



State-by-State Information about How to Find Family Members Who Have Been Separated by Adoption

Mutual Consent Registry: This is how all parties involved in adoption provide information on whether they are willing or unwilling to have identifying information disclosed. These registries vary from state to state but generally the consent is needed from one birth parent and either the adoptive child or adoptive parents depending on the age of the child to release this information. In most states, the parties need to file an affidavit in order to release the information.

Non identifying Information: This is information about birth parents and children that does not give away the identity of the individuals. This information could include this different information: when and where the adoptive child was born, how old the birth parents are and a brief physical description, race, ethnicity, medical information and religion of the birth parents, how much schooling the birth parents have, why the child was put up for adoption and any other children each birth parent may have. All states have provisions in place about who can obtain this information and when. Usually it is given to adoptive parents at the time of adoption. Adoptive children can request to receive this information generally once they turn 18 years of age.

Identifying Information: Information that reveals a person's identity, such as last name, address, phone number and detailed family history. In the field of adoption search and reunion, information allowing a birth parent, adoptive parent or an adoptee to be identified and located.

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Nonidentifying information may be released, upon request, to:

- The adopted person who is age 18 or older
- The birth parents
- The adoptive parent
- Custodial grandparent
- Legal guardian of a minor adopted person
- An adult descendent of an adopted person or the adoptive parent, with the written consent of the adopted person.
- The adopted person's spouse, adult stepchild, or adopted adult sibling, with the consent of the adopted person.
- The birth grandparent with the consent of the birth parent
- The legal representative of any of the above listed persons
- A former foster child who may or may not have been adopted, who is age 18 or older, and who is searching for a birth sibling who is also age 18 or older, who may or may not have been adopted and who may or may not have been in the foster care system.

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- For adoptions finalized prior to September 1, 1999:
 - Access to the adoption record is available through a confidential intermediary who must obtain consent from the parties before release of information
- For adoptions finalized on or after September 1, 1999:
 - All adoption records shall be open to inspection by persons listed above. Adoption records, as defined by § 19-1-103, include:
 - The adopted person's original birth certificate and amended birth certificate
 - The final decree of adoption
 - Any nonidentifying information
 - The final order of relinquishment
 - The order of termination of parental rights
- Nonidentifying information means information that does not disclose the name, address, place of employment, or any other material information that would lead

to the identification of the birth parents and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- The physical description of the birth parents
 - The educational background and occupation of the birth parents
 - Genetic information about the birth family
 - Medical information about the adopted person's birth
 - Social information about the birth parents
 - The placement history of the adopted person
- The State Registrar shall prescribe an updated medical history statement that a birth parent may submit with the completed contact preference form.
 - The medical history statement shall be a brief narrative statement written by the birth parent indicating medical information about the birth parent or other biological relatives.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- Any of the parties listed above may file a motion with the court to appoint a confidential intermediary to determine the whereabouts of such individual's unknown relative or relatives.
 - No one shall seek to determine the whereabouts of a relative who is younger than age 18.
- The State Registrar shall make available to any birth parent named on an original birth certificate a contact preference form on which the birth parent may state a preference regarding contact by an adult adopted person, an adult descendant of an adopted person, or a legal representative of the adopted person or descendant.
 - The contact preference form shall allow the birth parent to voluntarily include his or her contact information in the adoption record and shall provide him or her with options to indicate a preference regarding whether he or she would or would not prefer future contact with the adopted person or adult descendant of the adopted person.
 - If contacted is preferred, whether the birth parent would prefer contact directly or through a confidential intermediary or a child placement agency.
- The contact preference form shall also indicate that the birth parent can change his or her contact preference form by notifying the State Registrar in writing.

Access to original birth certificate:

The contact preference form provided by the State Registrar shall include an option for the birth parent to authorize the release of the original birth certificate. An authorization to release may be exercised and submitted to the State Registrar at any time after January 1, 2006.

Voluntary Adoption Registry, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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