



## 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 adoptivee to be identified and located.

# DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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

- This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed

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

- This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed

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

- All records are sealed and may not be inspected except upon order of the court, and then only if the welfare of the child is promoted.

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

- The original birth certificate is a sealed record that cannot be opened without order of the court.

## **District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency**

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