

[travel.state.gov](#) > [Intercountry Adoption](#) > [Country Information](#) > [Alerts & Notices](#) > **Ethiopia**



Ethiopia

June 2, 2013

[Print](#) [Email](#)

Notice: Implementation of Pre-Adoption Immigration Review (PAIR) Program in Ethiopia

Effective September 1, 2013, the Government of Ethiopia will require all adoption cases filed on behalf of U.S. prospective adoptive parents with the Ethiopian courts to undergo the U.S. PAIR process. The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA) will require a PAIR letter issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as one of the criterion for its best interest determination. To comply, the adoption dossier submitted by prospective adoptive parents to the Federal First Instance Court (FFIC) to initiate the adoption, will need to include the PAIR letter issued by USCIS. The FFIC will then forward the dossier, including the PAIR letter, to MOWCYA for review. The new criterion will not affect pending adoption cases filed with Ethiopian courts before September 1, 2013.

To enable prospective parents adopting from Ethiopia to comply with Ethiopia's new requirement, USCIS issued a policy memorandum, effective immediately, that allows prospective adoptive parents to begin the PAIR process and file a Form I-600, *Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative*, before Ethiopian courts finalize an adoption in Ethiopia. These procedures allow USCIS to assess the child's likely eligibility for U.S. immigration benefits and make a preliminary determination before Ethiopian courts finalize the adoption decree. A copy of the policy memorandum is available on USCIS' [website](#) .

To begin the PAIR process, petitioners adopting children from Ethiopia should file the Form I-600 petition and supporting documents through the appropriate lockbox for forwarding to the USCIS National Benefits Center (NBC) before filing an adoption case with the Ethiopian courts. Please refer to USCIS' [website](#) for filing instructions for the NBC. USCIS overseas offices and the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia will continue to accept Form I-600 petitions, but such petitions will be forwarded to the NBC for PAIR review.

Prospective adoptive parents filing their Form I-600 petition should include all available required documentation when filing a Form I-600 petition, except the adoption decree or grant of legal custody. Additionally, the following PAIR-specific documentation must be submitted when the child's country of origin is Ethiopia:

- Evidence of the match between petitioner and child such as:
 - Adoption Contract between the Prospective Adoptive Parent (PAP) and the orphanage, together with a power of attorney appointing the Adoption Service Provider (ASP) to represent the PAP, in cases where the contract is signed by the ASP on behalf of the PAP; or
 - Adoption Contract between the PAP and relinquishing birth relative.
- Evidence of child's availability for intercountry adoption, such as:
 - Court order from Regional, Zonal, or Woreda authorities;

- Police report from local authorities, placing the child in the care of a licensed orphanage; or
- Adoption Contract between PAP and relinquishing birth relative, in cases of intra-family adoption only.

The FFIC will make its own determination regarding the child's adoptability. After completing the adoption and receiving the adoption decree from the FFIC, U.S. adoptive parents will submit their adoption decree and all necessary documents to Embassy Addis Ababa for final Form I-600 petition review and immigrant visa processing.

You may refer to www.adoption.state.gov for additional information about adopting from Ethiopia.