least 18 years of age upon expiration of the fingerprint validity period of 15 months. Also, if the prospective adoptive parents have not yet filed a Form I-600, and make a written to extend the approval period of a Form I-600A, it is not necessary for them to pay the biometrics fee again to be fingerprinted in connection with the extension request.

**Biometric services.** As part of the USCIS biometric 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 member 18 years of age or older, of the prospective adoptive parent(s)' household. **NOTE:** Submit a copy of the birth certificate of each qualifying household member over 18.

If necessary, USCIS may also take each person's photograph and signature as part of the biometric services.

**Petitioners residing in the United States.** After filing this petition, USCIS will notify each person in writing of the time and location where they must go to be fingerprinted. Failure to appear to be fingerprinted or for other biometric services may result in denial of this application.

**Petitioners residing abroad.** Completed fingerprint cards (Forms FD-258) must be submitted with this application. Do not bend, fold or crease the completed fingerprint cards. The fingerprint cards must be prepared by a U.S. embassy or consulate, USCIS office or U.S. military installation.

**NOTE:** If the prospective adoptive parent(s) and any other adult members of the household are residing abroad at the time of filing, they are exempt from paying the biometric services fee for fingerprinting. However, they may have to pay fingerprinting fees charged by the U.S. Department of State or military installation.

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

Use the following guidelines when you prepare your check or money order for the Form I-600A and the biometric service 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 and are filing your petition there, make it payable to **Treasurer, Guam**.
  - B. If you live in the U.S. Virgin Islands and are filing your petition there, make it payable to **Commissioner of Finance of the Virgin Islands**.

**NOTE:** Please 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 biometric fees on this form are current as the the edition date appearing in the lower right corner of this page. However, because USCIS fees change periodically, you can verify if the fees are correct by following one of the steps below:

1. Visit our website at **www.uscis.gov**, select "Immigration Forms" 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 biometric service fee for USCIS to take your fingerprints, photograph or signature, you can use the same procedure to obtain the correct biometric fee.

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## Address Changes.

If you change your address and you have an application or petition pending with USCIS, you may change your address on-line at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov), click on "Change your address with USCIS" and follow the prompts or by completing and mailing Form AR-11, Alien's Change of Address Card, to:

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

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

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

## Processing Information.

### What Should You Do After Locating and/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 the Form I-600A application.

If approved in the home study for more than one orphan, the prospective adoptive parent(s) may file a petition for each of the additional children to the maximum number approved. If the orphans are siblings, no additional filing fee is required. However, if the orphans are not siblings, an additional filing fee is required for each orphan beyond the first orphan.

A fee of **\$670.00** must be submitted for filing this petition. However, a fee is not required for this petition if you filed an advance processing application (Form I-600A) within the previous 18 months and it was approved or is still pending.

**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 where provided previously with Form I-600A.

Generally, Form I-600 should be submitted at the USCIS office where the advance processing application, Form I-600A, was filed. Prospective adoptive parent(s) going abroad to adopt or locate a child may file Form I-600 with either the USCIS office or American consulate or embassy having jurisdiction over the place where the child is residing or will be located, unless the case is being retained at the USCIS office stateside.

**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 2** of the form. Failure to do so will result in the rejection of the Form I-600A.

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

**Initial processing.** Once a 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 a 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 a Form I-600 based on that approval, you may make **one** request, without fee, to have USCIS extend the approval period for your Form I-600A. You must submit a written request to the USCIS office that adjudicated the initial I-600A. The request must be received no earlier than 90 days prior to the expiration of the Form I-600A approval, but before the 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 must file it no later than December 31.

The written request must explicitly request a one-time, no-charge extension to the current 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/update must address each issue under 204.3(e) and indicate whether anything has changed on any item. The home study must also address any changes to the I-600A answers and must say whether approval is still recommended.

**Requesting a change of country.** If you had USCIS send the approval notice for your Form I-600A to the Department of State office in 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 Department of State office in the new country. You must submit a written request to the USCIS office that adjudicated the initial I-600A. 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 received **one** free change of country, then you must submit a properly completed Form I-824, Application for Action on Approved Petitioner or Application, with the fee specified in 8 CFR 103.7(b), to obtain any additional change of country

### 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 website 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 website. 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.

### Penalties.

If you knowingly and willfully falsify or conceal a material fact or submit a false document with this Form I-600A, we will deny the 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, completing and submitting the form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Regulatory Management Division, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., 3rd Floor, Suite 3008, Washington, DC 20529. OMB No. 1615-0028. **Do not mail your application to this address.**

