

Nightlight® Christian Adoptions International Adoption Program Description UKRAINE



GENERAL INFORMATION

Nightlight's Ukraine program has been active since 1998 through our South Carolina office (which was formerly Carolina Hope Christian Adoption Agency). The fees for an adoption from Ukraine are reasonable, and we estimate that the process will take 1 - 2 years from application to completion depending upon the type of child you are seeking to adopt. Your wait time will likely be at the shorter end of this range if you are open to a special needs or older child.

Staying on top of the regulations and the idiosyncrasies of Ukraine adoptions requires someone with firsthand knowledge of adoptions in Ukraine. Nightlight uses a facilitator who regularly travels to Ukraine to meet with key officials and staff at the Adoption Center and the SDAPRC, Ukraine's adoption authority. Additionally, Nightlight is committed to helping families prepare for the adoption of children from Ukraine. Because Ukraine does not permit families to pre-identify a child before traveling, you will be identifying a child in-country. Our educational requirements will help prepare you by providing information about developmental delays and health issues. Because of the nature of children in need of adoption from Ukraine, you will be learning about the adoption of older children or children with special needs – and the resources you possess to parent such children.

The following websites are a useful place to start for reading more about Ukraine adoption and the country:

- <http://adoption.state.gov/country/ukraine.html>: U.S. State Department page about Ukraine adoption
- http://kyiv.usembassy.gov/amcit_adoptions_eng.html: The Ukraine adoption information pages of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/UP.html>: CIA World Factbook pages about Ukraine

CHILDREN AVAILABLE

Ukraine adoption is a wonderful program for families desiring to adopt older children (6 and above) or children with special needs ages 14 months and older. The types of special needs include cleft palate/cleft lip, club foot, hole in the heart, orthopedic needs, and vision or hearing impairments; there are also more significant needs such as alcohol-related birth defects, down syndrome, and mental retardation. Many older children with only minor (and correctible) health challenges are also in need of adoption (in the 3-5 age range, and even more in the 6-15 range). Children who would otherwise have little hope for a future can have a better life with the emotional and physical security that a loving family can offer, along with the availability of excellent medical care in the United States.

ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

Based on Ukrainian law, you must be married and be at least 15 years older than the child you seek to adopt and no more than 45 years older than the child. If you have any criminal background or any mental health history, please let us know so that we can determine if the authorities in Ukraine will accept your application.

PROCESS

1. Begin your **adoption homestudy** and submit **form I-600A** to CIS.
2. Begin to assemble your **dossier**. We will give you detailed instructions.

3. While you are waiting for your CIS approval, Nightlight assists in the **apostilling** of your dossier.
4. Once CIS has approved your adoption homestudy, you will receive your **I-171H pre-approval notice**.
5. About 3-4 weeks after you have received your approval from Immigration (I-171H), you should receive a **packet of information** from the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv.
6. Your **dossier** will be hand delivered to the SDAPRC by the translator in Ukraine after all the documents are gathered, including your I-171H approval from CIS. Once your documents are submitted, they are reviewed and in about 10 days the translator will be notified that your dossier is in good order.
7. At the time that you are notified of the status of your dossier, you may also be given a **travel date** (if you are open to a child with special needs or an older child). However, it is generally difficult to predict when you will be given an appointment to travel and go to the SDAPRC.

TRAVEL & ADOPTION

You select your child once you are in the country. When you arrive in Kyiv (Kiev), an English-speaking representative will meet you. The next day you will go to the SDAPRC, where you will be given information about a child who is the same sex and approximate age that you requested. You will most likely see a picture of the child. Once you have identified a child to adopt and met with the child at his orphanage, you proceed in that region with the completion of the adoption. You will go to court and meet with a judge about one week after you have met with your child. At this time, you will be required to have a 10-day-wait period. During this time you can go home or you can stay in Ukraine. You then receive your child, and your guide will make arrangements to get your child's new birth certificate and Ukrainian passport, as well as file paperwork with the U.S. Embassy in Kiev for your child's U.S. visa. This process takes about 1 week to 10 days. Usually you will stay almost 4 weeks in Ukraine for the entire adoption process or you could make two shorter trips.

The in-country stay gives you time to visit your child daily at the orphanage and to begin the bonding process. It is amazing to see how children change while their parents are there visiting with them. It is quite common for a toddler to begin walking during this time and reaching other developmental milestones. The bonding process is very important, and being in the country allows your child to transition from being in an orphanage to being with you, his new family.

POST ADOPTION

Within 30 days of your arrival home, you must register your child with the Ukrainian Embassy. Your home study provider will prepare two post-placement reports and submit them to Nightlight: one report will be completed after the social worker visits your home within 3 months of your child's arrival home and another about 10 months after your child is home. Each year for the first three years that your child is home, you must send a post-placement report to Nightlight. The first two reports will be conducted by your home study provider as stated above. These reports include your child's developmental progress and pictures. This is a very serious commitment; in the past Ukraine has placed a moratorium on adoptions because adoptive families did not send in yearly post placement reports as requested by the Embassy of Ukraine. Therefore, Nightlight requires that families make a good faith deposit into their Nightlight account. Upon submission of these post-placements, a portion of that deposit will be returned to you.

COSTS

The program fee for a Ukraine adoption is \$20,050. Additional estimated expenses of \$4,500 - \$7,500 will bring the total cost to approximately \$24,550 - \$27,550.

Please call or e-mail Lisa Prather, Lisa@Nightlight.org, with any questions.

