

Guatemala I: Establishing An Orphanage/Children's Home

Introduction

Establishing an orphanage in Guatemala involves navigating various federal and state regulations, obtaining the necessary licenses, and ensuring compliance with standards for child care and protection. Here is a comprehensive guide to help you through this process:

1. Understand the Legal Requirements

- Familiarize yourself with the laws and regulations governing orphanages and children's homes in Guatemala. This includes the Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia (Law on Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents) and guidelines from the Secretaría de Bienestar Social (Secretary of Social Welfare).

2. Conduct a Needs Assessment

- Perform a community needs assessment to determine the necessity and viability of an orphanage in your chosen location.

3. Establish a Governing Body

- Form a board of trustees or governing body to oversee the operations of the orphanage. This should include individuals with expertise in child welfare, finance, legal matters, and healthcare.

4. Create a Detailed Plan

- Develop a comprehensive plan that includes the mission, vision, objectives, operational strategies, funding sources, and sustainability measures for the orphanage.

5. Register as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

- Visit the Registro de Personas Jurídicas (Registry of Legal Entities) to register the orphanage as an NGO.
- Prepare the necessary documents including:
 - Constitution of the organization.
 - Trustee information (including passport photographs and valid ID).
 - Application form for registration.

6. Obtain Approval from the Secretaría de Bienestar Social (SBS)

- Submit an application to the SBS at both the departmental and national levels.
- Provide the following:
 - Registration certificate from the Registry of Legal Entities.
 - Proof of land ownership or lease agreement for the orphanage premises.
 - Detailed plan and layout of the orphanage.
 - List of board members and staff, including their qualifications.
 - Proof of financial capability or funding sources.
 - Policies on child care, safety, and protection.

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7. Site Inspection

- The SBS will conduct a site inspection to ensure that the proposed premises meet the required standards and guidelines.

8. Recruit Qualified Staff

- Hire qualified staff who meet the standards set by the SBS, including social workers, caregivers, and administrative personnel.

9. Set Up Infrastructure and Facilities

- Ensure the orphanage is equipped with the necessary infrastructure such as dormitories, classrooms, recreational areas, healthcare facilities, and kitchen.

10. Develop Policies and Procedures

- Create policies and procedures for the operation of the orphanage, including child admission and discharge processes, health and safety protocols, education and recreation programs, and staff responsibilities.

11. Compliance with Health and Safety Standards

- Ensure that the orphanage complies with health and safety standards, including fire safety measures, sanitation, and emergency preparedness.

12. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

- Implement a system for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the orphanage's operations to ensure adherence to standards and to make necessary improvements.

13. Regular Reporting

- Submit regular reports to the SBS as required, detailing the orphanage's activities, financial status, and any significant events or changes.

Conclusion

By following these steps diligently, you can ensure that your orphanage or children's home is legally compliant, well-managed, and capable of providing a safe and nurturing environment for the children in your care.

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Resources and Contacts

- Registro de Personas Jurídicas, Guatemala:
Registro de Personas Jurídicas
<https://mingob.gob.gt/mingobsites/repeju/>
7a Avenida 14-47, zona 1, Guatemala, Guatemala
Nuevo PBX: (502) 2244-7000
- Secretaría de Bienestar Social (SBS), Guatemala:
Secretaría de Bienestar Social
<https://www.sbs.gob.gt/>
32 calle 9-34 zona 11 las Charcas
Horario de atención al público
Lunes a Viernes de 8:00 a 16:30
PBX: 2414-3535

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