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Ethiopia

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Notice: PAIR Ethiopia Transition Notes: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

This notice from the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is to provide information from the initial transition into the Pre-Adoption Immigration Review (PAIR) program in Ethiopia and address some frequently asked questions from prospective adoptive parents and adoption service providers.

On August 30, 2013, the Department of State published an adoption notice detailing the three categories of cases that would be considered to be pre-PAIR cases by the Ethiopian Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA). These cases are not subject to the PAIR requirements. MOWCYA provided the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa a list of specific cases that are considered pre-PAIR. MOWCYA will require a PAIR letter from any case not on this list. If you are unsure if your case is considered pre-PAIR, you can contact the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa (consadoptionaddis@state.gov) or the Office of Children's Issues (askCI@state.gov) to verify whether your case is subject to PAIR requirements.

FFIC Hearing Dates before the PAIR Determination

Cases submitted to the Federal First Instance Court (FFIC) after the September 1, 2013 implementation of the PAIR are subject to the PAIR requirements. Some cases which were submitted shortly after the implementation date may have received preliminary court hearing dates, despite not having a PAIR letter. Families in this situation may wish to request a later hearing date from the FFIC or withdraw their petition to the FFIC until the PAIR process is completed. Because the FFIC accepts the filing, schedules a preliminary hearing, and then forwards the filing to MOWCYA in order to prepare the best interest recommendation for the preliminary hearing, the PAIR letter needs to be included with the FFIC filing in order to facilitate that process. It is our understanding that if MOWCYA receives a filing that is subject to the PAIR requirements but does not have a PAIR letter, they will present an unfavorable recommendation to the FFIC due to the lack of the PAIR letter. While the FFIC does have final discretion in the issuance of an adoption decree, it is our understanding they generally do not issue decrees over an unfavorable recommendation from MOWCYA.

Pre-PAIR Cases

Families whose adoptions are confirmed as pre-PAIR cases but who have chosen to go through PAIR processing can do so without concern for the timing of the PAIR letter with relation to the court process. MOWCYA will not be looking for PAIR letters in these cases. Once the court process is complete and the PAIR letter is issued, these families should follow the instructions for PAIR filings on submitting the final decree to the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa. They should be sure to include the PAIR letter in this submission. PAIR letters for confirmed pre-PAIR cases will not need to be authenticated because these PAIR letters will not be submitted to any Ethiopian government offices.

Order of case processing

PAIR filings and resulting Form I-604 investigations will be processed as expeditiously as possible in the order they are received. As with all adoption related immigration processing, the timeframe for completion of PAIR processing varies greatly based on the circumstances of each case. Families

adopting multiple children should note that PAIR processing may be completed sooner for some of the children than others. Families in this situation are encouraged to consider this timing issue carefully as they plan both their submission to the FFIC and subsequent travel for court hearings.

Authentication Fees

Families have requested information regarding the fees for authentication of the PAIR letter for use in Ethiopia. Instructions for requesting authentications from the Department of State can be found on the [Office of Authentications](#) webpage. The fee for authenticating PAIR letters is \$8 per document (as of the notice date). Please consult the Authentications webpage for [the most recent fee information](#). Instructions for requesting authentications from the [Embassy of Ethiopia to the United States in Washington, D.C.](#) can be found on its website. The current service fee for authentications of U.S. documents for use in Ethiopia is \$94.80 for U.S. citizens and other non-Ethiopian nationals. Please contact the Embassy of Ethiopia to the United States to confirm the latest fee information.

Communication

If you would like the Department of State or USCIS to contact you by e-mail during PAIR processing, please provide your email address with your PAIR filing. Further, if you wish for either the Department of State or USCIS to communicate directly with your adoption service provider or agency, a privacy waiver must be submitted with your PAIR filing.

This information will also be added to the Ethiopia country specific information on adoption.state.gov and the USCIS country information webpage for Ethiopia in the coming weeks.