



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 adult adopted person
- The adoptive parents
- Birth parents and adult birth siblings
- Identifying information may accessed by any of the persons listed above except for the adoptive parents.

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- Within 63 days of a written request, the following information must be provided:
 - The date and place of the child's birth
 - The health and genetic history of the child, including prenatal care, condition at birth, and any drug taken by the child's mother during pregnancy.
 - Any subsequent medical, psychological, psychiatric, or dental examination done when the child was under the jurisdiction of the court.
 - Any neglect or physical, sexual, or emotional abuse suffered by the child.
 - A record of any immunizations and health care the child received while in foster care.
 - The health and genetic history of the child's birth parents and other members of the child's family.
 - The findings of any medical, psychological, or psychiatric evaluation of each parent at the time of placement.
 - If a parent is deceased, the cause of and the age at death.
 - A description of the child and the child's family of origin, including:
 - The first name of the child at birth
 - The age and sex of birth siblings
 - The child's educational background and any special educational needs.
 - The child's racial, ethnic, and religious background
 - A general description of the child's parents
 - The child's past and existing relationship with any relative, foster parent, other individuals or facility.
 - The levels of educational, occupational, professional, athletic, or artistic achievement of the child's family.
 - Hobbies, special interests, and school activities of the child's family
 - The circumstances of any order terminating the parental rights of a parent for abuse, neglect, abandonment, or other mistreatment of the child.
 - Length of time between the termination of parental rights and adoptive placement and whether the termination was voluntary or court-ordered.

- Any information necessary to determine the child's eligibility for State or Federal benefits, including financial, medical or other assistance.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- Within 63 days after a request for identifying information about an adult adopted person is received, a child-placing agency or the department shall provide in writing to the birth parent or adult birth sibling requesting the information. The adult adopted person's most recent name and address if the adult adopted person has given written consent to release the information. If written consent is not on file, a confidential intermediary may be used to locate the adult adopted person.
- Upon a written request for identifying information from an adult adopted person, including a request for the name and address of an adult birth sibling, the agency or department shall submit a clearance request form to the central adoption registry.
- After receipt of a clearance reply form from the central adoption registry, the agency or department shall notify the adopted person in writing of the identifying information to which the adopted person is entitled, or, if the identifying information cannot be released, the reason why the information cannot be released.
- For adoptions finalized between May 28 , 1945 and September 12, 1980:
 - Identifying information shall be released to the adult adopted person on each birth parent who has consented to the release, or both birth parents if both have consented or if one or both parents are deceased.
- For adoptions finalized before May 28, 1945 or after September 2, 1980:
 - Identifying information may be released to an adult adopted person unless the birth parent has filed a statement currently in effect with the central adoption registry denying consent to have identifying information released.

Access to original birth certificate:

- A copy of the original birth certificate may be provided to the adult adopted person upon request when accompanied by a copy of a central adoption registry clearance reply form, or by court order.

Central Adoption Registry, Michigan Department of Human Services

Contact Info Last Updated: 26-April-2011

Web Link: <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5461---,00.html>

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