

**Barriers to Accessing
U.S. Birth Certificates for
Migrant Parents Who Have
Returned to Mexico with Their
U.S. Citizen Children**

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The Institute for Women in Migration, AC (IMUMI), is a civil society organization that promotes the rights of women in migration in the Mexican context, whether they are living in their communities of origin or are in transit through or reside in Mexico or the United States. Women migrants should have the right to have control over their lives in the context of work, their emotional well-being, and their social development in locations that promote the well-being and security of the women and their families.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Legal Barriers.....	3
Logistical Barriers.....	5
Cultural Barriers.....	7
Conclusion.....	9

Introduction

Birth certificates are often the only form of legal identity documentation that children receive. Unfortunately, many barriers exist for undocumented immigrants when they attempt to request birth certificates for their children born in the United States, impeding parents' ability to prove their children's identities.

At the Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI), we assist many clients with identity document applications for their children born in the United States. These clients, who are primarily from Mexico and Central America, were undocumented immigrants living in the United States when they gave birth to their children. When parents return to their home country (either voluntarily or after an order of deportation), their U.S. citizen children often accompany them.

In Mexico, it is important to register the children as Mexican citizens in order to apply for public benefits such as healthcare, education, or other governmental support. When parents do not have an original, certified copy of their child's birth certificate, this process becomes virtually impossible, thereby denying the child not only proof of her U.S. citizenship, but also preventing access to her Mexican citizenship rights.

The Right to an Identity: Legal Framework

Worldwide, identity documents are required for individuals to "secure recognition of their legal identity, their family relationships, their nationality, and their corresponding rights."¹ In the United States, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution provides that all persons "born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside."² Thus, under the Constitution, anyone born in the United States is a citizen. The Inter-American system mandates that all citizens have a right to identity documents. On June 3, 2008, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States approved and adopted the Inter-American Program for a Universal Civil Registry and the "Right to Identity," AG/ RES. 2362 (XXXVIII-O/08), which followed the 2007 resolution AG/RES. 2286 (XXXVII-O/07), of the same name.³ The resolution states that "recognition of the identity of persons is one of the means through which observance of the rights to legal personhood, a name, a nationality, civil registration, and family relationships are facilitated, among other rights recognized in international instruments such as the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the American Convention on Human Rights. The exercise of these rights is essential for participation in a democratic society."⁴

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights have upheld this Declaration as binding for all members of the Organization of American States, of which the United States and Mexico are both members.

¹ World Bank and WHO, "Global Civil Registration and Vital Statistics: Scaling up Investment Plan 2015–2024," May 28, 2014, at xiii.

² United States Constitution, Amendment XIV, Section 1.

³ AG/RES. 2362 (XXXVIII-O/08), available at http://www.oas.org/sap/docs/puica/AGRES_2362%20_6_.pdf.

⁴ Inter-American Program for a Universal Civil Registry and the "Right to Identity," AG/RES. 2362 (XXXVIII-O/08), Preambulatory Clause.

Foreign-Born Children and Mexican Citizenship

According to Article 30 of the Mexican Constitution,⁵ children born in the United States (and abroad more generally) to a Mexican mother or father are Mexican nationals by birth. According to Mexican law, in order to register a child born in the U.S. as a Mexican national, a parent must present a certified copy of the child's birth certificate with an official apostille⁶ and a certified translation to their local civil registry.⁷ When these families are unable to access the birth documentation of their children in the United States, the children become virtually stateless, unable to prove either their U.S. or Mexican citizenship.

In order to address this issue, the Mexican Civil Registry (*Registro Nacional de Población e Identificación-RENAPO*) and the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding creating a program that allows Mexican officials to electronically verify U.S. birth certificates from certain U.S. states, eliminating the requirement of the apostille. This program, called "Soy Mexico," will continue through 2018 and might be renewed in the longer term. Although we are hopeful that this bi-national agreement will prove effective, parents will most likely still need the original, certified copy of the U.S. birth certificate in order to register their children's Mexican nationality. In addition, not all of the 57 NAPHSIS member jurisdictions have granted permission to allow RENAPO to access their databases. If, for example, the birth certificate is from Texas or any of the other non-participatory jurisdictions, an apostille will still be required even if the agreement is implemented perfectly by Mexican officials.⁸ In addition, since the agreement was signed in June 2016, IMUMI has documented cases of civil registries that still require official birth documents with apostilles, demonstrating that the program has not been implemented consistently nationwide.

Families who have returned to Mexico either voluntarily or following a deportation order who are unable to register their children are excluded from government programs available to Mexican citizens, such as social security and health care. In some cases, these individuals even face difficulties accessing the public education system, in spite of the fact that a birth certificate is no longer an official legal requirement for enrollment.⁹ **IMUMI recommends that all families still present in the United States register their U.S.-born children's Mexican nationality at the closest Mexican Consulate, if at all possible.**

⁵ Mexican Constitution, Art. 30, available at http://www.oas.org/juridico/mla/en/mex/en_mex-int-text-const.pdf.

⁶ An "apostille" is an official seal applied to documents issued by the governments of signatories to the Hague Convention on Legalization of Foreign Documents, available at <https://assets.hcch.net/docs/b12ad529-5f75-411bb523-8eebe86613c0.pdf>. In the United States, the Secretary of State office in each state issues apostilles for birth certificates. Federal documents are apostilled by the State Department in Washington, D.C.

⁷ As civil registries fall under state control in Mexico's federalist system, specific requirements for registration may vary state by state, but a certified copy of the birth certificate, apostille, and certified translation are required by almost all states in Mexico. Some state civil registries state that they have already eliminated the requirement for apostille seals. The Civil Registry in Sonora has informed IMUMI that it does not require an original certified copy of a birth certificate to register a child as Mexican and also does not charge for the inscription of dual-nationality. A law was recently passed in Jalisco to facilitate the registration of U.S. born children. If parents register their child's Mexican nationality at a Mexican Consulate in the United States, they do not require an apostille and there is no fee, but each consulate has its own additional requirements including both parents must be present to effectuate the registry.

⁸ As of February 2018, there are 42 jurisdictions participating in the program, including New York City and Washington, D.C. For a list of participating jurisdictions, see SEGOB, "Obtención del acta de nacimiento de menores de edad nacidos en Estados Unidos de América (EUA)," available at <https://www.segob.mx/segob/%7Crenapo/articulos/acreditacion-de-la-identidad-de-las-personas-mexicanas-nacidas-en-estados-unidos-de-america-150534?idiom=es>.

⁹ The Mexican Ministry of Education eliminated identity documentation requirements for access to elementary and secondary school in 2015 and 2016. For copies of the primary and secondary school "control standards," see, http://www.controlescolar.sep.gob.mx/es/controlescolar/Documento_de_Normas and http://www.controlescolar.sep.gob.mx/es/controlescolar/Documentos_de_Normas.

Unfortunately, the systemic legal, logistical, and cultural barriers Mexican parents face when attempting to apply for United States birth certificates often render their children effectively stateless. For the purposes of this paper, we define legal barriers as regulatory (often administrative) restrictions defining who can request birth certificates. Logistical barriers are regulatory obstacles unrelated to the legal identity of the person requesting a birth certificate. Cultural barriers are those that exist due to the cultural differences between Mexico and the United States, particularly in family life and naming conventions. This paper outlines those barriers and proposes changes to facilitate access to identity documents for all United States citizens, regardless of the immigration status of their parents and the country in which they are currently residing.

I. Legal Barriers

The main legal barriers that preclude undocumented parents from obtaining copies of their children's birth certificates are the identification requirements in the application processes. Birth certificates are issued by the various state Departments of Public Health, by the Vital Records or Vital Statistics branch of these departments. These offices have differing policies across the United States. Most states, however, define birth certificates as private documents and will only provide certified copies to the registrant or specified qualifying family members.¹⁰ In order to demonstrate that a qualifying relationship exists, most states require a form of U.S. government-issued identification in order to request the document. State driver's licenses and United States passports are the most common examples of sufficient documentation. However, these forms of identification are often not easily accessible (or are impossible to obtain) for undocumented parents living in the United States. Obtaining the required identification is further complicated for parents who are no longer residing in the United States. We discuss several states that exemplify the general trends across the United States, but for a state-specific list of requirements, please see Appendix A.

Many states have identification requirements that seem to specifically exclude undocumented populations. For example, Virginia Vital Records has an online list of 19 accepted primary identification documents and 16 secondary documents (two of which are required in order to complete a request).¹¹ Apart from felons who served time in the United States and now have a Virginia Criminal Justice Agency Offender Information Form, undocumented immigrants would not have access to any of the primary forms of identification, and the secondary forms are often very difficult for undocumented immigrants to obtain, particularly when they are living in Mexico. For example, when parents do not have sufficient identification, they are offered the option to provide a letter from the hospital where the child was born as well as a letter from the doctor who provided the mother with prenatal care. For parents living in Mexico, these letters can be impossible to obtain. In addition, according to its online requirements, while Virginia accepts foreign passports as identification, these passports must have a currently valid U.S. visa to qualify. When IMUMI contacted the Virginia Vital Records office, however, staff members stated they would accept a Mexican passport as long as it was accompanied by a parents' birth certificate and an official translation. While this potentially makes accessing birth certificates possible for some parents, it is still unlikely that this process would be feasible for a person with limited resources, as Mexican

¹⁰ Each state defines the term "qualifying family member" differently, but generally parents and the registrant herself can always request birth certificates. Siblings, grandparents, other relatives, and legal representatives may also qualify as requestors.

¹¹ Virginia Department of Health, "Office of Vital Records, ID Requirements," available at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/vital-records/id-requirements/>.

passports costs a minimum of 1,205 Mexican pesos (around \$60 USD) and an official translation can be difficult, and costly, to obtain.¹² Since this option is not publicized as part of the official regulations, it is dependent on the individual reviewing the application and not an official policy.

Other states offer more options for undocumented parents requesting birth certificates, but still present challenges to parents residing in Mexico. The state of New Mexico accepts a specific type of Mexican identification called the *Matricula Consular*, which is issued in the United States by Mexican Consulates.¹³ This is a good option for many undocumented immigrants in the United States, however the parent must have obtained it while residing there. California does not require identification, but rather a signature notarized by a U.S. notary on the application form.¹⁴ While this is difficult in Mexico since there are 14 Embassies and Consulates with U.S. notaries in the country and the cost is \$50 USD¹⁵ per notarized signature, it does not completely foreclose the possibility for parents to access their children's birth certificates. Nevada accepts both the *Matricula Consular* and the Mexican voter registration card, commonly referred to as the IFE or INE, which is a free form of identification presented to all Mexican citizens upon reaching the age of eighteen.¹⁶ Originally, it was not in the power of the consulates to issue INEs, but this policy has recently changed, making it possible for Mexican citizens to acquire this identity document from within and outside of Mexico. The state of Washington has no identification or notary requirements as a result of the Public Records Act of 2005.¹⁷ Both Arizona and Idaho have the option of submitting either government identification or a notarized signature.¹⁸

Recommendations

IMUMI suggests the following to ensure that undocumented immigrants have access to their U.S. citizen children's birth certificates: accept a Mexican passport, INE, and *Matricula Consular* as primary forms of identification documents and give the option of notarizing the application form should that prove easier for an applicant. States should also accept notarizations from Mexican notaries to facilitate the process for parents who cannot travel to a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for a notary signature. We believe this would be the best way to both secure confidential documents and guarantee identity rights for all citizens. Additionally, we recommend that these regulations be formalized and officially displayed online (in English and Spanish) in order ensure compliance by Vital Records employees and limit confusion.

We believe the power to implement many of our best practices recommendations lies within the state Vital Records or Statistics Offices. State Registrars are therefore in a unique position to bring about the implementation of these recommendations through state administrative codes. Most states have some mention of vital records in their codes, but the specificity varies from state to state. The majority of states give discretionary power to the registrar. For example, New Mexico Revised Statute 7.2.2.20 states, "the state registrar or local custodian may also require acceptable identification of the applicant and/or a sworn statement," which would allow the state to

¹² <http://sre.gob.mx/pago-de-derechos-de-pasaporte>.

¹³ See IMUMI state requirement chart, attached as Appendix A.

¹⁴ *Id.* We have heard of some individuals using a Mexican notary accompanied with an official apostille and translation, but this can also be a costly option. IMUMI has not yet used this type of notary services, and works exclusively with the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Mexico to obtain notarized signatures for birth certificate applications.

¹⁵ IMUMI has worked with several clients to obtain waivers of the \$50 USD fee with the help of local Mexican government officials.

¹⁶ Instituto Nacional Electoral, available at <http://www.ine.mx/>.

¹⁷ Washington Administrative Code, Public Records Act, WAC44-14.

¹⁸ See IMUMI state requirement chart, attached as Appendix A.

implement more accommodating identification requirements and begin to accept notarized signatures.¹⁹ Nowhere in the New Mexico Administrative Code does it specify what qualifies as “acceptable identification.” Arizona State Administrative Code dictates that a copy can be issued when an application “establish[es] the applicant’s eligibility to receive a copy of the certificate,” allowing for the registrar to outline the requirements for determining eligibility.²⁰

A recent settlement in Texas reinforces our belief that many state Vital Records offices are the responsible bodies for determining these requirements and that there is flexibility in their regulations. In 2015, the Texas Civil Rights Project represented a group of undocumented immigrant parents and their U.S. citizen children in a class action lawsuit against the Texas Department of Public Health, the overseer of Vital Records.²¹ The parents argued that their children were being denied their constitutional right to citizenship and its attendant benefits (public health programs, public school, etc.). The Department of Public Health did not deny the existence of barriers to acquisition of birth certificates, but rather argued that it was not a necessary document in order to access the benefits mentioned by the parents.²² Both parties agreed to a settlement in which Texas will be required to accept Mexican voter registration cards, or INEs, as acceptable forms of identification.

Prior to 2013, INEs were accepted as sufficient identification in local offices. However, in 2013, although the Texas Administrative Code did not change, county registrars began denying birth certificate requests when INEs were presented as a primary form of identification. As a result of the court settlement, without a change to the Administrative Code (but under surveillance of the court), the INE will again be accepted.²³ Because the case was settled, no legal precedent was set; however, we believe that it demonstrates flexibility in the implementation of identification requirements and reinforces our belief that the power to alter identification requirements is often held by the registrars. Additionally, it is likely that if Texas believed it would prevail on the merits of the case, the parties may not have reached a settlement agreement. Therefore, we believe that this case may have the potential to motivate states to change their regulations or adjust their discretionary practices prior to initiating legal action.

II. Logistical Barriers

In addition to the legal barriers discussed above, parents also encounter many logistical barriers when attempting to access their children’s identity documents. We consider the lack of clarity in regards to which foreign identification documents are accepted (such as the Virginia example cited above) to be a logistical barrier. Additionally, most websites and application documents are only available in English. This makes it very difficult for those who do not speak English to navigate the process alone. Although many immigrant parents do speak English (or have children who do), the technical terminology in the application forms often surpasses their level of reading comprehension.

¹⁹ New Mexico Administrative Code, Disclosure of Records, NMAC 7.2.2.20 (E).

²⁰ Arizona Administrative Code, ARTICLE 4. ACCESS TO RECORDS; COPIES; FEES, AAC-R9-19-402.

²¹ “Growing suit says Texas denying birth certificates to US-Born Children,” August 19, 2015, available at <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/8/19/migrants-sue-texas-for-denying-birth-certificates.html>.

²² “Lawsuit Forces Texas to Make It Easier for Immigrants to Get Birth Certificates for Children,” July 24, 2016, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/25/us/lawsuit-texas-immigrants-birth-certificates.html?module=ArrowsNav&contentCollection=U.S.&action=keypress®ion=FixedLeft&pgtype=article&r=0>.

²³ *Id.*

Another logistical barrier arises when paying for documents. All birth certificate ordering processes have fees, and for mail-in service, the majority of states only accept personal checks linked to a United States bank account or U.S. money orders, both of which are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain from outside of the United States. While many states have implemented VitalCheck as a method to order birth certificates online, it often is not a viable option for returned or deported immigrant families. To request a birth certificate through VitalCheck, parents must present a scanned copy of a form of United States government-issued identification (such as a driver's license or U.S. passport) and provide a credit card registered in the United States for payment. Furthermore, VitalCheck often imposes an additional fee of \$12 to \$15 USD, on top of the fee for the certificate, furthering the economic strain on parents.

In addition to payment issues, many states, such as Arizona and Oklahoma,²⁴ require the inclusion of self-addressed and stamped envelopes in the application packet. In order to comply, parents must have access to United States stamps, which to our knowledge are not available in Mexico, or they must purchase an expensive prepaid FedEx international label. Additionally, some states stipulate that the requestor must have a return address within the United States, which most returned migrants cannot provide.

Recommendations

In response to these logistical barriers, IMUMI has identified areas of opportunity to improve the system. First, we urge Vital Records offices to recognize the prevalence of transnational families and the logistical barriers that they face when attempting to access documents. We also suggest states create designated areas on their vital statistics websites that are easy to navigate and clearly explain the process of ordering documents from abroad. In addition, we recommend that all materials, including websites and application documents, be translated into Spanish and be easily accessible.²⁵ The online ordering processes should be improved to provide a better alternative to expensive mailing fees. Furthermore, if Vital Records offices codify their new regulations to accept Mexican documents or a notary signature as a form of identification, this should be implemented immediately so they can be used for ordering birth certificates online. Additionally, we recommend a reduction or elimination in the processing fee for ordering a document online. In regards to payment, we recommend that bank transfers and foreign credit or debit cards be considered acceptable forms of payment. Another potential solution is a partnership with an organization like PayPal, which easily processes international payments. The responsible party for carrying out these recommendations would be the Office of Vital Records or Statistics at the state level. Depending on the state, some of the recommendations, such as having applications available in Spanish, are already in place.

IMUMI also sees a possibility for more involvement from the Mexican Foreign Ministry (SRE), which runs the country's consulates in the United States. The SRE also has local offices in each Mexican state. We believe the SRE could, in addition to aiding in the dissemination of information, act as a point of contact for Mexicans who are outside of the United States who wish to complete this

²⁴ See IMUMI state requirement chart, attached as Appendix A.

²⁵ In several instances, IMUMI staff have found that state websites that contain links to crucial request documents are blocked from international access without the use of a virtual private network (VPN). See IMUMI state requirement chart, attached as Appendix A, for more information on states whose websites are not accessible from Mexico.

process. Having a defined point of contact in the United States could help with payment or mailing complications. The SRE could create the option to accept payment in Mexico and transfer it to an account in the United States, since they have offices in both the United States and Mexico. The SRE could also work with the Offices of Migrant Services (Oficinas de Atención a Migrantes) that exist in many Mexican states to help Mexican nationals fill out paperwork and complete the process for ordering a birth certificate, which can often be overwhelming and cumbersome.

III. Cultural Barriers

Once a parent successfully obtains their child's birth certificate, these documents often contain errors or incomplete information. Many of the issues we see at IMUMI are the result of cultural and linguistic differences between the United States and Mexico. More specifically, we frequently see naming convention differences and spelling mistakes due to a lack of Spanish language abilities of nurses at hospitals and clerks registering the names in the United States.

Naming conventions in Mexico and in many Latin American countries dictate that most individuals have one or two first names in addition to the paternal last name of each parent. In Mexico the father's paternal last name appears first, followed by the mother's paternal last name. Often, middle names do not exist in Latin American naming conventions; rather, individuals have "second first names." While the temptation exists in the United States to register "Maria Adriana" as having the first name "Maria" and the middle name "Adriana," this may cause her problems in Mexico because Mexican civil registries record both "Maria" and "Adriana" as first names and will not recognize the "middle name." Additionally, when Mexican parents are registering their newborn child in the United States, they are often prompted for one last name to put on the birth certificate and frequently use the father's name, as is the naming convention in the United States. IMUMI has also documented cases of clients who attempt to register two last names, only to be (incorrectly) informed by the hospital staff that a child can only have one last name in the United States.

It is also fairly common for parents' names to be written incorrectly on the birth certificates, either with misspellings or abbreviated versions of their complete name (for example, birth certificates may be missing one first name or last name). Misspellings often occur when registrars in the United States are unfamiliar with Spanish names; for example, we see "Muñoz" become "Munoz," and "Rodriguez" become "Rodriquez." Having an error on a United States birth certificate, whether in the child's or the parent's name, can preclude a child from registering their Mexican nationality. Unfortunately, in many states in the United States, changing a name (including simple spelling errors and/or adding a second last name) requires a court order. This requires the aid of a lawyer in the United States or physical presence in the United States if the person feels they can represent themselves in court. In the event that a parent cannot return to the United States freely and cannot pay for an attorney in the United States (which can cost, even at a "low-bono" rate, at least \$2,000 USD), the parent effectively has no options to correct their child's birth certificate. With no option to change the child's birth certificate, the only way for a parent to access education and health insurance for the child is often to register the child under a falsified Mexican birth certificate. This is due to the fact that many Mexican civil registries will not accredit a child's Mexican nationality if the Mexican nationality of either or both parents cannot be verified, or if the child's birth certificate contains errors.

If a Mexican birth certificate for the mother has the name “Maria Adriana Muñoz Rodriguez,” but the U.S. birth certificate only contains the name “Adriana Munoz,” Mexican authorities may refuse to register the child as Mexican, citing inability to confirm Mexican nationality through the mother or inconsistencies between the U.S. birth certificate and Mexican identification or birth certificates provided by the parents. Additionally, when a parent’s name is misspelled or abbreviated and does not match her identification, she can have a hard time proving her biological and legal relationship to the child more generally (for example, when attempting to register her child for employer-based health insurance or requesting a passport on behalf of her child), which creates a variety of legal and other problems in both Mexico and the United States.

Recommendations

These cultural barriers exist regardless of the legal barriers purposefully put in place to actively prevent undocumented immigrants from obtaining correct and complete identification documents, and thus require slightly different interventions. We suggest that hospital vital statistics staff in areas of the United States with large Latino immigrant populations (i.e. San Diego, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Houston) receive training in Latin American naming conventions and spellings in order to avoid these errors before they occur.

Hospital staff should inform new parents of the benefits of naming their children according to the naming conventions in their countries of origin and encourage them to make sure their own names on the birth certificate are written exactly the same as all their other identification documents, including those from their countries of origin. These conversations would also include emphasizing the fact that the parents will not put in jeopardy their child’s U.S. citizenship should they choose to use Mexican naming conventions. Support should be provided if the parents are not literate and cannot read the documents on their own. However, hospitals should not use name verification of parents as an additional way to deny them rights. For example, IMUMI represented a client with a child born in Indiana who could not add his name to a birth certificate as the father because he did not possess official U.S. identification documents.

Once hospital staff is made aware of the problems transnational families face due to birth certificate errors, they can be more helpful in guiding immigrant families through the process. We also recommend, through consulates and nonprofit organizations, the creation of “Know Your Rights” materials and campaigns to help immigrant families understand that although the custom in the United States is to provide a child with one first and one last name, parents are completely within their rights to list two first and/or two last names. At this time, we are unaware of a state law that does not allow a parent to give his or her child two last names. Transnational families need to know the benefits of using the naming conventions of their home countries prior to or at the moment of registering their child.

Lastly, we also recommend that Vital Statistics offices across the country facilitate the process for making simple corrections to birth certificates (such as correcting misspellings). Several states, such as Colorado, allow for an affidavit signed in front of a notary to be used to correct simple spelling errors. We believe this practice should be encouraged and expanded.

V. Conclusion

As exhibited in this report, there are many legal, logistical, and cultural barriers that make the process difficult or sometimes impossible for Mexican parents residing outside of the United States to access their U.S. citizen child's birth certificate and consequently their most basic identity rights. The recommendations of IMUMI in order to ensure all citizens are able to benefit from the rights they are entitled to are as follows:

» In response to legal barriers:

- Accept INEs, Matricula Consular cards, and foreign passports as primary identification documents in all 50 states.
- Allow for a notarized signature to be used instead of identification documents.
- Formalize accepted identification documents and clearly display this information online.

» In response to logistical barriers:

- Create and display online the specific instructions for ordering birth documents from abroad.
- Translate all websites and application materials into Spanish.
- Improve online ordering processes, implementing online documentation submission.
- Reduce online ordering fees.
- Accept bank transfers, online transfers through systems such as PayPal, and foreign credit cards as forms of payment.
- Increase the SRE's involvement to act as a point of contact in the United States to facilitate payment and shipping of documents.

» In response to cultural barriers:

- Train hospital staff in areas with large immigrant populations about Latin American naming conventions.
- Deploy "Know Your Rights" materials campaigns through consulates, nonprofit organizations, and community organizations such as churches, to inform immigrant communities about their right to use the naming conventions of their home countries and of the importance of having all names written correctly on birth certificates.
- Encourage vital statistics offices to facilitate the birth certificate correction process, keeping in mind the needs of parents from other cultural backgrounds who may not be literate in English and/or do not live in the United States with access to family courts.