

Both the Hague Convention Adoption Process (Convention adoptions) and the orphan adoption process, (or non-Convention adoptions) involve two basic U.S. determinations: 1) The suitability of the adoptive parents, and 2) Whether the child's adoption meets eligibility requirements in order for the child to immigrate to the United States.

So what's the difference?

Below is a chart outlining the differences between the two procedures. In general, prospective adoptive parents receive more protections when adopting from Convention countries.

	Convention Countries	Non-Convention Countries
Your Adoption Service Provider	Licensed in U.S. state of residence + Accredited or approved by one of the Department of State's designated <i>Accrediting Entities</i>	Licensed in U.S. State of residence
Adoption Services Contract	Adoption services contract contains information about agency's policies, fees, history, relationships with supervised providers, etc.	Though many ASPs disclose policies, fees and relationships with supervised providers, they are not required by most state laws to do so.
Home Study	Must meet both State and Federal requirements; Prepared by an accredited agency, supervised provider or exempted provider	Must meet State level and USCIS federal requirements
Adoption Fees	Itemized in adoption services contract	
Parent Education	10 Hours of parent education	Parent education only if mandated by U.S. State of residence or voluntarily provided by agency
Adoptive Parent's Eligibility	Form I-800-A; Must be filed <i>before</i> being matched with a child (and before Form I-800)	Form I-600-A; Can be filed at the same time as the Form I-600.

	Convention Countries	Non-Convention Countries
Provisional Petition Approval; Child's Eligibility	Country of Origin must determine the child is adoptable with Convention consents and other protections, must meet definition of <i>Convention adoptee</i> Form 1-800	Must meet <i>orphan</i> definition Form 1-600
Child's Medical Records	Prepared, and provided by Convention country's competent authorities; Prospective adoptive parents given at least 2 weeks to review	
Visa Type	IH-3 or IH-4 Visas	IR-3 or IR-4 Visas
Visa Application	Submitted <i>before</i> foreign adoption/ legal custody proceedings	Submitted after foreign adoption/ legal custody proceedings (except Guatemala and Vietnam)
Adoption Records	Preserved for 75 years	