



USCIS Update

Feb. 24, 2009

USCIS TO ADJUDICATE PETITIONS FILED WITHIN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO CLASSIFY ORPHANS AS IMMEDIATE RELATIVES

WASHINGTON — U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today announced that beginning March 30, 2009, it will assume responsibility from the Department of State for adjudicating any [Form I-600](#), *Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative*, filed within the Russian Federation.

While this will not affect the documentary evidence requirements for orphan immigrant visa cases, some document intake procedures for filing will change.

USCIS is requesting that prospective adoptive parents schedule an appointment to file Form I-600 with the Moscow USCIS field office once they know on which date they will have all the documents necessary to file their Form I-600 with USCIS Moscow. Appointments for filing a Form I-600 with the Moscow USCIS field office will be available for scheduling via the internet at: www.infopass.uscis.gov. Appointments will be available no earlier than two weeks (14 calendar days) before the anticipated filing date.

USCIS will process each Form I-600 as expeditiously as possible and expects to be able to meet the current processing times for most cases. However, adoptive parents are urged to make their travel arrangements to Russia as flexible as possible in the event an issue arises that may take additional time to resolve.

In preparation for this change and to minimize the possibility of any delay while in Russia, USCIS recommends the following for prospective adoptive parents and adoption service providers:

Before traveling to Moscow to file a Form I-600 petition, prospective adoptive parents should:

- Ensure that fingerprint record clearances are valid and will remain valid throughout the processing of the Form I-600 in Moscow, Russia.
- Ensure that the Form I-600A, *Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition*, approval remains valid until the Form I-600 is filed at Moscow. A one time no fee extension of approval of Form I-600A may be obtained prior to traveling. An extension request must be submitted before the expiration of the original period of validity of Form I-600A.
- Obtain an amended home study and an amended notice of approval of Form I-600A if there has been a significant change to the household (e.g., a change of residence, new adult household member, new child to the home, etc.) after the home study was last submitted to USCIS with Form I-600A.

- Obtain an amended home study and an amended notice of approval of Form I-600A in the event that the prospective adoptive parent(s) have accepted a placement to adopt a child whose medical condition is more serious than the original recommendation in the home study.
- Note: If an amended notice of Form I-600A approval is necessary, the request must be made to the USCIS office that initially approved the prospective adoptive parent's Form I-600A and must include an amended home study.

Prospective adoptive parents should submit written authorization to USCIS with the filing of their Form I-600 if the prospective adoptive parents want to permit USCIS to release information about their case to either their U.S. or Russian adoption service provider, if such has not been previously submitted. The Privacy Act and DHS regulations limit the information that may be provided to an adoption service provider on a particular case without written permission from the prospective adoptive parents.

For additional information on intercountry adoptions, visit www.uscis.gov or <http://adoption.state.gov>.

Please see the [Questions and Answers](#) about adoptions from the Russian Federation.

– USCIS –



Questions and Answers

Feb. 24, 2009

USCIS to Adjudicate Petitions Filed Within the Russian Federation to Classify Orphans as Immediate Relatives

Introduction

Beginning on March 30, 2009, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will assume responsibility from the Department of State for adjudicating any [Form I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative](#), filed within the Russian Federation.

In preparation for this change and to minimize the possibility of any delay while in Russia, USCIS recommends prospective adoptive parents and adoption service providers review the following list of questions and answers.

Questions and Answers

Q. Where do I file Form I-600, *Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative*, after adopting an orphan in Russia?

A. You must file your Form I-600 with the USCIS Moscow Field Office located at the United States (U.S.) Embassy in Moscow at Novinsky Bulvar 19/23. The nearest subway stations are "Barrikadnaya" and "Krasnopresnenskaya." Parking is not readily available.

Q. How can I contact the USCIS Moscow Field Office?

A. The USCIS Moscow Field Office can be reached by:

- **Email:** Please send adoption-related inquiries to moscow.adoptions@dhs.gov. All other inquires should be sent to moscow.dhs@dhs.gov.
- **Phone:** For general inquiries in Russian or English, please call (7-495) 728-5550 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you are calling from the United States, please dial 011 first.
- **Fax:** Please send faxes to (7-495) 728-5083.
- **Walk-in:** The USCIS Moscow Field Office is open for public inquiries only Monday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Note: The USCIS Moscow Field Office is closed on American and Russian holidays.

Q. What documents must I submit with my Form I-600?

A. When you file Form I-600 in Russia, you will be submitting your documents at one window for two different departments: USCIS and the U.S. Department of State Consular Section. USCIS has authority for adjudicating the I-600 petition, and the Consular Section has authority for issuing the child's immigrant visa after petition has been approved.

You should bring all of the documents listed below, including those required by the U.S. Department of State, to your appointment and be prepared to submit a photocopy (unless otherwise noted). All foreign language documents must be accompanied by a certified English translation. USCIS may at any time require that you submit the original document for review. You do not need to have the photocopies notarized.

1. Form I-600 (Pages: 1, 2) completed, personally signed and dated by the adoptive parent or both parents if married (a power of attorney does not authorize one spouse to sign on behalf of the other spouse for USCIS purposes).
2. The child's Russian passport, with a photocopy of the biographical page.
3. The child's birth certificate (i.e., the one with the birth parents listed) or other evidence of identity and age if a birth certificate is not available.
4. The child's amended birth certificate (i.e., the one which indicates the names of the U.S. citizen adoptive parents).
5. The adoption certificate.
6. The adoption decree issued by the local court.
7. Information regarding the resolution of the birth parents' rights: e.g., death certificates; certificates confirming that the listed parents were not legally registered; letters of relinquishment; court decrees removing parental rights, etc.
8. A letter from the Ministry of Education indicating that the child has spent the required amount of time listed on the Federal Data Bank and has been released for adoption by foreigners.
9. A letter from each orphanage or hospital in which the child has resided. This letter should include the dates of the child's stay in the institution, any information as to whether the child was visited, and a statement of no objection to the adoption by the orphanage.

In addition to the documents listed above, the Department of State Consular Section requires certain documents to process the child's immigrant visa. Please see their Web site <http://moscow.usembassy.gov> for more information and any updates. As noted above, you should submit these documents when you are filing the I-600 petition with USCIS:

1. Passport(s) of adoptive parent(s), with a photocopy of the information page of each passport.
2. The medical form in a sealed envelope from a Panel Physician. See the "Immigrant Visa" section on <http://moscow.usembassy.gov> for a list of eligible physicians and their contact information.
3. Form DS-230 (Pages: 1, 2, 3, 4) - Application for Immigrant Visa. This form should be completed from the perspective of the adopted child. Please do not sign this form until asked to do so by a Consular Officer.
4. Immunization Affidavit.
5. Form I-864, Affidavit of Support, and last 3 years of 1040 tax returns (only required if one of the parents was not presented at the court hearing or if parents reside outside the U.S.). If you are adopting more than one child, you must submit a separate I-864 for each child.
6. Two color photos of the child (5 cm by 5 cm).

Q. Do I need an appointment to file the Form I-600? If so, when are appointments scheduled?

A. Yes, you will need an appointment to file the Form I-600 with the USCIS Moscow Field Office. You should make an appointment for a day when you will have all of the supporting documents to submit with your Form I-600. The time necessary to obtain all required Russian documents varies from case to case, and may range from several days to about two weeks after the final adoption court hearing. Before you make an appointment to file, you should contact your adoption service provider for information about your final court hearing and when you will have all of the required documents to file Form I-600.

Q. How do I schedule an appointment to file my Form I-600?

A. To schedule an appointment to file Form I-600, go to the USCIS "INFOPASS" website at: www.infopass.uscis.gov and click "Make your appointment with INFOPASS." Choose "Russian

