



## 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 DAKOTA

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

- The adoptive parent
- The adopted person who is age 18 or older
- Identifying information may be released to:
  - The adopted person
  - The birth parents

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

- Nonidentifying information, if known, shall be made available to the adoptive parent or to the adopted person who is age 18 or older upon written request and proper proof of identification.
  - Information may be withheld only if it would tend to identify a birth relative. Nonidentifying information includes:
    - The age of the birth parents at the time of the child's birth
    - The heritage of the birth parents, including nationality, ethnic background, and race.
    - The number of years of school completed by the birth parents at the time of the child's birth.
    - The general physical appearance of the birth parents at the time of the child's birth. In terms of height, weight, color of hair, eyes, skin, and other information of a similar nature.
    - The talents, hobbies, and special interests of the birth parents.
    - The existence of any other children born to either birth parent before the child's birth.
    - Whether the termination of parental rights was voluntary or involuntary.
    - The religion of the birth parents
    - The occupations of the birth parents in general terms
    - The health of the birth parents and blood relatives
    - The relationship between the birth parents

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

- The Department of Social Services shall maintain a voluntary registry of adopted persons and birth parents, of who have presented a consent regarding the release of identifying information about them.

- Any consent shall indicate to whom the information may be released and whether the adopted person desires release of this identifying information after his or her death.
- A person who uses this voluntary register may revoke his or her consent at any time.

**Access to original birth certificate:**

- The original birth certificate is available upon order of the court.

**South Dakota Voluntary Adoption Registry, Department of Social Services,  
Adoption Unit**

Contact Info Last Updated: 24-April-2013

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