

Rwanda

Country Information



Rwanda is **not** party to the *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* ([Hague Adoption Convention](#)). Therefore, when the Hague Adoption Convention entered into force for the United States on April 1, 2008, intercountry adoption processing for Rwanda did not change.

NOTE: Immigrant visas for Rwandan citizens, including adopted orphans, are issued at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. Please visit the website for the Immigrant Visa Section at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi for information on immigrant visa services at http://nairobi.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas.html or e-mail at consularnairobi@state.gov

Updated: April 2010

[DISCLAIMER](#)

WHO CAN ADOPT

To bring an adopted child to United States from Rwanda, you must be found eligible to adopt by the U.S. government. The U.S. government agency responsible for making this determination is the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). [Learn more.](#)

In addition to these U.S. requirements for adoptive parents, Rwanda also has the following requirements for adoptive parents:

- **RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS:** There are no residency requirements for foreign adoptive parents.
- **AGE REQUIREMENTS:** In most cases adoptive parents must be under age 50. However, a judge can waive the age requirement.
- **MARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS:** In most cases couples must have been married for at least five years with no more than one previous divorce.

Singles will be approved in some cases; typically only female singles are considered.

- **INCOME REQUIREMENTS:** Prospective adoptive parents must show financial stability.
- **OTHER REQUIREMENTS:** In most cases only families with two or fewer children will be considered.

Please note that eligibility requirements are subject to change and specific requirements may be waived at a judge's or the Ministry's discretion. Questions about current eligibility requirements should be addressed directly to the Ministry of Gender and Family of the Government of Rwanda.

WHO CAN BE ADOPTED

A child must meet the definition of an *orphan* under U.S. law for you to bring him or her back to the United States. [Learn more](#) about these U.S. requirements.

HOW TO ADOPT

Rwandan Adoption Authority
Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)

The Process

The process for adopting a child from Rwanda generally includes the following steps:

1. Apply to be Found Eligible to Adopt
2. Be Matched with a Child
3. Adopt the Child in Rwanda
4. Apply for the Child to be Found Eligible for Adoption
5. Bring Your Child Home

Adoption Agencies and Attorneys:

Rwanda's Adoption Authority, the Ministry of Family and Gender, prefers to work directly with prospective adoptive parents during the adoption process.

No American adoption agencies are currently officially registered by the Government of Rwanda.

Prospective adoptive parents are advised to fully research any adoption agency or facilitator they plan to use for adoption services. For U.S.-based agencies, it is suggested that prospective adoptive parents contact the Better Business Bureau and/or the licensing authority in the U.S. state where the agency is located or licensed.

1. Apply to be Found Eligible to Adopt:

To bring an adopted child from Rwanda to the United States, you must apply to be found eligible to adopt (Form I-600A) by the U.S. Government, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).
[Learn how.](#)

In addition to meeting the U.S. requirements for adoptive parents, you need to meet the requirements of Rwanda as described in the Who Can Adopt section.

Prospective parents currently must send the required documents (listed below) to the Ministry of Gender and Family for initial approval before commencing the adoption process in Rwanda.

Next, prospective adoptive parents must petition the local Rwandan court having jurisdiction over the prospective adoptive child's residence. Once the adoption is approved, the adoption decree is filed at the local vital records registry for the child's place of residence.

2. Be Matched with a Child:

If you are eligible to adopt, and a child is available for intercountry adoption, the central adoption authority in Rwanda will provide you with a referral to a child. Each family must decide for itself whether or not it will be able to meet the needs of a particular child and provide a permanent family placement for the referred child.

The child must be eligible to be adopted according to Rwanda's requirements, as described in the Who Can be Adopted section. The child must also meet the definition of an orphan under U.S. law. [Learn more.](#)

3. Adopt the Child (or Gain Legal Custody) in Rwanda:

The adoption is incomplete without the granting of an Adoption Order by the Ministry of Family and Gender. The process for finalizing the adoption (or gaining legal custody) in Rwanda generally includes the following:

- **ROLE OF THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY:** Documents are filed with the Ministry of Family and Gender. A travel letter from that office is required for the child to exit Rwanda.
- **ROLE OF THE COURT:** After receiving an advance approval to adopt (I-600A) from the Department of Homeland Security in their district in the U.S., prospective adoptive parents must petition the local Rwandan court having jurisdiction over the prospective adoptive child's residence. Once the adoption is approved, the adoption decree is filed at the local vital records registry for the child's place of residence.
- **ROLE OF ADOPTION AGENCIES:** A few US-based adoption agencies provide consulting services to families wishing to adopt in Rwanda. Contacts are available at the U.S. Embassy in Kigali's http://rwanda.usembassy.gov/attorneys_in_rwanda.html. Adoption officials at the Rwandan Ministry of Family and Gender have expressed to the US Embassy that they prefer to work directly with parents rather than through third party agencies or lawyers.
- **ADOPTION APPLICATION:** Send complete dossier (requirements listed below), including home study, to the Ministry of Family and Gender, with a cover letter requesting permission to adopt.
- **TIME FRAME:** Allow at least 6 months to complete the Rwandan adoption and subsequent U.S. immigration procedures.

- **ADOPTION FEES:** There are no Rwandan government fees associated with intercountry adoptions. However, adoptive parents can expect to pay attorneys' fees for services rendered.

The U.S. Embassy in Rwanda discourages the payment of any fees that are not properly receipted, "donations," or "expediting" fees, that may be requested from prospective adoptive parents. Such fees have the appearance of "buying" a baby and put all future adoptions in Rwanda at risk.

- **DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:** Documents are filed with the Ministry of Family and Gender. Documents from the Government of Rwanda are in French. Prospective adoptive parents will need English translations (certified by the translator) of the adoption documents and birth certificates and death certificates (if applicable) of the adopted child's birth parents to complete immigrant visa processing in Nairobi. The U.S. Embassy in Rwanda can assist in locating translation services, but no U.S. Government resources are available for translating documents. The following documents are required:

- Birth certificate(s) of the adoptive parent(s). If a birth certificate is unavailable, a legal or administrative certificate that proves date of birth and identity may be submitted;
- Original birth certificate of the child to be adopted;
- Marriage Certificate of adoptive parents
- Waiver of age limit certificate, if applicable (for adoptive parents over the age of 50);
- The "Act of Adoption," which is prepared by the local Bureau de l'Etat Civil (Vital Statistics Office);
- Declaration of the adoptive parent's spouse and adult children consenting to the adoption;
- The Adoption Act. The act must reference the information on the birth and death certificates, whichever are applicable, as well as the identities/documents of the adopting persons (passports and International Adoptive Home Study);
- Authorization letter for departing Rwanda (issued by the Ministry of Family and Gender)
- Legal Judgment Document (a court order approving the adoption), which is prepared by the local court having jurisdiction where the child is located.
- Recommendation from Rwandan Embassy in Washington , DC
- Home Study Report
- Certificate of Good Behavior / Police Record
- Certificate of Complete Identification
- Household Composition
- Proof of Income
- Adoption acceptance letter from U.S. Department of State (available from U.S. Embassy Consular Office)

NOTE: If possible, documents should be certified by a notary public as well as by the Rwandan Embassy in the U.S. Additional documents may be requested. If you are asked to provide proof that a document from the United States is authentic, we can help. [Learn how.](#)

4. Apply for the Child to be Found *Eligible for Adoption*:

After you finalize the adoption (or gain legal custody) in Rwanda, the U.S. Government, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) MUST determine whether the child is eligible under U.S. law to be adopted (Form I-600). [Learn how.](#)

5. Bring Your Child Home

Now that your adoption is complete (or you have obtained legal custody of the child), there are a few more steps to take before you can head home. Specifically, you need to apply for several documents for your child before he or she can travel to the United States:

Birth Certificate

Rwandan birth certificates cannot be amended retroactively. PAPs can proceed to Immigration to request a Rwandan passport for their adopted child using the original birth certificate and adoption documents.

Rwandan Passport

Your child is not yet a U.S. citizen, so he/she will need a passport or other official travel document from Rwanda.

U.S. Immigrant Visa

Once the Rwandan adoption is final, and you have obtained a Rwandan passport and travel letter from the MIGEPROF for your child, adoptive parents should file an I-600 application. A parent who has an approved Form I-600A may file their Form I-600 either at the USCIS district office closest to their place of residence in the U.S. or in person at the U.S. Embassy in Kigali. Walk-in hours for American Citizen Services at the U.S. Embassy in Kigali may be found on the Embassy website.

Note: If only one spouse is traveling to Kigali, s/he must sign the I-600 application under oath in front of the consular officer. The parent who is not traveling must sign the application after having been completed (in other words, after all of the information relating to the child had been entered onto the form). Either spouse may sign the I-600 application as the "prospective petitioner" with the other signing as the "spouse," unless the married couple consists of one U.S. citizen and one non-citizen, in which case the U.S. citizen must be the "prospective petitioner" on both the I-600A and I-600 and be the one to sign application before the consular officer. A third party may not sign or file the petition on behalf of the PAPs.

Once your Form I-600 application has been approved, you should contact the consular section at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi to schedule an immigrant visa interview.

The immigrant visa allows your child to travel home with you. As part of this process, the Consular Officer must be provided the "Panel Physician's" medical report on the child [Learn more.](#)

NOTE: Visa issuance after the final interview now generally takes at least 24 hours and it will not normally be possible to provide the visa to adoptive parents on the day of the interview. Adoptive parents should verify current processing times at the appropriate consulate or embassy before making final travel arrangements.

Child Citizenship Act

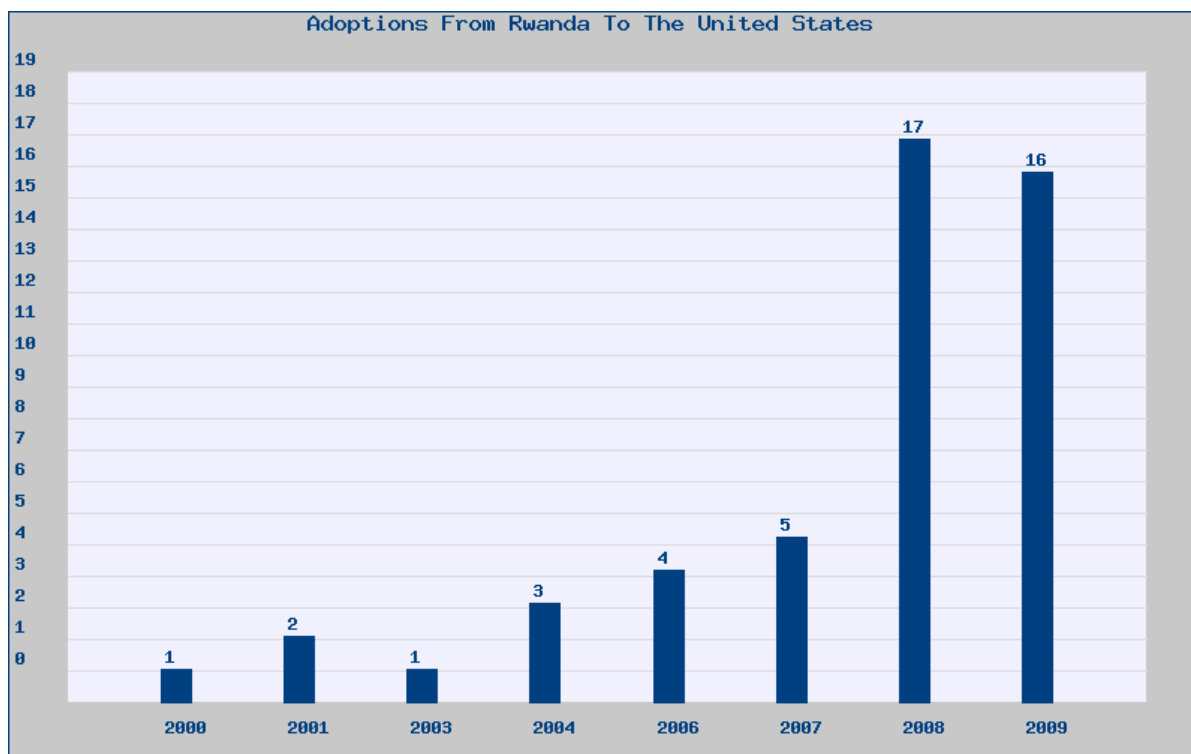
For adoptions finalized abroad: The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 allows your adopted child to acquire U.S. citizenship automatically when he or she enters the United States on an IR-3 or IH-3 immigrant visa for the purpose of permanent legal residence.

For adoptions finalized in the United States: The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 allows your adopted child to acquire U.S. citizenship automatically when the court in the United States issues the final adoption decree.

**Please be aware that if your child did not qualify to become a citizen upon entry to the United States, it is very important that you take the steps necessary so that your child does qualify as soon as possible. Failure to obtain citizenship for your child can impact many areas of his/her life including family travel, eligibility for education and education grants, and voting.*

[Learn more](#) about the Child Citizenship Act.

Statistics



TRAVELING ABROAD

Applying for Your U.S. Passport

U.S. citizens are required to enter and depart the United States on a valid U.S. passport. Only the U.S. Department of State has the authority to grant, issue, or verify United States passports.

Getting or renewing a passport is easy. The [Passport Application Wizard](#) will help you determine which Passport form you need, help you to complete the form online, estimate your payment, and generate the form for you to print—all in one place.

Obtaining Your Visa

In addition to a U.S. Passport, you also need to obtain a visa. A visa is an official document issued by a foreign country that formally allows you to visit. Visas are attached to your passport and allow you to enter a foreign nation.

To find information about obtaining a visa for Rwanda, see the Department of State's Country Specific Information.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1007.html

Staying Safe on Your Trip

Before you travel, it's always a good practice to investigate the local conditions, laws, political landscape, and culture of the country. The State Department is a good place to start.

The Department of State provides Country Specific Information

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1007.html for every country of the world about various issues, including the health conditions, crime, unusual currency or entry requirements, and any areas of instability.

Staying in Touch on Your Trip

When traveling during the adoption process, we encourage you to register your trip with the Department of State. Travel registration makes it possible to contact you if necessary. Whether there's a family emergency in the United States, or a crisis in-country, registration assists the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in reaching you.

Registration is free and can be done [online](#).

AFTER ADOPTION**What does Rwanda require of the adoptive parents after the adoption?**

The provider that has compiled (conducted) the adoption home study for the parents shall follow up with the parents and provide post-adoption reports to the Rwandan Ministry of Family and Gender after six months and an annual progress report for the first two years.

What resources are available to assist families after the adoption?

Many adoptive parents find it important to find support after the adoption. Take advantage of all the resources available to your family -- whether it's another adoptive family, a support group, an advocacy organization, or your religious or community services.

CONTACT INFORMATION**U.S. Embassy in Rwanda**

Embassy of the United States of America

2657 Avenue de la Gendarmerie

B.P. 28

Kigali , Rwanda

Tel: (250) 596-400 X 2592

Fax: (250) 596-591

E-mail: consularkigali@state.gov

Website: <http://rwanda.usembassy.gov/>

U.S. Embassy in Kenya

(Visa applications for Rwanda should be made in Nairobi, Kenya)
Embassy of the United States of America
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
P.O. Box 606
00621 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: (254) 20-363-6000
Fax: (254) 20-363-6410
E-mail: consularnairobi@state.gov
Website: <http://nairobi.usembassy.gov/>

Rwanda Adoption Authority

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)
P.O. Box 969
Kigali , Rwanda
Tel: 011-250-587-128
Fax: 011-250-587-127
E-mail: info@migeprof.gov.rw
www.migeprof.gov.rw

Embassy of Rwanda

Rwandan Embassy in the United States
1714 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington , D.C. 20009
Tel: 202-232-2882/3/4
Fax: 202-232-4544
E-mail: rwandemb@rwandemb.org
<http://www.rwandaembassy.org/index.php>

Office of Children's Issues

U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
SA-29
Washington, DC 20520
Tel: 1-888-407-4747
E-mail: AskCI@state.gov
<http://adoption.state.gov>

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

For questions about immigration procedures, call the National Customer Service Center (NCSC)
1-800-375-5283 (TTY 1-800-767-1833)