



Resumption of Adoption Processing by US CIS in Guatemala

On September 16, 2003 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in Guatemala (CIS-Guatemala) resumed processing applications for adoption and emigration of orphans.

CIS-Guatemala had suspended processing of orphan adoption petitions (Form I-600) in accordance with Guatemala's attempt to implement the Hague Convention on International Adoptions (Hague Convention). The Constitutional Court of Guatemala deemed the implementation unconstitutional last month. The Guatemala government is pursuing alternative implementation measures; however, in the interim the Guatemalan Solicitor General's office (PGN) will revert to adoption processing under the old "notarial" system, and we will, likewise, resume processing as we had done in the past.

The CIS procedure for receipt and processing of I-600 petitions and supporting documentation will be the same as it was before the suspension. Form I-600s may be submitted at the US Consulate in Guatemala City, Window 8, to a CIS official Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (excluding holidays). Upon preliminary review of the I-600 and supporting documentation, CIS will issue a DNA authorization letter. Only Embassy panel physicians may take the required samples for DNA testing (which must be done by a CIS-recognized lab).

CIS recognizes that many families have already experienced delays due to the suspension, and many more have been waiting to file. The agency is taking steps to ensure appropriate staffing resources in Guatemala to process all pending cases and new cases as expeditiously as possible. Nevertheless, prospective adoptive parents should be aware that the Department of State advises that due to uncertainties regarding Guatemala's implementation of the Hague Convention delays should be expected. Check the embassy website at <http://usembassy.state.gov/guatemala/wwwhadoe> for the updates.

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