



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 adoptive parents
- Identifying information is accessible to:
 - The adopted person who is age 18 or older
 - A birth sibling who is age 18 or older
 - A birth parent

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- The health history and other nonidentifying background information of the birth parents and blood relatives of the adopted person shall be given to the adoptive parents and the court no later than the date of finalization of the adoption proceedings.
- The information shall be made available upon the request, in person or in writing, of the adult adopted person.
- The information shall not be made available if it is of a nature that would tend to identify the birth parents of the adopted person, except as provided in §§ 199.570 and 199.572.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- If the birth parents have given consent, the adult adopted person may inspect the records pertaining to his or her adoption proceedings upon written request.
 - If the birth parents have not given consent, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services may notify the birth parents that the adult adopted person has made a request for information. The notification shall be by personal and confidential contact, without disclosing the identity of the adult adopted person.
- If, after a diligent effort, the secretary of the cabinet certifies that both birth parents identified in the original birth certificate are deceased or is unable to locate the parents, then a judge may order that all adoption records shall be open for inspection to the adult adopted person.
 - In any case, the court shall order that only identifying information about the birth parents be shared with the adult adopted person.
- In situations where a preadoptive brother or sister relationship existed, and one or more of these siblings was then adopted, the following procedures shall be followed on an inquiry by one or more of the siblings to the cabinet seeking information about his brother or sister:

- In all cases, an adopted person age 18 or older or a preadoptive sibling age 18 or older may file information with the cabinet about himself or herself, his or her present location, and his or her known antecedents. Stating his or her interest in being reunited with his or her preadoptive siblings and authorizing the cabinet to release such information to any preadoptive siblings who may make similar inquiry.
- In any case in which a person age 18 or older requests information about or expresses a desire in being reunited with a preadoptive sibling, the cabinet shall first determine whether the sibling has made similar inquiry. If the sibling has previously authorized release of information, the cabinet shall release the information to the sibling making inquiry.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The original birth certificate is available only upon court order.

Department for Community Based Services, Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children

Contact Info Last Updated: 07-June-2011

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