



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 following persons may use the passive voluntary adoption reunion registry:
 - Birth parents and adult birth siblings
 - The adult adopted person
 - Surviving relatives of a deceased adopted person
 - The parent or adult sibling of a deceased birth parent
 - The adoptive parent of a deceased adopted person

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- The passive voluntary adoption reunion registry shall provide for the transmission of nonidentifying health and social and genetic history of the adult adopted persons, birth parents, and other specified persons. Genetic and social history includes the following information that is available:
 - Medical history
 - Health status
 - Cause of and age at death
 - Height, weight, and eye and hair color
 - Ethnic origins
 - Religion, if any
- Health history includes, when obtainable, the child's health status and medical history at the time of placement for adoption. Including: neonatal, psychological, developmental, physiological, and medical care history.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- The persons listed above may use the registry to register their willingness to the release of identifying information to each other by submitting a signed affidavit.
 - The affidavit gives authority to the registry to release identifying information related to the registrant to the other relevant persons who register.
 - Each registration shall be accompanied by the birth certificate of the registrant.
- A registry shall release only information necessary for identifying a birth parent, adult adopted person, or adult birth sibling, and shall not release information of any kind pertaining to the adoptive parents, siblings who are children of the adoptive parents, and the income of anyone.

- Any eligible registrant or any adoptive parent may file with the registry an objection to the release of identifying information.
 - When an objection to the release of identifying information has been filed, the court shall hear the objection of the filing party prior to the release of identifying information to determine whether it is in the best interest of the parties to release identifying information.

Access to original birth certificate:

- An uncertified copy of the original birth certificate can be obtained through the adoption registry by the adult adopted person when each birth parent named on the certificate has registered.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Family Court, Juvenile Division

Contact Info Last Updated: 28-March-2011

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