



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 have access to family information:
 - The adoptive parents or a guardian of the adopted person
 - The adopted person who is age 18 or older
 - If the adopted person has died, the adopted person's spouse if he or she is the legal parent of the adopted person's child or the guardian of any child of the adopted person.
 - If the adopted person has died any child of the adopted person who is age 18 or older.
 - The birth parents
 - Other birth children of the birth parents

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- Nonidentifying information may be released upon request to any of the persons listed above.
- Nonidentifying information may include the health and genetic history of the birth parents and members of the birth parents' families.

Mutual access to identifying information:

- Court personnel, the division, an attorney assisting in a direct placement adoption, or an agency may provide partial or complete identifying information between a birth parent and adoptive parent. When the parties mutually agree to share specific identifying information and make a written request to the court, the division, or the agency.
- A person may petition the court to obtain information relating to an adoption in the possession of the court, the division, or any agency or attorney involved in the adoption.
 - The court shall not release identifying information unless the person requesting the information has established a compelling need for disclosure or consent has been obtained.
- An adopted person age 18 or older or a birth parent may file at any time with the court and the agency, division, or attorney who participated in the adoption a notarized statement granting consent, withholding consent, or withdrawing a consent previously given for the release of confidential information.

- If an adopted person who is 18 or older and the birth mother or birth father have filed consent to the release of confidential information, the court may disclose the information, except identifying information relating to a birth parent who did not grant written consent.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The original birth certificate can be made available only upon a court order or as prescribed by rule.

Arizona Confidential Intermediary Program, Arizona Supreme Court Web

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