

Adoption Preparation Overview

Welcome to the adoption process!!! You have started on a very worthwhile journey. The following is a summary of the process leading up to assignment.

THE DOSSIER

Every adoption will require documentation. The two most important documents are the home study and the letter from immigration approving your advance processing for a visa for the adoptive child. **No assignment can be made until the home study is complete and you have approval from immigration.**

The home study can take from thirty to ninety days to complete. The home study is the assessment made by a licensed child placing agency or licensed social worker that approves you as adoptive parents. The social worker will request certain documents from you. The sooner you provide the requested documents, the sooner your home study can be completed. These documents are separate and apart from what we will need in this office for the adoption.

We advise all of our clients to immediately file the application for advance processing of an orphan petition (I-600A) with the filing fee, copies of birth certificates, marriage license and divorce decree or death certificate (if applicable). If there are prior arrests or convictions, **you MUST obtain certified copies of the disposition of the arrest or conviction.** Once your application is filed, you will receive a notice from immigration informing you of the date and time to appear for electronic fingerprinting. Citizenship and Immigration Services will no longer accept prints taken by local police departments. Some offices will not issue fingerprint appointments until the home study is filed.

The following is the list of documents needed for the adoption in Guatemala. Our office will take care of authenticating and legalizing the documents with the Guatemalan Consulate. Authentication by the Secretary of State in some states is required before the documents can be sent to the Guatemalan Consulate. Documents like a birth certificate or marriage license that come from a government office need not go to the Secretary Of State. Those documents can be sent to the Guatemalan Consulate directly. Any document signed by a notary public must first be sent to the local Secretary of State.

1. Home Study
2. Certified copies of Birth Certificates
3. Certified copy of Marriage License
4. Notarized Police Record Checks, state and local

5. Notarized Doctor's letter stating you are in good physical and mental health, free from any communicable diseases and HIV negative
6. Affidavit of two letters of reference
7. Letter of Employment
8. Name Affidavit (this lists all names you have ever gone by)
9. Power of Attorney
10. G-28 form
11. Photographs of your home, yourselves and extended friends and family

ASSIGNMENT

A common question is **"When will we get an assignment?"** Most of our families receive assignments shortly after the completion of the dossier. However, we cannot control how long this will take. In the case of Guatemala, the adoptions are direct placement; therefore, assignments are made quickly.

You may be notified that a child may be available. This is done only to see if there is any interest in the child. It can take from one week to several weeks to obtain specific information and documentation on the child.

Assignments are usually offered after we have received medical details and a picture of the child. We strive to get the most reliable medical information, but no one can guarantee with one hundred percent certainty the accurateness of the information.

You will have 48 hours to decide on the assignment. It is your right to accept or refuse an assignment. You are not penalized or placed at the bottom of the list. You will be presented with the next available assignment.

THE ADOPTION PROCESS

The second most important question is **"When will our baby come home?"** The adoption process in the foreign country can take three to six months. To learn what steps take place in the process, please see the guide in this packet labeled **Guatemalan Adoption Process.**