

Guatemala

DIRECT PLACEMENT ADOPTION PROGRAM

Sunny Ridge Family Center can provide your family with adoption services through our direct placement program in Guatemala. Guatemala is one of the leading countries in the placement of adoptable children. In 2005, over 3,700 children were placed into permanent adoptive homes in the United States. When faced with economic hardship, lack of employment opportunities, and the uncertainty of family support, Guatemalan birth parents frequently place their children for adoption. Sunny Ridge works with experienced adoption attorneys in Guatemala to complete your adoption process.

Children Available for Adoption

Infant and toddler boys and girls, of Mayan or Hispanic/Mayan descents, are available for adoption. These children are generally relinquished for adoption by the birthparent shortly after birth. The children are then placed with trained foster parents until the adoption is completed and the adoptive parents take custody of the child. While in care, children receive regular medical exams, immunizations, and attentive care from their foster parents. No more than two children reside in any foster home. Twins and siblings may also be available, and two unrelated children may be adopted at the same time.

Requirements

Married couples, and single females, between the ages of 25 and 50, may apply for the adoption of a child from Guatemala. There is no length-of-marriage requirement, and clients with previous marriages are also accepted. Families with biological or adopted children may also apply.

The Adoption Process

Adopting a child from Guatemala usually takes about seven to eight months to complete, from the time of accepting a referral. The program has a shorter wait time for referral of boys than girls. Families adopting from Guatemala are required to have an approved home study conducted by a licensed adoption agency, as well as clearance from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. Dossier documents must also be prepared for the Guatemalan Family Court. These documents, compiled by the family, are then translated and forwarded to Guatemala where they are submitted to the Family Court. In this step a judge will assign a social worker to the case who will interview the birth mother, foster mother and see the baby.

Following the interviews and visit, a report will be written and submitted to a judge for final approval, usually in one to three months. During this time, DNA testing is completed on the birthmother and child, with copies of the results sent to the family, the agency and the U.S. Consulate in Guatemala. The case will then be submitted to the Procuraduria General de la Nacion (PGN). An attorney will review all of the legal documentation and give approval for the case to move forward.

Once approved, the birthmother must sign the final adoption decree (two to five days). At this time the baby becomes legally adopted. The attorney will apply for a new birth certificate (two to five days) and secure the baby's Guatemalan passport. The attorney will then submit all of the documentation to the U.S. Consulate for final approval. The attorney will also arrange for a medical appointment with the U.S. Embassy approved doctor for the baby's final medical check up and permission to leave the country.

The adoptive parent(s) will travel to Guatemala City and bring the child home. The trip to Guatemala usually is three to four days. Upon request, and for an additional fee, parents can have the child escorted to the United States. Adoptive parents also have the option of visiting the child during the legal process.

Post-Placement Requirements

Three (3) post placement visits and reports are required during the first six months that the child is home.

Adoption Fees

Application fee	\$250
Home study fee	\$2,300
Program fee	\$5,900
Foreign fee	\$21,000/\$24,000
US Visa Application	\$380
Post placement fee	(3 @ \$300) \$900
Court report (optional)	\$250
Total	\$30,935/\$33,935, plus travel

*Foreign fee includes pre-adoption medical care for your child, including regular medical examinations and immunizations, baby supplies including food and clothing, foster parent salary, DNA testing, attorney fees, all court and legal fees, adoption documents, baby's visa medical examination and passport.

Sunny Ridge Family Center is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children. **Sunny Ridge Family Center** is licensed as a child welfare agency by the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (#019976)

