



USCIS Update

August 6, 2007

USCIS IMPLEMENTS CHANGES TO ASSIST PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENTS *Allows One-Time Extension of Approved Application*

WASHINGTON - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on July 30, 2007 implemented several changes benefiting prospective adoptive parents who experience delays finalizing their adoptions.

USCIS now permits prospective adoptive parents to receive one no-charge extension of the approved *Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition* (Form I-600A) if they have not already submitted a petition (Form I-600) to classify an orphan as an immediate relative. This extension is valid regardless of the number of children the prospective parents are authorized to adopt. Prospective adoptive parents must make the request in writing and USCIS must receive the request no earlier than 90 days before the expiration of the Form I-600A approval, but before the approval expires. In addition, requests must include an updated or amended home study. USCIS does not charge a fee for the home study, however, the home study provider may charge for preparing an update.

Further, prospective adoptive parents who have an approved *Application for Advance Processing of Orphan Petition* (Form I-600A) on file with USCIS may now request a one-time, re-fingerprinting without charge. Since the original fingerprints are valid for 15 months, and the approved Form I-600A is valid for 18 months, the free re-fingerprinting is valid for an additional 15 months and will cover the three month gap, aligning with the timeframe of an extension of the I-600A.

Prospective adoptive parent(s) may also make one request for a change of country notification without charge. The written request must include all supporting evidence to substantiate the change of country request. Prospective adoptive parent(s) should *not* use the *Application for Action on an Approved Application or Petition*, (Form I-824) to request this one free change of country request. For a second or subsequent change of country request, however, prospective adoptive parents must file the Form I-824, with the appropriate fee.

USCIS made these changes because the processing of orphan petitions often may take longer than the current valid approval period. In addition, adjudicating applications to adopt foreign-born children involves some of the most complex decision-making within immigration services. These modifications will help families to continue the adoption process without occurring additional expense.

Additional information on intercountry adoptions is available on the USCIS web site: www.uscis.gov.