

Next Steps After First Trip - Court Preparation

After you have arrived home from your first trip, your next steps will be to start preparing for court. Court normally happens about 3-5 months after you initially received the referral of your child. At this court hearing, the judge will review your file and grant the final adoption of your child with your family. It then usually takes around 2 weeks for the birth certificate and adoption decree to be issued. Once they are issued, VESTA will issue proposed travel dates for your final trip. The final trip, on average, is typically 1-2 months after court.

In order for the court hearing to occur, the following documents are required to be mailed to Bulgaria. Each document needs to be notarized. Once the judge in Bulgaria has these documents, they will be able to hold court for your family. You can find each of these documents on the portal.

1. **Medicals:** Each parent must have their Physician complete an updated medical form. Utilize the Medical Letter template on the portal and use the "Bulgaria Medical Letter – Yes or No Condition". Please make sure this is signed by the MD and then notarized in their office.
2. **FBI Background Checks:** Each parent must complete an updated FBI Background Check just as you did for your Dossier. Schedule your FBI fingerprint appointment: <https://fieldprintusa.com/individuals>. Please fill in "personal use", do not click "adoption". And say "no" if it asks you if you filing this out for adoption or apostille. You can schedule your own location, which will be at a local office based on your zip code. Results will be emailed within 48 hours to your email address. Please make sure to print the results in COLOR. Please use the True and Accurate copy form on the portal to get these results notarized.
3. **Parental Rights Letter:** Your home study agency social worker will complete this letter. You can send them the template on the portal. Have your Home study agency notarize this letter before mailing to you.
4. **Home Study Update Court Letter:** Your home study agency social worker will complete this letter. You can send them the template on the portal. Have your Home study agency notarize this letter before sending to you.
5. **Proof of Property/Mortgage Letter:** You can provide a copy of your mortgage monthly statement, or letter indicating proof of house property (if paid off). We need to have it list both parents' names and the address (if jointly owned). Use the attached "Proof of Property Notary Cover letter" for this. The Parents will sign indicating it is a true copy of the original.

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6. **I-800A:** If your I800A is not expired, please use the "Notary letter for NBC Notice of Approval" to notarize the form. You will need to include the Notary letter with a copy of your approval letter for court. If this is expired then the I800 is sufficient in this case and no need for a I800A.
7. **I-800:** One notarized copy of your I800 approval letter (one for each child, if applicable) is needed. Please use the "Notary letter for NBC Notice of Approval" to notarize the approval letter. You will need to include the Notary letter with a copy of your approval letter for court.

After all the originals are completed, and one scan is sent to your IAS, you may then mail all the originals to your IAS. You can confirm the address to use at this time.