



USCIS Update

October 11, 2007

USCIS ANNOUNCES REVISED GUATEMALAN ADOPTION PROCESSING PROCEDURES

WASHINGTON – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will, effective October 15, 2007, place a ceiling on the number of initial orphan petition submissions in Guatemala. Under the new procedures, USCIS will accept only one initial application packet to adopt a child from Guatemala (Form I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative) per prospective adoptive parent, attorney, or representative, per appointment. Currently, USCIS accepts up to four initial application packets from such individuals per appointment. For those still wishing to file, 40 daily appointment slots are issued on non-holidays, Monday through Thursday beginning at 7:00 AM. The appointment slots are issued on a first come first served basis until all 40 appointment slots are distributed or until 3:30 PM (whichever comes first). There is no change to the time period for the submission of final documents (9:00-9:30 AM Monday – Thursday).

The U.S. Department of State has urged United States citizens not to begin an adoption in Guatemala (http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/intercountry/intercountry_3825.html). Current Guatemalan law prevents the Government of Guatemala from processing adoptions with non-Hague Convention member countries, including the United States, beginning on January 1, 2008. Because it usually takes more than three months to process an adoption from Guatemala, it is unlikely that new cases filed today will be completed before January 1, 2008. In order to lessen the likelihood that prospective adoptive parents adopting from Guatemala will be unable to finalize their adoptions, USCIS has taken the step to minimize the intake of new cases as described above. At the same time, USCIS is increasing resources applied to processing adoption cases already filed. After January 1, 2008, USCIS and the Department of State will only accept and process final I-600 packets submitted after approval by the Government of Guatemala's Procuraduría General de la Nación.

– USCIS –