



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.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Nonidentifying information may be released, upon request, to:

- The adoptive parents
- The adopted person
- The birth parents
- Identifying information may be accessed by the following persons:
 - The adopted person who is age 21 or older
 - The birth parents and siblings

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- The adoption agency may furnish nonidentifying information to: adoptive parents, birth parents, or adopted persons. When, in the sole discretion of the chief executive officer of the agency, the information would serve the best interests of the persons concerned.
- Nonidentifying information includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - The health and medical histories of the birth parents
 - The health and medical history of the adopted person
 - The adopted person's general family background without name references or geographical designations.
 - The length of time the adopted person has been in the care and custody of the adoptive parent.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- The public adoption agency responsible for the placement shall furnish to an adopted person the identity of the adopted person's birth parents and siblings, and to the birth parents and siblings the identity of the adopted person under the following conditions:
 - The adopted person is age 21 or older, and the applicants apply in writing to the adoption agency for the information.
 - The agency has a current file containing affidavits from the adopted person and the birth parents and siblings that they are willing to have the identities revealed to each other.
 - The agency has established and maintained a confidential register that contains the names and addresses of the adopted person and birth parents as well as the siblings who have filed affidavits.

- The adopted person and his or her birth parents and siblings have undergone counseling by the adoption agency concerning the effects of the disclosure.
 - The adoption agency may charge a fee for the services, but services must not be denied because of inability to pay.
- No disclosure may be made within 30 days after compliance with these conditions. The director of the adoption agency may waive the 30-day period in extreme circumstances. The agency may delay disclosure for 20 days from the expiration date of the 30-day period to allow time to apply to a court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin the disclosure for good cause shown.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The original birth certificate is placed in a special sealed file by the State Registrar. The statute does not specify a procedure for access to the original certificate.

Adoption Reunion Registry, South Carolina Department of Social Services

Contact Info Last Updated: 04-May-2011

Web Link: <http://dss.sc.gov/content/about/counties/adoptions.aspx>? E-

mail: June.scruggs@dss.sc.gov

Phone: (803) 898-8980

Fax: (803) 898-9053

Columbia SC 29204