

NEW MEXICO IMMIGRATION LAWYER BLOG

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Adoption Process of Haiti Orphans Expedited by Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security has announced a humanitarian parole policy to allow orphaned Haitian children to enter the United States under temporary protected status. The policy is part of the U.S. government's ongoing relief efforts to assist Haiti following the devastating earthquake. The humanitarian parole will allow eligible children entry to the United States on an expedited basis to insure that they receive the care they need.

The Department of Homeland Security together with the Department of State is working to issue travel documents in an expedited manner to allow qualifying children to travel immediately to the United States. In order to qualify for humanitarian parole, the children must be in one of 2 categories. Basically, the children must have been in the process of adoption by U.S. parents as of the date of the earthquake on January 12, 2010.

Upon issuance of the travel documents, the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince will facilitate the evacuation of the children to the United States. Upon arrival, the children will be placed with their adoptive parents in the United States while the adoption process runs its course.

Unaccompanied minors are subject to special entry procedures regarding their custody and care. The Department of Homeland Security, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Officers of Refugee Resettlement will work together to expedite the entry of the Haitian children. Upon entry, each case will be evaluated individually by USCIS. Depending upon the circumstances, the children may be eligible for permanent residence on arrival with no further processing. Others who enter under humanitarian parole status will require resolution and adjustment of status following arrival.

This is an important step by the Department of Homeland Security to address the devastating impact that the earthquake has taken on Haiti and its children. There are many more newly orphaned children that will not fall into one of the 2 specified categories. Hopefully, these innocent children will receive some relief as well through additional relief policies directed at addressing their safety, welfare and survival in the midst of such a horrible tragedy.

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