



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 following persons may register with the mutual consent voluntary adoption registry:
 - The adult adopted person
 - An adult sibling
 - The birth parents

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- Any information compiled relating to medical history, medical and developmental history, and social history of the person to be adopted shall be made available at any time by the clerk of court, the department, or any agency that made the placement to:
 - The adopting parents
 - The adopted person who is age 21 or older
 - Any person approved by the department if the person uses this information solely for the purposes of conducting a legitimate medical research project or of treating a patient in a medical facility.
 - A descendant of an adopted person
- The identity of the adopted person's birth parents shall not be disclosed

Mutual access to identifying information:

- The State Registrar shall reveal the identity of the birth parent to the adult adopted person or the identity of the adult adopted person to the birth parent, shall notify the parties that the requests have been matched, and shall disclose the identifying information to those parties if all of the following conditions are met:
 - A birth parent has filed a request and provided consent to the disclosure of his or her identity to the adult adopted person upon request of the adult adopted person.
 - An adult adopted person has filed a request and provided consent to the disclosure of his or her identity to a birth parent upon request of the birth parent.
 - The State Registrar has been provided sufficient information to make the requested match
- If the adult adopted person has a sibling who is a minor and who also has been adopted, the request will be denied.
- The State Registrar shall reveal the identity of the adult adopted person to an adult sibling if the following conditions are met:

- An adult adopted person has filed a request and provided consent to the disclosure of his or her identity to an adult sibling.
- The adult sibling has filed a request and provided consent to the revelation of his or her identity to the adult adopted person.
- The State Registrar has been provided with sufficient information to make the requested match
- A person who has filed a request or provided consent may withdraw the consent at any time prior to the release of any information by filing a written withdrawal- of-consent statement with the State Registrar. The adult adopted person, adult sibling, and birth parent shall notify the State Registrar of any change in the information contained in a filed request or consent.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The original birth certificate may not be inspected except under order of a court. The State Registrar shall, upon the application of an adult adopted person, a birth parent, an adoptive parent, or the legal representative of the any of the former, inspect the original birth certificate and reveal to the applicant the date of the adoption and the name and address of the court that issued the adoption decree.

Iowa Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry, Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Vital Records

Web Link: <http://www.iowalegalaid.org/resource/adoption-records-in-iowa>

Phone: (515) 281-6263

Des Moines IA 50319