

## **DOCUMENT CHECKLIST: International Adoption and the INS**

If you are embarking on an international adoption, you have undoubtedly started the document gathering and photocopying process that will consume much of your time over the next weeks. In addition to the completion of paperwork to meet state requirements and the dossier preparation to satisfy the requirements in the child's home country, the INS has its own set of documentation requirements that must be met before your child can enter the United States.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service requires that prospective adoptive parents of foreign-born children file forms I-600 and I-600A. Form I-600 is a Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative, and I-600A is an Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition. Advance processing is a means by which part of the Orphan Petition may be completed and processed even before you receive a referral, so that once you have identified a child for adoption there will be fewer administrative delays on the part of the INS.

Both the I-600 and I-600A forms are available on the INS's web site, [www.ins.usdoj.gov](http://www.ins.usdoj.gov). When you complete the forms and submit them to the INS, you will also need to attach the following documents. For more specific information, consult an adoption or immigration attorney.

### **FORM I-600A**

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Proof of U.S. citizenship*** in the form of one of the following:

- An unexpired U.S. passport valid for five years; or
- If you were born in the United States,
  - √ Your birth certificate;
  - √ Your baptismal certificate under seal of the church, showing place of birth (baptism must have occurred within two months of birth); or
  - √ Affidavits of two U.S. citizens who have knowledge of your birth in the United States; or

If you were born outside the United States and became a citizen through naturalization or through the citizenship of a parent or “husband,” and have not been issued a certificate of citizenship in your own name,

√ Evidence of the citizenship and marriage of the parent or husband and of the termination of any prior marriages; and

√ If you are claiming citizenship through a parent, your birth certificate and a statement showing the date, place, and means of all of your arrivals and departures into and out of the United States; and

√ If your naturalization occurred within ninety days of the filing of the I-600A or I-600, the naturalization certificate.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Proof of marriage and marriage terminations***, including

\_\_\_\_\_ A certificate of marriage, and

\_\_\_\_\_ Proof of termination of any previous marriages of both spouses (divorce decrees).

Note: A divorce decree is required for anyone previously married, even if not currently married.

\_\_\_\_\_ A ***home study*** with a statement or attachment recommending or approving the adoption, signed by an official of your state or licensed adoption agency.

The home study must include:

√ A statement of the adoptive parents’ financial ability to raise and educate the child;

√ A detailed description of your home; and

√ An evaluation of your physical, mental, and moral capabilities with respect to raising and educating the child.

The statement from an adoption agency must include

√ That it is licensed,

√ The state in which it is licensed,

√ The license number, and

√ The period for which the license is valid.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Fingerprints* for each adult person in the household.

**FORM I-600**

In addition to the documents listed above, the prospective adoptive parent(s) must submit:

\_\_\_\_\_ Proof of the orphan's age (birth certificate or best available evidence).

\_\_\_\_\_ Death certificate(s) of the child's birth parent(s), if applicable.

\_\_\_\_\_ If the child has one birth parent, evidence that the parent is incapable of caring for the child and has irrevocably released the child for emigration and adoption, in writing.

\_\_\_\_\_ If the child has been placed in an orphanage by the birth parent(s), evidence that the child has been unconditionally abandoned.

\_\_\_\_\_ A certified copy of the adoption decree.

\_\_\_\_\_ A certified translation of the adoption decree.

\_\_\_\_\_ Evidence that the pre-adoptive requirements of the state in the United States in which the child will live have been met.