



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.

MISSOURI

Nonidentifying information may be released, upon request, to:

- The adoptive parents
- The child's legal guardians
- The adult adopted person
- The adult adopted person's lineal descendants if the adopted person is deceased.
- Identifying information is available to the adult adopted person or the adult adopted person's lineal descendants if the adopted person is deceased.

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- Nonidentifying information, if known, concerning undisclosed birth parents or siblings shall be provided upon written request. Nonidentifying information can include the physical description, nationality, religious background, and medical history of the birth parents or siblings.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- An adult adopted person, or his or her lineal descendants if he or she is deceased, may make a written request to the court for information identifying his or her birth parents. If the birth parents have consented to the release of identifying information, the court shall disclose that information. If the birth parents have not consented to the release of the information, the court shall, within 10 days of receipt of the request, notify in writing the child-placing agency or juvenile court having access to the requested information.
- If the agency or court is unable to notify the birth parent within 3 months, the identifying information shall not be disclosed to the adult adopted person. If an affidavit executed by a birth parent authorizing the release of information is filed with the court, the court shall disclose the identifying information.
- Any adult adopted person whose adoption was finalized in this State or whose birth parents had their parental rights terminated in this State may request the court to secure and disclose identifying information concerning an adult sibling. Identifying information pertaining exclusively to the adult sibling, whether part of the permanent record of a file in the court or in an agency, shall be released only upon consent of that adult sibling.
- The department shall maintain a registry for birth parents, adult siblings, and adult adopted persons to indicate their desire to be contacted by each other. At the time of registration, a birth parent or adult sibling may consent in writing to the release of identifying information to an adult adopted person. If such consent has not been executed and the division believes that match has occurred, the division shall

make confidential contact with the birth parents or adult siblings and with the adult adopted person. The birth parent, adult sibling, or adult adopted person may refuse to go forward with any further contact between the parties when contacted by the division.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The State Registrar shall file the original certificate of birth with the certificate of decree of adoption and such file may be opened by the State Registrar only upon receipt of a certified copy of an order as decreed by the court of adoption.

Missouri Division of Family Services, Adoption Information Registry

Contact Info Last Updated: 29-April-2009

Web Link: <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/office/stlouscity.htm>

Phone: (314) 340-7000

Fax: (314) 340-7117

St. Louis MO 63101