Intercountry Adoption

For families throughout the United States

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
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Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago is recognized as a 501 (c) 3 Non-Profit Agency, is fully accredited and is Licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services - License #003971

Catholic Charities is recognized by the Department of State, and accredited by the Council on Accreditation, to provide adoption services for Hague Adoption cases.
Welcome to Catholic Charities International Adoption Program!

We have been providing International Adoption services since the 1950s, when we first began placing children from Italy, Germany, Ireland and Canada. Our International Adoption Program is a great choice for many families. We believe very strongly in the importance of providing extensive training and education to help prepare you for the process, joys and challenges of adopting internationally.

We are currently seeking prospective adoptive families for school age children and sibling groups from orphanages and group homes throughout Mexico and Poland, who are waiting for stable, loving families.

While the process has slowed, and overall numbers have declined somewhat over the past few years, thousands of families are still pursuing International Adoptions. Come join us for a journey to another part of the world!

Immigrant Visas Issued to Orphans Coming to the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Twenty Countries of Origin</th>
<th>FY 2013</th>
<th>FY 2012</th>
<th>FY 2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 CHINA</td>
<td>2,306</td>
<td>2,697</td>
<td>2,589</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 ETHIOPIA</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>1,568</td>
<td>1,727</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 UKRAINE</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>970</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 HAITI</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>REPUBLIC OF KOREA 627</td>
<td>SOUTH KOREA 736</td>
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<td>5 CONGO, DEM. REP. 313</td>
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<td>UKRAINE 395</td>
<td>UKRAINE 632</td>
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<td>6 UGANDA</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>UGANDA 240</td>
<td>PHILIPPINES 230</td>
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<td>7 RUSSIA</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>NIGERIA 238</td>
<td>INDIA 228</td>
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<td>8 NIGERIA</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>COLOMBIA 195</td>
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<td>TAIWAN 177</td>
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<td>10 GHANA</td>
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<td>NIGERIA 148</td>
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<td>11 BULGARIA</td>
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<td>PHILIPPINES 125</td>
<td>CONGO-KINSHASA 133</td>
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<td>12 COLOMBIA</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>BULGARIA 125</td>
<td>GHANA 100</td>
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<td>13 REPUBLIC OF KOREA</td>
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<td>14 INDIA</td>
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<td>15 TAIWAN</td>
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<td>16 LATVIA</td>
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<td>17 JAMAICA</td>
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<td>18 GUYANA</td>
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<td>19 POLAND</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 PAKISTAN</td>
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6,478                           8,091                           8,613

World Totals for Year:

7,094                           8,668                           9,320

Source: United States Department of State  http://adoption.state.gov
Intercountry Adoption Process:

1. **Contact Adoption Intake Specialist** at (312)655-7086 to complete a preliminary inquiry form.

2. **Locate a licensed, accredited adoption agency to provide your home study and post adoption supervision and support.**

3. **Complete and return the application packet** along with the application fee.

4. **Receive notification of your assigned adoption specialist.** An adoption specialist will be assigned to work with your family and will contact you, and will forward agreements to your local agency for their signature.

5. **Meetings with your local Adoption agency to complete Home Study for Convention Adoption** for a series of interviews as part of the home study. The home study is comprised of fingerprinting, a criminal background check, child abuse and neglect clearances from each state or country you have lived in since the age of 18, medical history, references, the abovementioned interviews and a home visit. The home study report itself is the legal document required by USCIS, and by Foreign Officials. There are very specific guidelines that must be followed. Your local agency will also need to agree to provide you with at least 10 hours of adoption education and preparation, meeting Hague Convention and IAA requirements. Once Catholic Charities has reviewed and approved your Adoption Home Study, you will file an I-800A form with USCIS. The I-800A cannot be filed until the home study has been completed, and has also been approved by our office.

6. **Compile your dossier documents and have them authenticated by the proper state agencies.** Your adoption specialist will provide you with the necessary information to complete this step. Once completed, your dossier will be sent to the authorities in the country you have chosen to adopt from.

7. **Await Referral.** Waiting times vary and will depend upon your specific situation and child request.

8. **Receive and accept a referral.** When a possible match is identified, your adoption specialist will receive a child referral to share with you. The referral will include basic information about the child or children and medical information; it may include photos. Our adoptive families are encouraged to have the child’s medical history reviewed by medical professionals who specialize in Intercountry adoption. You will have the opportunity to ask for additional or clarifying information during this process.

9. **Upon accepting a referral, you will forward the I-800 form with child referral information and your approval to proceed to our office, for submission to USCIS, along with documents that we must provide.**

10. **Travel to complete adoption.** The number and length of trips vary from country to country. During this time, you will visit with your child, attend the required court dates, and obtain your child’s entry visa.

11. **Welcome home!** Once you have returned home with your new family member, Catholic Charities will continue to provide support and post placement services. There are ongoing reporting requirements as well, including both agency written reports and family self-reports. Further information will be provided.
Adoption Program with Poland

In 1998, Catholic Charities began to investigate the possibility of serving as a child placing agency for Poland. A formal agreement to do this was signed with Poland in January, 1999 and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago currently has formal agreements with all three entities (Regional Adoption Centers, Catholic Adoption Center and Friends Society) within Poland that place children in the United States. We also have a staff person in Poland who serves as our liaison and works with child placing authorities in Poland to secure child referrals for our families, as well as working with the families once they travel and are in-country.

The following is an overview of our Poland program:

Who may adopt?
Child placing authorities in Poland have identified the following eligibility requirements:

- Adoptive parents can be no more than 40 years older than the child they are adopting.
- Married couples must be married at least 3 years (exceptions determined by Poland on a case by case basis.)
- Single women may adopt.
- At least one parent must be a U.S. citizen
- Must be in good health.
- Must have explored their medical situation regarding infertility, if applicable, and are not involved in infertility treatment.
- Must have a willingness to recognize and support the importance of a child’s heritage and family of origin.
- Must be financially stable, with the ability to make 2 trips to Poland and stay for a period of up to 8 weeks in total.

We welcome prospective adoptive parents of all religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds. We also provide placement services to out-of-state families.

Who are the children available for adoption?
In Poland, children become available for international adoption following the death of their parents, or extreme economic hardship or other crises that may cause parents to abandon their children or prevent them from properly caring for them. Their parental rights have been legally terminated, and the children are cared for in relatively small group homes, foster homes or orphanages. The children are typically between the ages of 6-15 yrs., and sibling groups are available.

Referral and Travel
Once your dossier has been approved and a possible match has been made, a referral packet will be forwarded for you to review. The referral will include detailed information on the medical, developmental and social history of the child(ren). A video or photos may also be available. Following your expressed acceptance of the referral, you will travel to Poland to meet the child(ren) and begin the legal processing of your adoption. This trip will be five to ten business days long. Both parents are required to travel to Poland prior to, and remain for both assigned court dates. It is possible for one of you to return to the U.S. after the second court date if necessary. Families should be prepared to stay in Poland six to eight weeks during their second trip. While in Poland, adoptive families will receive the support and assistance of a Catholic Charities staff member in arranging for housing and completing all steps in the adoption process. During this time, you will await the final adoption decree and obtain your child’s Polish Passport before having a Visa Interview Appointment at the U.S. Embassy, which issues visas for all adopted children. (More specific information on Visa requirements will be provided to you during your adoptive home study and preparation process.)
Adoption Program with Mexico

In 1997, Catholic Charities began functioning as a child placing agency for families across the United States interested in adopting from Mexico. We are pleased to resume working with Mexico, where we had many years of adoption experience prior to the implementation of the Hague Convention and the most recently implemented centralized approval and adoption processing guidelines established by adoption authorities in Mexico. Mexico is a Hague Convention country, and adoptions must meet Convention requirements. The following is an overview of our Mexico program:

Who may adopt?
The following eligibility guidelines are specified by Mexican authorities and Convention requirements:

- Prospective adoptive parents must be over 25 years of age and at least 17 years older than the child. If married, only one parent needs to meet this requirement. No greater than a 40 year age difference between the prospective parents and the youngest child, preferred.
- Prospective adoptive parents may be married or single.
- Prospective adoptive parents must demonstrate the means to support the physical and educational needs of the child.
- At least one parent must be a U.S. citizen.
- Must be in good health (no degenerative or infectious diseases).
- Must have a willingness to recognize and support the importance of a child’s heritage and family of origin.
- Illinois families must meet the Department of Children and Family Services licensing and pre-adoption requirements for adoptive parents.

Who are the children available for adoption?
The Mexican Central Authority has clarified that Mexican children who meet any of the following conditions are eligible for placement through The Hague Convention Intercountry Adoption Process:

1. Children five years and older
2. Children with a physical or mental disability
3. Children who suffer from a disease that is costly to treat
4. Sibling groups (Children under 5 years of age may be adopted if siblings older than five are also being adopted.)

Referral Time and Travel

Anticipated Referral wait time is 8-24 months from dossier submission, depending upon the request of the adoptive family and whether children that suit the request are legally free for adoption. After receiving preliminary referral information, most families will make an initial trip to meet with DIF representatives, who will then coordinate a meeting to introduce the child to the prospective adoptive parent(s). In some cases, this visit may include the supervised visitation period of three or more weeks; (some regions allow for the visitation period to be scheduled over multiple trips) upon conclusion of the visit(s) the orphanage director and family (and the child if age appropriate) determine to move forward with the placement.

If the prospective adoptive parents agree, they formally accept the referral and the Article 16 and Article 17 Reports are issued and translated for PAPs to file the I-800, which is generally approved within 2-3 weeks and forwarded to Embassy/Consulate in Mexico City. At this point the consular officer will request that the child’s DS 260 visa application be filed. Upon consular officer’s determination that child appears eligible, the Consulate will notify the SRE/National DIF (Article 5 letter). At this point the judicial process can begin, and must be initiated by DIF. Timing will depend on court dockets and judge’s schedule in the State and region where the child resides, and it may take anywhere from 1 – 6 months, until family travels for their court date to complete the adoption process.

The family will attend court proceedings, await the final adoption decree and obtain the child’s amended birth certificate and Mexican Passport, and English translations of the decree and birth certificate before having a Visa Interview Appointment at the U.S. Consulate in Mexico City, which issues visas for all adopted children.
Intercountry Adoption Fees

The program fees for an international adoption include:

**Poland**
- $300 – Application Fee
- $1500 – Adoption Processing Fee - Phase I
- $______ – Home Study fee paid to your local agency
- $3000 – Documents/Translation (Adoption Process Phase II)
- $9000 – Foreign Program Fee+
- $1000 – Post Placement Fees
- $14,775+ Total paid directly to Catholic Charities

+ For each additional sibling placed, there will be an additional $1500 fee in order to increase the humanitarian aid to the orphanage and cover additional translation expenses.

**Mexico**
- $300 – Application Fee
- $______ – Home Study fee paid to your local agency
- $4500 – Documentation Processing & Translation
- $8750 – Foreign Program Fee
- $1000-$3600 – Orphan Care fee and Humanitarian Aid
- $1500 – Post Placement Report Deposit Fee
- $500 – Post Placement Administrative Fee
- $15,050 + Total paid directly to Catholic Charities

Airfare, Lodging, food and other expenses will vary with number of trips, orphanage location, expected travel dates and duration of stay in country. You may be able to receive a tax credit for qualified adoption expenses, use IRS Form 8839 to figure the amount of your adoption credit, or consult your tax preparer. For 2013 the maximum credit was $12,970.

Any additional fees or expenses in excess of $1,000, incurred in the Convention country, for which the agency will hold the prospective adoptive parents responsible, will be disclosed to the adoptive parents, in writing, and their consent will be obtained, before the fees or expenses are incurred. The prospective adoptive parents have the option to waive the notice or consent requirement in advance.

Fees are subject to change, and may change due to varying circumstances.

Refund Policy - All fees are to be paid at predetermined intervals. Fees are for services rendered and are non-refundable, except the Post Adoption/Placement Fee which shall be refunded in full, within 60 days, if the client does not complete an adoption. Catholic Charities reserves the right to terminate the adoption process without refund of fees for clients who fail to disclose information fully or properly or in any way place the agency at risk.
Adoption Financial Resources

Personal Savings, Bank Loans and Fundraising
Many families use personal savings, take out bank loans, or receive financial help from family and friends. Some banks and credit unions offer adoption loan programs or home equity loans for adoptions. Families have held fundraisers or have set up an adoption bank account, where friends or family can make tax-deductible donations towards the adoption.

Adoption Tax Credits
Use IRS Form 8839 to figure the amount of your adoption credit and any employer-provided adoption benefits you can exclude from your income for the adoption of an eligible child, which includes provisions for families adopting children either in the U.S. or internationally. For 2013 the maximum credit and exclusion are both $12,970, per eligible child. The amount begins to phase out if you have modified adjusted gross income in excess of $194,580 and is completely phased out for modified AGI of $234,580 or more. Please see your tax consultant for more information.

Employer Assistance / Adoption Benefits
Your employer may offer adoption assistance in various forms. Ask your Human Resources Department to determine if your company offers assistance. For more information about employer adoption benefits please visit www.adoptionbenefits.com, contact the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption at 1-800-275-3832, or the National Adoption Center at 1-800-TO-ADOPT.

Assistance for Military Families
Please discuss the current adoption assistance information with your base personnel. You can also contact the Adoption Exchange Association at 303-333-0845 to receive their publication, You Can Adopt! A Guide for Military Families.

Adoption Loans, Grants, and Resources
Catholic Charities does not have experience with, nor do we endorse the following organizations. This information was gathered and compiled from the Internet, and clients should conduct appropriate research before utilizing any of the following:

The Abba Fund
P.O. Box 1120
Ramseur, NC 27316
888-775-3422
www.abbafund.org

A Child Waits Foundation
1136 Barker Rd.
Pittsfield, MA 01201
866-999-2445
www.achildwaits.org

A Child’s Desire
1735 1/2 Washington
Natchitoches, LA 71457
318-354-1229
www.achildsdeseire.org

Acres of Hope Adoption Assistance
29525 Four Corners Store rd.
Mason, WI 54856
715-765-4118
aoh.savinglives@gmail.com
www.acresofhope.org

Airlines Discount
Various airlines offer discounted airfares for families traveling to bring home their adopted child.

Affording Adoption
www.affordingadoption.com/

Brittany’s Hope
www.brittanyshope.org

Child Welfare Information Gateway
Children’s Bureau/ACYF
1250 Maryland Avenue SW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20024
888.251.75
http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/
adoptive/funding.cfm

China Care Foundation
P.O. Box 607
Westport, CT 06881
203-227-3655
www.chinacare.org

Gift of Adoption Fund
P.O. Box 567
2001 Waukegan Road, 5th Floor
Techny, IL 60082
877-905-2367
www.giftofadoption.org

God’s Grace Adoption Ministry
P.O. Box 4
Modesto CA 95353
209-572-4539
www.ggam.org

Home for Good
697 E. Intervale Rd.
Grants Pass, OR 97527
541-479-5926
www.hfgf.org/

Kingdom Kids Adoption Ministries
8625 N Whitehouse Drive
Spokane, WA 99208
509-465-3520
www.kingdomkidsadoption.org

Life International
P.O. Box 40
Gridley, IL 61744
309-747-3556

National Adoption Foundation
36 Mill Plain Rd.
Danbury CT 06811
203-791-3811
www.nafadopt.org

National Council For Adoption
225 N. Washington St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-299-6633
www.adoptioncouncil.org/financing.htm

* MBNA Bank has a program that offers lines of credit up to $25,000.