

# A Helping Hand Adoption Agency International Adoption Program Description Nicaragua



## GENERAL INFORMATION

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America, it borders with Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south. The Pacific Ocean lies to the west of the country, the Caribbean Sea to the east. Nicaragua sits north of the Equator. The Capital is Managua; the main language is Spanish although native tribes on the eastern coast speak their native languages.

Adoptions in Nicaragua are completed through a collaborative effort that includes a Nicaraguan attorney working directly with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Family (Mi Familia), the government agency that authorizes all domestic and international adoptions. Mi Familia ensures that the child has been abandoned and no biological family members are willing and able to care for the child.

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

- [http://adoption.state.gov/country\\_information/country\\_specific\\_info.php?country-select=nicaragua](http://adoption.state.gov/country_information/country_specific_info.php?country-select=nicaragua) U.S. State Department page about Nicaragua adoption
- <http://www.nicaragua.com/>: Nicaragua Tourism

## CHILDREN AVAILABLE

- Nicaraguan children available for adoption range from infancy to pre-teens.
- Both boys and girls are available for adoption, with no preference given to either sex.
- Children are either Caucasian or of Hispanic ancestry.

## ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

- Only married couples may adopt from Nicaragua.
- Applicants must be between 25 and 50, but a single parent must be at least 15 years older than the child they wish to adopt.

## PROCESS

1. Make application to A Helping Hand Adoption Agency.
2. Begin your **adoption homestudy** and submit **form I-600A** to CIS.
3. Submit a letter of intent and Dossier to Nicaragua.
4. Mi Familia will confirm that the adoptive family has been approved by the USCIS to adopt a child and that they have a completed home study. Once your completed dossier has been evaluated, the case is presented to the Mi Familia's adoption advisory council for a final decision on the adoption.
5. For children under 5 years old, the adoptive parents will be notified of a referral approximately 12 months to 36 months after the dossier is submitted. The younger the child you wish to adopt, the longer the wait for a referral. Families interested in adopting children over the age of 5 years old, can expect a referral within 6 months of registering their dossier in Nicaragua. If the adoptive parents accept their referral, they will prepare for their trip to Nicaragua. The trip will take approximately 12 to 20 weeks. (The Nicaraguan Central Authority requires families only be in Nicaragua for 12 weeks. However, the process can be delayed.)
6. Mi Familia will authorize the court proceedings. The judicial process can take an additional 4 weeks.
7. Once the final decree of adoption is issued by the court, the adoptive parents are able to obtain a birth certificate from the Central Registry of Managua. As soon as the birth certificate has been issued, a passport can be obtained from Nicaraguan

- Immigration, then the family can request a visa appointment at the US Embassy, receive child medical, and visa.
8. Finally, you may travel back to the United States with your child.

### **TRAVEL & ADOPTION**

After receiving a referral from Mi Familia, the adoptive family must travel to Nicaragua and remain there approximately 3-5 months (12-20 weeks). The first 4 weeks is an adaptation period where the adoptive parents will visit the child in the orphanage. After the 4 weeks adaptation period is complete the child will live in Nicaragua with the family until the process is completed in Nicaragua. After the adaptation period, Mi Familia will authorize the court proceedings which can take an additional 4-8 weeks. Once the final decree of adoption is issued, the family then begins the final process through the US Embassy to obtain a visa for their child to return to the US.

The in-country stay gives you time to visit and bond with your child. It is amazing to see how children change while receiving one on one attention from their parents. 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 have a home visit by your homestudy provider. Your homestudy provider will prepare post-placement reports and submit them to A Helping Hand every 6 months for the first 4 years after the adoption is finalized. These reports include your child's developmental progress and pictures. This is a very serious commitment; AHH is committed to showing the MMDES and birth families that children adopted by US citizens are healthy and well cared for. Compliance with post adoption reports is also required by Nicaragua. Therefore, AHH charges a fee to monitor and process these post placement reports and also requires families to pay for the cost of the post placement report in advance.

### **COSTS**

The program fee for a Nicaragua adoption is \$13,000. Additional estimated expenses of \$12,000 – 21,000 will bring the total cost to approximately \$25,000 – 34,000. In addition, your out-of-pocket expenses may further be reduced if you receive scholarships or other employer-provided adoption benefits. For additional fee information, please see Exhibit A.

Please contact Lisa Prather, at [lisa@worldadoptions.org](mailto:lisa@worldadoptions.org) or (859-263-9964) with any questions.

