



## 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.

# CALIFORNIA

## **Nonidentifying information may be released, upon request, to:**

- The adopted person who is age 18 or older
- The adoptive parent of an adopted person who is under age 18
- Identifying information is available to:
  - The adopted person who is age 21 or older
  - The birth parent of an adult adopted person
  - The adoptive person of an adopted person who is under age 21

## **Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:**

- Nonidentifying information about the birth parents and adopted person, such as: medical history, scholastic information, psychological evaluations, and developmental history, is provided to the adopting parents.
- The department or licensed adoption agency shall provide a copy of the medical report, in the manner the department prescribes by regulation, to any of the following persons upon the person's request:
  - A person who has been adopted who is at least age 18 or presents a certified copy of the person's marriage certificate
  - The adoptive parent of a person under age 18
- A person who is denied access to a medical report may petition the court for review of the reasonableness of the department's, or licensed adoption agency's decision.
- The names and addresses of any persons contained in the report shall be removed unless the person requesting the report has previously received the information.

## **Mutual access to identifying information:**

- The adopted person who is 21 or older may request the release of the identity of his or her birth parents, and their most current address shown in the records of the department or licensed adoption agency. If the birth parent or parents have indicated consent to the disclosure in writing.

- The birth parent may request disclosure of the name, and most current address of the adopted person. If the adopted person is age 21 or older and has indicated in writing that he or she wishes his or her name and address to be disclosed.
- The adoptive parent of an adopted person under age 21 may request disclosure of the identity of a birth parent and the birth parent's most current address shown in the records. If the department or licensed adoption agency finds that a medical necessity or other extraordinary circumstances justify the disclosure.
- If an adult adopted person and the birth parents have each filed a written consent with the department or licensed adoption agency, the department or agency may arrange for contact between those persons.
- Information about a birth sibling may be released to another sibling provided both are age 21 or older and have provided a written waiver.
- Photos or letters and other personal property may be released upon request if the adopted person is age 18 or older and other conditions have been met.

### **Access to original birth certificate:**

- The original birth certificate is available only by order of the court

### **California Department of Social Services, Adoptions Support Unit**

Contact Info Last Updated: 22-March-2011

Web Link: [http://www.cildsworld.ca.gov/CFSDAdopti\\_309.htm](http://www.cildsworld.ca.gov/CFSDAdopti_309.htm)

Phone: (916) 574-1333

Fax: (916) 574-1313

Sacramento, CA 95825