

Frequently Asked Questions on USCIS Customer Service for Intercountry Adoption Cases

On Oct. 6, 2023, USCIS changed our customer service operations for intercountry adoption cases. Instead of taking live calls, USCIS is now using an enhanced voicemail prompt that informs customers about the purpose of the phone line, directs them to other resources as appropriate, and gives callers the option to email the USCIS Adoption Unit (nbc.adoptions@uscis.dhs.gov) or leave a voicemail, if appropriate for follow-up on appropriate matters for the line to individually address.

Q1. Is USCIS no longer responding to adoption-related questions from the public?

A1. No, USCIS continues to provide responses and is streamlining processes to provide better responses to certain inquiries as this FAQ further explains. Generally, for inquiries about pending orphan or Hague cases, USCIS now provides an automated response, with potential options for follow up by email or by phone, if needed. The voicemail system directs callers with adoption-related questions to available web resources and directs callers with a pending intercountry adoption (orphan or Hague) case to either email the USCIS Adoption Unit (nbc.adoptions@uscis.dhs.gov) or to leave a voicemail.

Q2. Is there a new or different number for the USCIS Adoption Unit?

A2. No, the number for the USCIS Adoption Unit remains the same. However, while there is no longer an option for live calls, the voicemail system now provides clearer instructions on how to make an inquiry or where to find other information on USCIS' website. The Adoption Unit email is nbc.adoptions@uscis.dhs.gov.

Q3. Why did USCIS make this change?

A3. USCIS evaluated the nature of the calls to the live call line to identify areas of improvement and to increase efficiency in both responses and the overall adjudication of these case types. There were several factors that were identified that led to this change. First, USCIS prioritized balancing resources to ensure timely adjudications and still maintain a dedicated customer service avenue for this population in certain necessary matters. USCIS Immigration Services Officers (ISOs) who adjudicate orphan and Hague cases also staffed the former live customer service line (now voicemail box) and staff the current email box. USCIS also analyzed the types of inquiries it received via the live call line and determined that 38% of inquiries were unrelated to the call line's scope, which required officer time to redirect to the proper channels. 54% of inquiries were related to general case status updates alone, where the filings were within normal processing times. This change therefore maximizes finite ISO resources by ensuring that ISOs who adjudicate orphan and Hague cases focus only on inquiries about these cases and not on unrelated matters or general status inquiries about cases that are within normal processing times. Second, the voicemail or email option allows stakeholders to provide

details about their inquiry so ISOs have the time needed to research appropriate case inquiries before they can respond to questions in a meaningful way, which live calls do not allow for. Additionally, 40% of calls requested publicly available information that could be found or shared without the need for live support. In making this change, USCIS' goal was to both support timely adjudications that are critical to this population and find ways to provide substantive responses in a more efficient manner.

USCIS has also enhanced our email autoreply message to better manage expectations about which messages may or may not receive a response and what additional resources may be helpful to address the inquiry. In addition, we will be updating our [USCIS Adoption Contact Information](#) page.

Q4. What adoption-related questions are appropriate to submit to USCIS?

A4. Our [USCIS adoption webpages](#), our [Policy Manual](#), and the [Department of State intercountry adoption webpages](#) provide answers to most commonly asked questions. Questions related to processing times for orphan and Hague cases can be found on our [website](#). We also have an [FAQ on orphan and Hague processing times](#).

Please do not submit questions about when a case may be completed (case status inquiry) if your case is within normal [processing times](#). (You can enter your receipt date towards the bottom of this page to get your inquiry date.) We can only provide case status responses on pending intercountry adoption cases (Forms I-600/A, Forms I-800/A, and their respective supplements) if the case is outside normal processing times (according to your inquiry date). USCIS cannot provide legal advice or pre-adjudicate cases. We will respond to expedite requests, biometric/fingerprint inquiries (including refresh and reschedule requests), and other inquiries if appropriate. For more information about USCIS expedite criteria, visit [How to Make an Expedite Request](#).

All inquiries submitted via voicemail or email are reviewed, triaged, and addressed in accordance with these FAQs and will receive a response, if appropriate. Relevant inquiries presenting serious or pressing issues, such as a bona fide expedite request or age-out concerns are prioritized. If necessary and appropriate, USCIS may also provide a call back to minimize multiple email exchanges. Submitting duplicate emails may delay response times.

For adoption-related Form I-130, adjustment of status, citizenship and naturalization inquiries, please contact the [USCIS Contact Center](#). For adoption-related inquiries for military families, please contact our [Military Help Line](#).

Q5. What information do I need to leave in my voicemail and/or email?

A5. Providing your name, contact information, your receipt number or SIM#, and the reason for your inquiry in your voicemail and/or your name, SIM#, and reason for your inquiry in the subject line of your email, with your contact information and any additional relevant information in your email body, will help us better sort and address your message. Again, please confirm that your case is outside normal

processing times before reaching out for a case status update. For other inquiries, please see Q&A 4 above to ensure it is appropriate and cannot be answered through other available resources.

Q6. When will I get a response after I leave a voice message or send an email?

A6. You will generally receive a response within two business days, but please note some inquiries may take longer to review.

Q7. I have called the Adoption Unit’s voicemail and/or emailed them, why have I not heard back?

A7. USCIS will only respond to inquiries about pending intercountry adoption cases (Forms I-600/A, Forms I-800/A, and their respective supplements). If you are inquiring solely about the status of your case, please consult the publicly posted case processing times (based on your case inquiry date). We can only respond to a case status inquiry if the case is outside our publicly posted [case processing times](#) (based on your case inquiry date). The USCIS Adoption Unit generally responds to relevant voicemails and emails that are within the scope of Q&A 4 above within two business days. Some inquiries may take longer if, for example, they require additional research. Submitting duplicate emails may delay response times.

Q8. What information is provided in the Adoption Unit’s new email autoreply?

A8. The information below is what you can expect to see in the Adoption Unit’s new email autoreply that addresses what inquiries will or will not receive a response. The autoreply also provides links to additional resources. We have included the relevant sections of this autoreply below.

USCIS New Adoption Unit Email Autoreply Relevant Sections:

We only respond to case status inquiry requests that are outside normal processing times. For USCIS’ processing times please visit our [Check Case Processing Times page](#).

If your inquiry does not relate to an intercountry adoption matter that is PENDING before USCIS, you will not receive a response from this email box.

For additional customer service resources, please see the “Other Adoption Inquiries” section of our [USCIS Adoption Contact Information page](#) or the [USCIS Tools](#) page, and direct your inquiry appropriately.

Email Purpose: We only respond to inquiries on the following PENDING intercountry adoption cases (or their supplements):

- [Form I-600A, Application for Advance Processing of an Orphan Petition;](#)
- [Form I-600, Petition to Classify Orphan as an Immediate Relative;](#)
- [Form I-800A, Application for Determination of Suitability to Adopt a Child from a Convention Country;](#) or
- [Form I-800, Petition to Classify Convention Adoptee as an Immediate Relative.](#)

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It is the goal of the Intercountry Adoptions team to respond to relevant email inquiries within two business days. Please bear in mind, some inquiries may take longer. Please also note that submitting duplicate emails may delay response times.

Q9. Where can I provide feedback on the Adoption Unit’s customer service transition and my experience with it?

A9. USCIS will be holding a national stakeholder engagement in the spring of 2024. Please share your feedback and experiences regarding the Adoption Unit’s enhanced voicemail and/or email by emailing us at public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov.