
BANGLADESH

International Adoption Program

PROGRAM INFORMATION

HOPE INTERNATIONAL

ADOPTING FROM BANGLADESH

Qualifications for Adopting from Bangladesh

U.S. Requirements:

- 1) You must be a U.S. citizen. If you are married, your spouse must also be either a U.S. citizen or have legal status in the United States.
- 2) If you are unmarried, you must be at least 25 years old.
- 3) You cannot currently be on probation or parole or have any pending criminal proceedings.
- 4) Department of State now requires children immigrating to the U.S. to complete the COVID vaccine if it is available for their age.

Texas Requirements:

- 1) You cannot have a felony conviction against a person.
- 2) You cannot have a child abuse referral with a finding of “sustained or unable to determine.”

Bangladesh Requirements:

- 1) Citizenship: At least one of the prospective guardians must provide proof of Bangladeshi citizenship, have a National ID card, and be willing to apply for a Dual Citizenship Certificate.
- 2) Age: Prospective Adoptive Parents must be at least 18 years old; Bangladeshi law does not specify a maximum age for adopting parents.
- 3) Marital Status: Both married and single persons may adopt. Bangladesh does not recognize same-sex marriage. Some orphanages will not place a child in a family where one of the parents has been divorced.
- 4) Religions: children can only be placed with adoptive parents of the same religion. Couples with different religions may have difficulty being approved.
- 5) Other children in the home: preference is for there to be no other children in the home; exceptions can be made. Bangladesh prioritizes placement with infertile couples
- 6) Income: Bangladesh law does not establish a minimum income requirement for guardians. However, a prospective guardian must prove to the Family Court judge that he/she is able to feed, shelter, and educate the child.
- 7) Substance use and criminal history: Substance use or criminal history by a prospective guardian could be an issue for Bangladesh and must be discussed on a case-by-case basis
- 8) Guardianship: Bangladeshi law does not allow for final adoptions of Bangladeshi children in Bangladesh. Prospective adoptive parents considering adopting a Bangladeshi child will obtain guardianship from a Bangladeshi court and subsequently

be required to finalize the adoption of the child in the United States according to the laws of their state of residence, which vary greatly. This will also necessitate that the family must then apply for the child's Certificate of Citizenship, which is not issued automatically in IR4 visa cases.

- 9) Families may adopt more than one child at a time as long as they receive home study and USCIS approval to do so. Note that the general preference is to place one child at a time, except for in the case of siblings.

IN COUNTRY PROVIDER: Although the US requires adoptive families to work through a US Hague accredited agency, Bangladesh does not work with US adoption agencies. The local authorities consider the process to be a domestic placement with Bangladesh citizens. The Guardianship process within Bangladesh is an independent process initiated directly by the Bangladeshi citizen. Hope International has agreements with local licensed attorneys and orphanages in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

TIMEFRAME: Depending on many different factors, including the number of eligible children at the time of your availability to travel to Bangladesh, the timeframe to prepare your initial paperwork and be matched with a child can take 6-12 months. Then it can take an additional 4-6 months to obtain the child's visa for entry into the United States.

THE CHILDREN: Children available for adoption in Bangladesh are often orphaned due to the stigma of being an unwed mother, poverty, as well from disease and natural disasters. The children available for intercountry adoption from Bangladesh are 1 month-15 years old. There are also sibling groups and children with special needs living in government orphanages in need of an adoptive family.

PROCESS of Adopting from Bangladesh

As with all of Hope's adoption programs, you must first participate in a general information meeting/phone call prior to contracting with the agency. Once this meeting has taken place and you decide to work with Hope International, you will submit an application. Next the Executive Director will prepare your contracting documents. Once you have reviewed and signed the contracts and paid the initial agency and service fees, Hope immediately begins working on your home study and USCIS approval. Hope strives to offer the fullest level of support and services possible in order to complete your adoption in the quickest manner possible. While there are many aspects outside of Hope's control with adoption and foreign adoptions in particular, Hope has found during years of experience that hard work on things that can be controlled – paperwork, preparing and reviewing documents, etc. – usually quickens your overall adoption process.

1. **Completion of an International Home Study** – For families that live in Texas, Hope International will conduct the home study. If you live outside of Texas, Hope will assist you to find an agency to conduct your home study. Hope International will supervise this agency, and the agency must meet the standards for a supervised provider and use employees to conduct

the home study. Your final USCIS approval is contingent upon the recommendation for approval given by your home study agency. Your completed home study is valid for 12 months; an update will be necessary annually until a child is placed in your home and is also required if your living circumstances change prior to your adoption, such as change in health or residence. You are also required to obtain a medical, complete at least ten hours of pre-adoptive training, and to have both criminal and child abuse background checks. Hope will assist you with referrals for this training and in obtaining the clearances.

2. Apply to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – USCIS must pre-approve you as potential adoptive parents regarding an international adoption. Hope International will assist you by reviewing and submitting an I600A application to USCIS with your completed home study. USCIS must approve your ability to provide proper parental care for a child. Your I-600a approval and USCIS fingerprints will be valid for 15 months. Once you submit the I-600 petition, your fingerprints must be valid at the time of the child's visa appointment.

3. Bangladesh Process – Once you have completed the home study and received approval of your I600a application from USCIS, you are ready to submit an application to an orphanage. You must work with a governmental orphanage or an NGO orphanage that Hope has a foreign supervised provider agreement with.

4. Child Referral – During the home study process you will clarify the type of child you feel most equipped to parent. It is important to be honest with identifying the child you would like to adopt. It is helpful to take an inventory of your child preferences and to prioritize the most important characteristics (i.e. - sex, age, health status, etc.) Please be advised that if your list of criteria is too restrictive, you may significantly narrow your referral options.

You will visit the orphanage in person and be shown a child that is legally free for adoption, which is a child that has been irrevocably released via signed/fingerprinted affidavit by the biological mother. You can review the medical and social information that the orphanage director has collected on the child. Information regarding birth parents is usually not available.

5. Medical Evaluation - Hope strongly encourages you to have the child's information evaluated by a doctor skilled in evaluating intercountry adoption referrals. While in Bangladesh, you can email and fax medical information to doctors in the U.S., and you can take the child to a local doctor in Dhaka for evaluation as well. All social and medical documents will need to be translated into English for the U.S. doctors as well as for the U.S. Embassy. Once a doctor has given you their evaluation of the child's referral information, you will have at least two weeks to consider the referral information, barring extenuating circumstances and based on the child's need for a more immediate response. You will also communicate with Hope staff about the child you want to be matched with so that Hope staff can counsel you about the referral.

6. Guardianship process – Once you are ready to proceed, you will then sign a Deed of Agreement with the orphanage, and an attorney of your choice will work with you to prepare your documents for court to obtain guardianship of this particular child.

The attorney will advise you about the original documents needed from you to request a court hearing. It is best if you and your spouse attend the court hearing together. It may take

3-6 weeks to have the final court hearing. You may have to make a second trip to Bangladesh for the court hearing if you cannot remain in country for an extended period of time.

7. Travel and time in Country – You can decide how many trips you want to make to Bangladesh throughout the adoption process. You may remain in Dhaka, Bangladesh for the entire process which could take 4-6 months if there are no delays. Or one or both of you may return to the U.S. and return to Bangladesh as needed. One parent who is a dual citizen must be present to apply for the child's new birth certificate, the NOC (no objection certificate), the child's new passport, and the U.S. visa.

Step One: 3-4 weeks: If married, the parent that is a dual citizen must travel to meet the child, attend the court hearing, and have a Power of Attorney from their spouse. Once you have met and accepted a child referral, your paperwork will be submitted to the court for that child. At this time, you can decide if you will remain in Bangladesh throughout the remainder of the process or if you will return to the United States. If you remain in Bangladesh, once the court has granted Guardianship to you, you can take physical custody of your child and become the primary caretaker. If you choose to return to the U.S., you can name a relative to be the child's caretaker, or the child may possibly be able to remain in the orphanage.

Step Two: Once the Guardianship certificate is received, the next step is to apply for the child's new birth certificate listing the prospective adoptive parents as "Legal Guardian". Next, the dual citizen parent must apply in person for the "No Objection Certificate" (NOC) from the Ministry in Dhaka which can take 60-90 days or more. There is an investigation by the "special branch" ("SB") police force which can choose to make a home visit to where the child is residing in Bangladesh.

Step Three: Once the NOC has been issued you can apply for the child's new passport which again has to list the prospective adoptive parents as "Legal Guardian". The passport can take 14-30 days, at least, to obtain. Again, there is an investigation by the SB.

8. Visa application – Clients must file the I600 Petition to Classify the Child as an Immediate Relative. Although this can be filed in the U.S., Hope highly recommends you file the I600 in Dhaka. If you file it in the U.S., the time for approval is usually 2-4 months. If you choose to file it in Dhaka, then you would complete the online visa application (DS-260) and submit confirmation of that form to the Embassy in Dhaka requesting a visa interview. If the child is over 14 years old, a police clearance is required for older children. You must take all required documents to the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka for the interview. Once you have a scheduled appointment, but prior to the visa appointment, the child must obtain a visa medical exam at an approved clinic. The Embassy must receive the full package with medical information from the clinic prior to the visa issuance. The I604 "orphan investigation" is conducted by the consular officer in Dhaka.

9. Travel requirements – If one parent is not a Bangladeshi citizen, that parent must have a valid U.S. Passport and a visa to travel to Bangladesh. Some immunizations are recommended by the CDC to travel to Bangladesh. Due to the court in Bangladesh granting Guardianship of

your child to you (not a final adoption order) your child will travel to the U.S. on their Bangladeshi passport with a U.S. IR4 Visa.

10. Post-Placement Supervision and Adoption Finalization– When you return home, Hope International or your home study agency will provide post-placement supervision as required by the State of Texas and your state of residence so that your adoption can be finalized in a U.S. court. At the completion of the initial post placement period, you will be ready to proceed with your adoption finalization. Hope International will refer Texas families to a local family law attorney. If you reside outside of Texas, Hope recommends that you contact a member of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA) regarding the completion of an adoption in your state.

11. Certificate of Citizenship – The child will not qualify for citizenship until you enter the U.S. and have completed an adoption finalization, then you must apply for the Certificate of Citizenship with form N-600.

For further information please contact Hope International:

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