

Adopting From Ukraine

As with all of our adoption programs, you must first participate in a general information meeting prior to contracting with the agency. Once this meeting has taken place, and you have signed the contracts and paid the initial agency fees, we immediately begin working on your home study, foreign dossier, and USCIS approval. Our agency strives to offer the fullest level of support and services possible - even sending for apostilles and document authentications on your behalf in order to complete your adoption dossier in the quickest manner possible. While there are many aspects outside of our control with adoption and foreign adoptions in particular, we have found during our years of experience that our hard work on things we can control - paperwork, preparing and authenticating dossiers, etc. - usually quickens your overall adoption process. After your home study has been completed and approved and you have submitted for USCIS approval, we begin work on your dossier.

Once your dossier has been completed, we will forward it to our foreign coordinator who will translate the dossier and then submit it to the DAP, the central adoption authority in Ukraine. You may be able to travel 3-5 months after completing your dossier. Because of Ukrainian law, pre-travel videos and photographs of children are *not* available. The DAP, maintains the database of adoptable children available for intercountry adoptions. If you are eligible to adopt, and the DAP approves your application, you will receive an appointment (invitation) to visit the DAP. At this appointment DAP 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. The presence of both parents is required for the appearance in the adoption center and the court hearing. The DAP 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.

Following the visit to the DAP once you have identified a child that you believe is a good potential match for your family, you will travel with an escort/translator to the town where the child is located. You will make a decision about adopting a specific child only after seeing the child in person and reviewing medical and developmental information.

During this stage, you can choose to hire a doctor to visit the orphanage with you to assist in determining the child's health and development, and you can also correspond with doctors in the U.S. via phone, fax, and e-mail. After choosing a child, it takes 2-3 weeks to appear in court for a hearing. After court the judge's decision will not take effect for 10 days. During the 10 days the adoption can be appealed. If an appeal application is submitted, an additional 20-day period is granted for the appellant to file his/her complete appeal. This additional time can be shortened or waived by the court. After court the parents will decide if they want to stay to complete the adoption process, in which case they will have one long trip of up to 6 weeks. They may also choose to both return to the US and one or both of them return in 1-2 weeks to complete the final paperwork for the US Embassy to receive the child's visa. This second trip could take about a week.

Upon return back to the U.S., adoptive parents must register their child with the Ukrainian Consulate in the U.S. within 30 days. Families must submit post-placement reports to the Ukrainian Consulate annually for the first three years and then every third year until the child is 18 years old. For the first six months following placement, Hope International will provide post-placement supervision as required by the State of Texas. At the completion of the initial six-month post-placement period, you will be ready to proceed with your registration of foreign decree or re-adoption.



Qualifications for Adopting from Ukraine

- 1) Ukrainian law now specifies that there may be no more than 45 years between the age of the parents and the child and that an adoptive parent must be at least 21.
- 2) Only married couples can adopt.
- 3) There are no restrictions regarding the number of children already in the family's home or the length of a couple's marriage.
- 4) To be eligible for international adoption in Ukraine, and to be matched with a child with no known medical, physical, or mental conditions: a child must be at least 5 years of age or have a sibling over 5 years old. Children under age five with special needs may be considered for international adoption.
- 5) Families may adopt more than one child at a time as long as they receive home study and USCIS approval to do so.