

A Helping Hand Adoption Agency

International Adoption Program Description

Uganda



GENERAL INFORMATION

A Helping Hand's Uganda program began as a pilot program in 2010 through Nightlight Christian Adoption's South Carolina office. When Lisa Prather, the Assistant Director of that office, became Executive Director of A Helping Hand, she brought the program with her. The fees for an adoption from Uganda are reasonable, and we estimate that the process will take approximately 1 year from application to completion depending upon the type of child you are seeking to adopt.

Nightlight Christian Adoptions has partnered with a local Non-governmental organization (NGO) in Uganda known as Heart of a Child Uganda to open Tender Hearts Baby's Home. Nightlight Christian Adoptions is currently the sole supporter of this baby's home. We make regular trips to Uganda to ensure the safety and care of the children in the home and also take mission teams to Uganda to support the work being done. Children in Uganda are often abandoned due to poverty related to social problems and the parents' illnesses. Tender Hearts Baby's Home is committed to providing excellent care to needy children in Uganda. Additionally, the Uganda program is a guardianship, which means parents do not adopt the child in-country but receive guardianship of the child. Families travel to Uganda for court and then again to bring their child home. Parents can choose to stay and travel only once. Families are given guardianship by the court in Uganda and then adopt their child here in the US upon returning home. A Helping Hand is committed to helping families prepare for the adoption of children from Uganda by providing educational information on possible developmental delays and health issues.

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

- http://adoption.state.gov/country_information/country_specific_info.php?country-select=uganda U.S. State Department page about Uganda adoption
- www.ugandatourism.org/Arts%20and%20crafts%20of%20the%20Pearl%20of%20Africa.php: Uganda Tourism

CHILDREN AVAILABLE

Uganda adoption is a wonderful program for families desiring to adopt children 6 months old and older. The Tender Hearts Baby's Home cares for children up to age 5 years old. Children living in poverty and raised in institutional care often have both developmental and emotional needs. There are also children available for adoption that have minor and correctable to moderate and severe special needs. 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

Most loving, stable families qualify to adopt from Uganda. However, certain factors could keep you from adopting in general or from Uganda in particular, as each country has its own rules as to who can adopt. Before applying, please consult with A Helping Hand regarding any sensitive issues that may apply to you, such as a divorce, a mental health issue, or a criminal history.

PROCESS

1. Make application to A Helping Hand Adoption Agency.
2. Begin your **adoption homestudy** and submit **form I-600A** to CIS.
3. Begin to assemble your **dossier**. We will give you detailed instructions.
4. Once CIS has approved your adoption homestudy, you will receive your **I-171H pre-approval notice**.
5. Once your CIS approval has been received and a child is available for you, you will receive a referral of a child in Uganda.
6. Once you have accepted a match of a child, your **dossier** will be delivered to the attorney in Uganda who will add the child's paperwork to your dossier and file with the court for your court date.
7. You will receive a court date and travel to Uganda for the hearing.
8. The ruling will come up to two weeks after your hearing.
9. Return to Uganda for a visa appointment at the US embassy and to bring your child home!

TRAVEL & ADOPTION

You receive a referral of a child from A Helping Hand Adoption Agency. The referral will include a brief social history of the child, the current health and development of the child, and lab test results for malaria, syphilis, and HIV. We highly recommend that you have this information reviewed by a doctor who specializes in international adoption before you make a decision. Once you decide to accept a referral, you will be considered “matched” with the child. Your dossier will then be sent to Uganda to the attorney. The attorney will put together information on the child’s file and add this information to your dossier to file with the court. Once you receive a court date, you will then travel to Uganda. You are not required to remain in Uganda for the court ruling as this can take up to two weeks. The first trip can be only a few days. You will then travel to Uganda to attend the visa appointment for your child at the US Embassy. Once the visa has been issued, you can return home with your child. The 2nd visit can be as little as two weeks. Families desiring to make one trip and remain in Uganda after the court hearing, can expect to be in Uganda for a minimum of 4 weeks. If the US Embassy decides to investigate a case, it can take longer—up to 5 or 6 weeks or longer.

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. 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. You must complete your adoption here in the US and will need to contact an attorney to file an adoption petition in your home state. Your homestudy provider will prepare four post-placement reports and submit them to A Helping Hand; Two reports will be completed after the homestudy provider visits your home within 1 month and 6 months of your child’s arrival home and the others at 1 and 2 years after you arrive home with your child. In addition, the Ugandan courts require a self report be provided to the court every 6 months until your child turns 18 years old. Recently, the Uganda courts have also added into the guardianship ruling that families must return to Uganda with their child every 5 years until age 18. In the event that your social work report coincides with one of the self reports due, the social work report will supersede yourself report. These reports include your child’s developmental progress and pictures. This is a very serious commitment; AHH is committed to showing the Ugandan government and birth families that children adopted by US citizens are healthy and well cared for. 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 Uganda adoption is \$12,500. Additional estimated expenses of \$11,870 – 15,420 will bring the total cost to approximately \$24,370-\$27,920. 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 Mike Ginter, mikeg@worldadoptions.org or (859-263-9964) with any questions.

