

Adopting A Relative or Identified child from the Philippines

Many families in the U.S. consider adopting a child who is a relative living in the Philippines. This is a common type of adoption, and by Philippine law, a 'relative' is defined as a child who is related to the potential adoptive parents within the fourth degree. For example, if a potential adoptive parent in the U.S. has a sister in the Philippines and wants to adopt her child, this would be a 3rd degree relative and so meets the definition. A child who is living with relatives in the Philippines who is either unrelated to the family or is beyond the 4th degree is considered an 'identified' child. Both of these situations will be reviewed by the country on a case-by-case basis.

To qualify for intercountry adoption, a child (whether a relative or not) must first be issued clearance for international adoption by the Philippines and it must occur before the child turns 15 years old, even if the child is part of a sibling group to allow for time to meet US immigration law. On average, this first process takes 1-3 years. Parents in the U.S. must prove how they are related to the child, and there must be *strong evidence* that the placement would be in the child's best interest. This is solely determined by the Philippines.

The Philippines is looking for ***extenuating circumstances*** beyond poverty, job insecurity and providing a 'better life' in the U.S. when deciding whether a child will be declared legally available for international adoption. Abandonment, neglect, abuse and being orphaned are examples. Each situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether there is justification for an adoption. If the child is declared eligible for international adoption, the National Authority for Child Care (NACC) in the Philippines will contact Gladney and invite the family to the next step of the process: preparation of a Dossier for *consideration of approval* to adopt the child.

The general steps are:

- Contact Gladney to discuss your unique situation.
- If invited, complete a Prospective Adoptive Parent form (PAP) on Gladney's website for further screening.
- If invited, complete our online Application & pay a non-refundable fee.
- Complete NACC's Questionnaire & related documents (e.g., family tree, birth, death & marriage certificates, and photos) & submit to Gladney.
- Gladney reviews & submits your case to NACC. NACC forwards the case to the regional office where the child lives. The office staff investigates the family/child's situation to decide if adoption is appropriate. (e.g., interviews with the family, verification of the child's circumstances.)
- Once the regional office decides, NACC and Gladney are informed.
- If the child is cleared for international adoption, the family becomes an official Gladney client and starts a home study & dossier preparation.
- Gladney reviews & submits the Dossier to NACC. (NOTE: Submission of a Dossier *is not* an approval for the family to adopt the child. A final decision occurs after all documentation is reviewed and approved by NACC's Board).

- If the Dossier is approved, NACC will send a child proposal inviting the family to adopt the child. The family will prepare a Letter of Acceptance and NACC will send the Official approval for the family to adopt the child.
- The family will submit paperwork to USCIS.
- The Philippines will prepare the child's visa & travel documents; family travels.
- Post Placement visits occur over 6 months after arrival home.
- 'Consent to Adopt' paperwork is issued by NACC & the family hires an attorney and finalizes the adoption in local court.
- NACC & Gladney close the case.

[May, 2025]