



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 adopted person who is age 18 or older
- The birth parents
- The adoptive parents
- Identifying information is available to:
 - The adopted person
 - The birth parents
 - Blood relatives

Access to nonidentifying information limited to:

- The department or the licensed child-placing agency may share with the adoptive parents all information it has available about the minor child being placed for adoption. The department or the licensed child-placing agency shall delete any information that would tend to identify a birth parent.
- Requests for nonidentifying social or medical information may be made by an adopted person who is age 18 or older; a parent of an adopted person under the age of 18 or a birth parent.
- When any person listed above submits a request for nonidentifying social or medical information, the department or agency shall disclose such information relating to the adopted person, the birth parents, or the blood relatives. The department or the agency shall delete any information from the health history or background that would tend to be identifying. Court approval is not required for information disclosed under this paragraph.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- If the parties mutually agree to the release of identifying information, it shall be released as provided in this paragraph. Only the following people may authorize the disclosure of identifying information about an adopted person, a birth parent, or a blood relative:
 - An adopted person who is age 18 or older
 - The adoptive parents of an adopted person under age 18
 - A birth parent at the time of surrender or later
- Any release may be revoked or amended at any time. The person signing the release or its revocation shall file a copy with the department or licensed child-placing agency. The department or licensed child-placing agency shall then file a copy of the release with the court that heard the adoption petition. Court approval is not required for release of identifying information when a release has been signed, and the person affirms his or her desire to be contacted.

- Court approval shall be required if the parties do not agree, if they cannot be contacted, or if the department or agency questions the safety of releasing information.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The original birth certificate is subject to inspection only upon written order of the court for good cause shown.

New Hampshire Department of State, Division of Vital Records

Contact Info Last Updated: 25-January-2012

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