



INTERNATIONAL CHILD FOUNDATION, Inc.

Hague Accredited, Licensed & Non-Profit Adoption & Home Study Services

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Mexico Adoption & International Child Foundation

This program is in development stage; we are awaiting certification from the DIF in Mexico City. We are only able to assist families who are adopting relatives or who began adoptions prior to April 2008, on a case by case basis, at this time. The fees outlines below are an outline of projected adoption costs.

International Child Foundation began the Mexico adoption program in July, 2009, when we were introduced to Ricardo Gallego, a Mexico attorney, through the Director of the Board of God's Haven for Children.

To give you a little background... God's Haven for Children is a licensed foster family agency in San Luis Obispo, whose mission is to care for children who have been victims of mistreatment, sexual abuse or exploitation.

God's Haven for Children founded a sister organization in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, called Refugios de Dios para Ninos. The Refugios is an independent non-profit organization, whose mission is similar... the children served are those who have been physically, psychologically and often sexually abused.



Children are exploited everywhere. We know that the child sex trade is growing. In fact, it has become a burgeoning business in Mexico and Guatemala, as well as several Asian countries.

In June 2009, a district superintendent of schools from Tucson was arrested for charges related to the sexual exploitation of children. When I went to the internet for details, I searched "school principal arrested for child sex." A full page of arrests of principals, from Tennessee, Maryland, Utah, California, New York, Colorado and Mississippi arrived on my screen.

Mexico is a convenient destination country for child sex tourism.

How do children end up prostituted? Often it starts with abuse in the home. The home environment probably includes drugs. The child is perceived as a sex-object as early as age four or five. The mother, if she tries, fails at intervention. The child is coerced with threats or violence. After the child is worn out, depressed, no longer a novelty, she or he is sold to a pimp.

The Refugios hopes to find children before they are sold, as it is very difficult to recover a child from a brothel. They are valuable commodities until they get too old and drug-addicted and are turned out to fend for themselves.

Children come into Refugios through child protective services and DIF. (DIF is the government entity responsible for child welfare and adoption.) Often if one child is found to be abused, that child will be removed from the home with siblings. The siblings may not be victims of sexual abuse, but are victims of living in a depraved home.

Refugios provides a safe, calm, caring environment. Counseling and psychological services are an integral part of the program. The children attend school and receive tutoring. Gentle reassuring structure, nutritious food, good hygiene – these are what the children receive, often for the first time in their lives.

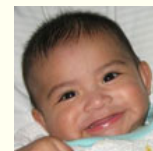
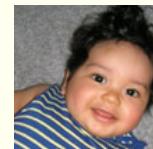
International Child Foundation is proud to be part of a program that reaches out to children otherwise lost and frequently all-too-soon dead from disease or overdose. Some of the children are available for adoption. Others are not. It depends on both the legal status of their case, whether they are or will be legally free for placement, and also on when they are ready to enter into a new family life.

Children referred to families through the Mexico program are referred through DIF. DIF draws from children in need of families from several orphanages in Sonora, including Refugios. Adoptive and non-adoptive families are able to volunteer at Refugios on a regular basis or as part of a special program. Help is always welcome, but this does not influence the matching of families with children; that is the province of DIF.

The Refugios special mission and orphanage is supported largely by God's Haven for Children



Children who found their
Forever Families



and by donations. While the shelter receives generous gifts of food and clothing, toys and educational materials, the children need legal advocacy. It takes months, sometimes years, for a child's case to be brought to a conclusion through the judicial process.

In Mexico, both parents and grandparents must be determined to be unwilling or unable or unsafe before parental rights are severed. If a child has two identified parents, then there are six adults who are part of the adjudication. If a child has only a mother, then there are three.

It is impossible to overstate how great this need is, in most countries, for older children. When a child is relinquished by a birth mother, it is a fairly simple legal event. When a child is removed from a domicile or abandoned, becoming legally eligible to have a new family requires a lengthy, costly and arduous judicial process.



Poor countries, such as Mexico or Russia or Vietnam and others, do not have the funds to allocate to sever parental rights. Thus children remain in orphanages until they reach their majority, whereupon they are sent out into the streets. Usually without job skills or family ties. The outcome is statistically grim; prostitution, crime, drugs, suicide. This is the best most orphans can do to survive, if they are not adopted.

Adoption Process and Requirements

Families entering in a Mexico adoption must have an approved home study and approval from USCIS to adopt from Mexico. Mexico and the US are both Hague Convention member

countries.

Married couples or single women may adopt. There are no specific age restrictions per DIF, other than that the parents must be at least 17 years older than the child. The age of the parents should be appropriate to the child or children; if a family in their late forties or early fifties wishes to adopt, it would be appropriate if the child or children were over age seven. If a young couple wishes to adopt, it would be appropriate for them to request a younger child.

DIF wants above all to place older children, age five and up. There are, in Mexico, families who are interested in adopting babies and toddlers. Single infants are mostly adopted by Mexican couples. US families can reasonably expect to be referred older children or sibling groups. Adoptive families who are focused on adopting a toddler will be considered, if on the DIF waiting list. There is really no way to estimate at this time how long the wait will be. It could be months or years. To some extent it depends on the number of waiting children who are toddlers who have no prospective Mexican adoptive parents. It also depends on how many older children are being adopted, as that is the priority. Foreign countries often expect agencies to place older children or special needs children before they will match a family with a single younger child.

There are five steps to the process...

First the preparation. This includes the home study and USCIS application, and preparing the initial documents for the dossier.

Second, the first trip to Mexico. The family will be accompanied by our attorney or his staff, to Nogales and on to the DIF in Hermosillo. Families must provide criminal clearances from Mexico and laboratory tests, also from Mexico, as part of their application to DIF.



Third, the family's application is processed and children are considered by DIF for matching. (This may be a short process for families open to older children or a long wait for families wishing to adopt a single toddler.) The family receives a referral and returns to Mexico to spend time with the child. This is arranged by the attorney. The time requirement varies with the age of the child. Generally families will need to plan on 3+ weeks. The visitation requirement can be broken into more than one trip. At the conclusion of the visit or visits, the orphanage director, family (and child, if age appropriate) agree to move forward with the placement.

Fifth, the judicial process begins. The attorney represents the adoption case. This takes about a month, presuming there are no legal hurdles with respect to the child's legal status.

Sixth and finally, the case is completed and the adoption approved. At this stage the adoption decree and related documents are translated and presented to the US Consulate to be adjudicated by USCIS/DHS. Presuming the adoption is approved, a visa is issued for the child to come home to the US.

ADOPTION FEES & ESTIMATED EXPENSES

Application: \$300

Home Study: ICF Home Study Fee for Hague Convention countries is \$1,200 or as set by your home study provider; there is no home study review fee if another Hague accredited agency prepared your home study

USCIS Fees: I-800A fee is \$750 for the applicant including applicant fingerprints plus \$80 per person for your spouse or other adult(s) residing with you to be fingerprinted.

Agency Fees: Total of \$5,800; this is broken into two payments. The first is the Agency Administration fee, \$2,800, which is paid with the Adoption Agreement. The second is the Agency Case Management fee, \$3,000, which is paid at the start of the dossier paperwork.

Foreign Fees:

Phase 1:

1. Presentation of application to DIF \$1,250
 2. Translation and certification of the:
Birth certificate(s), notarized and apostilled 200 (100 for single woman)
Marriage certificate, notarized and apostilled 100 (N/A for single woman)
Proof of employment—Letter from employer 50
Proof of domicile—Utility bill 50
 3. First trip to Mexico:
Transportation, gas, lodging 300
Accommodations 65
Meals 90 (45 for single woman)
Laboratory report 300 (150 for single woman)
Criminal history report 50 (25 for single woman)
 4. Other expenses and donation
Donation to Refugios de Dios 500
Monitoring and coordination 640
Two follow-up trips to Hermosillo (DIF) 270
- Total fees and estimated expenses, excluding airfare and transport to Nogales, Mexico: 3,865
(3,445 for single woman)

Phase 2:

1. Legal supervision of file process 2,500
 2. Translation and certification of documents 950
 3. Medical information and documents for child 350
 4. Second trip to Mexico:
Transportation, gas, lodging 300
Accommodations and meals; varies with location 600-2,000
Insurance (optional) 300
- Total fees and estimated expenses, excluding airfare and transport to Nogales, Mexico: 6,400

Phase 3:

1. Legal representation for judicial process 3,000
 2. Assistance with the US Consulate at Juarez 1,250
 3. Receiving visa and transporting to family in Nogales 1,000
- Total fees and estimated expenses: 5,250

Total of three phases of foreign services: \$15,515 (\$15,095 for single woman)

After your child or children receive their visas, the family may come to Mexico to bring the child home or we can arrange to escort the child to you in Nogales, AZ or Tucson, AZ; the costs of travel or escort vary.

Estimated total for agency fee & foreign fees including travel within Mexico: \$21,315 (\$20,895 for single woman)

Travel Costs vary widely. Airfare to AZ from other states in the US is between \$200-600. You may pay a reduced rate for your child, depending upon the airline.

Adoptions take many months. Fees are subject to change.
Call us with any questions. We're here to help.

We invite you to contribute to the mission of Refugios de Dios para Ninos.

*Refugios de Dios para Ninos and International Child Foundation are non-profit organizations.
Your donations are tax deductible, as the allowed by the tax code.*

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