



## 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.

# MARYLAND

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

- Only the following persons may register with the adoption registry for exchange of identifying information:
  - Birth parents and siblings
  - An adopted person, age 21 or older, who does not have a birth sibling under the age of 21 with the same adoptive parents.
- Nonidentifying and medical information shall be available to:
  - The adoptive parents
  - The adopted person
  - The birth parents

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

- A local department shall make reasonable efforts to compile and make available to a prospective adoptive parent a comprehensive medical and mental health history of the prospective adoptive child.
  - On request of an adoptive parent, a local department shall make reasonable efforts to compile a pertinent medical and mental health history of each of the adoptive child's birth parents, if available to the local department, and to make that history available to the adoptive parent.
  - A medical or mental health history may not contain identifying information about a parent or former parent.
- On request of an adopted person, adoptive parent, or birth parent, a local department shall provide information in its adoption record on the adopted person. The records that are accessed may not contain any identifying information.
- If, after a hearing on a petition of an adopted person or birth parent, a court is satisfied that the adopted person, a blood relative of the adopted person, or a birth parent urgently needs medical information not in department and court records, the court may appoint an intermediary to try to contact the adopted person or a birth parent for the information.

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

- To register with the Registry, an individual shall submit a notarized affidavit containing identifying information, including the individual's current name, any previous name by which the individual was known, address, and telephone number. A registrant may withdraw at any time by submitting an affidavit.
- On receipt of an affidavit, the administration shall:

- Attempt to match registrants or to provide matching information
- If a match is made, direct the child-placing agency or the local department to notify the registrants through a confidential contact.

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

- For adoptions finalized on or after January 1, 2000:
  - An adopted person who is at least age 21 may apply to the secretary for a copy of his or her original birth certificate
  - If an adopted person is at least age 21, a birth parent may apply to the secretary for a copy of the adopted person's original birth certificate
- A birth parent may file with the director of a disclosure veto to bar disclosure of information about that parent in an accessible record. The birth parent may also cancel a disclosure veto and refile a disclosure veto at any time.
- Except as provided below, the secretary shall give to each applicant who meets the requirements of this section a copy of each record that the applicant requested and that the secretary has on file.
- Whenever a birth parent applies for a record, the secretary shall redact from the copy all information as to:
  - The other birth parent if that parent has filed a disclosure veto
  - The adopted person and each adoptive parent if the adopted person has filed a disclosure veto
- Whenever an adopted person applies for a record, the secretary shall redact from the copy all information as to the birth parent if that parent has filed a disclosure veto.

### **Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry, Maryland Social Services Administration**

Contact Info Last Updated: 18-May-2011

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