



## 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.

# ILLINOIS

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

- The following persons may apply to the Illinois Adoption Registry:
  - Either birth parent
  - If the birth parent is deceased:
    - The adopted person's adult birth sibling
    - The adopted person's birth aunt or birth uncle
  - Any adult adopted person
  - Any adoptive parent
  - Legal guardian of an adopted person under age 21
  - If the adopted person is deceased:
    - Any surviving spouse
    - Adult child
    - Any adoptive parent
    - Legal guardian
- Nonidentifying information may be provided to the adoptive parents, the adopted person, or legal guardian who is a registrant of the Illinois Adoption Registry.

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

- The adoptive parents shall receive in writing the following nonidentifying information, if known, not later than the date of placement of the child:
  - The birth parents' age
  - The birth parents' race, religion, and ethnic background
  - The general physical appearance of the birth parents
  - The birth parents' education, occupation, hobbies, interests, and talents
  - The existence of any other children born to the birth parents
  - Information about birth grandparents, their reason for emigrating into the United States, if applicable, and country of origin.
  - The relationship between the birth parents
  - Detailed medical and mental health histories of the child, the birth parents, and their immediate relatives.
  - The actual date and place of birth of the adopted person
- No information provided under this subsection shall disclose the name or last known address of the birth parents, grandparents, the siblings of the birth parents, the adopted person, or any other relative of the adopted person.
- Any adopted person age 18 or older shall be given the information listed above upon request

- The Illinois Adoption Registry shall release any nonidentifying information above that appears on the certified copy of the original birth certificate or the Certificate of Adoption to an adopted person, adoptive parent, or legal guardian who is a registrant of the Illinois Adoption Registry.

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

- The Department of Public Health shall establish and maintain a registry for the purpose of allowing mutually consenting members of birth and adoptive families to exchange identifying and medical information.
  - Identifying information shall mean any one or more of the following:
    - The name and last known address of the consenting person or persons
    - A copy of the Illinois Adoption Registry Application of the consenting person or persons
    - A noncertified copy of the original birth certificate of an adult adopted person
- Each registrant may indicate whether exchange of information is authorized or denied.
  - Written authorization from all parties must be received prior to disclosure of any identifying information.
  - If information is disclosed, the department shall redact it to remove any identifying information about any party who has not consented to the disclosure of identifying information.
  - Any other disclosure of information requires a court order.
- Any adult adopted person, adoptive parent or legal guardian of an adopted minor, or birth parent of an adult adopted person may petition the court for appointment of a confidential intermediary for the purpose of:
  - Exchanging medical information
  - Obtaining identifying information
  - Arranging contact with one or more mutually consenting birth relatives.
- Beginning January 1, 2006, any adult adopted person, adoptive parent or legal guardian of a minor adopted person, any birth parent, sibling, aunt, or uncle of an adult adopted person, or any surviving child, adoptive parent, or surviving spouse of a deceased adopted person who wishes to petition the court for the appointment of a confidential intermediary shall be required to accompany their petition with proof of registration with the Illinois Adoption Registry and Medical Information Exchange.

### **Access to original birth certificate:**

- Beginning November 15, 2011, any adult adopted person who was born in Illinois on or after January 1, 1946, may complete and file with the registry a request for a noncertified copy of an original birth certificate.

- In cases in which the adopted person is deceased, his or her surviving adult child or spouse who has registered with the registry may request a noncertified copy of the original birth certificate.
- If the registry confirms that a requesting adult adopted person, the parent of a requesting adult child of a deceased adopted person, or the husband or wife of a requesting surviving spouse was not the object of a Denial of Information Exchange filed by a birth parent on or before December 31, 2010, and that no birth parent named on the original birth certificate has filed a Birth Parent Preference Form when Option E (prohibit the release of identifying information) was selected prior to the receipt of a request for a noncertified copy of an original birth certificate, the registry shall provide the adult adopted person or his or her surviving adult child or spouse with an unaltered noncertified copy of the adopted person's original birth certificate.

**Illinois Adoption Registry, Illinois Department of Public Health**

Contact Info Last Updated: 08-December-2013

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