



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 adoptive parent or legal guardian of an adopted person
- The adopted person who is age 18 or older or has been emancipated
- A deceased adopted person's direct descendant who is age 18 or older, or a parent or guardian of a descendant who is under age 18.
- The adopted person's birth parent, grandparent, or sibling
- Identifying information may be disclosed to:
 - An adopted person who is age 18 or older or has been emancipated
 - A deceased adopted person's direct descendant who is age 18 or older or the parent or guardian of a direct descendant who is younger than age 18.
 - The birth parent
 - A birth sibling who is age 18 or older

Access to nonidentifying information is limited to:

- Any person listed above may request a detailed summary of any relevant report about the adopted person, the birth parents, and the adopted person's genetic history, including the information required by § 2-105 of this title.
- This report shall exclude identifying information concerning an individual who has not signed a waiver of confidentiality. The report shall include all of the following nonidentifying information that is reasonably available:
 - A social and health history of the child
 - Any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse known to have been suffered by the child
 - Enrollment and performance in school, results of educational testing, and any special educational needs
 - An account of the child's past and existing relationships with any relative, foster parent, or other persons
 - A social and health history of the minor's parents and extended family, including:
 - Health and genetic history, including any known hereditary condition or disease
 - Racial, ethnic, and religious background and general physical description
 - Educational, vocational, athletic, artistic, or scientific achievement or interests
 - The existence of any other child of the parents

Mutual access to identifying information:

- For adoptions finalized prior to July 1, 1986, the registry shall disclose identifying information if the birth parent has filed any kind of document that clearly indicates that he or she consents to such disclosures.
- For adoptions finalized on or after July 1, 1986, the registry shall disclose identifying information without requiring the consent of the birth parent. Unless the birth parent has filed a request for nondisclosure in accordance with the provisions of § 6-106 of this title and has not withdrawn the request.
- Identifying information about the adopted person shall be disclosed to the birth parent if the adoptive parent of the adopted person who is younger than age 18 consents to the disclosure.
- Identifying information about a deceased adopted person shall be disclosed to the birth parent or sibling upon request if the deceased adopted person's direct descendant is age 18 or older and consents to the disclosure; or the parent or guardian of a direct descendant who is younger than age 18 consents to the disclosure.
- Identifying information about a birth sibling shall be disclosed to the adopted person upon request if both the sibling and the adopted person are age 18 or older and the sibling consents to the disclosure.
- A birth parent may prevent disclosure of identifying information by filing a request for nondisclosure with the registry. A request for nondisclosure may be withdrawn by a birth parent at any time.

Access to original birth certificate:

- The original birth certificate may be released upon request to an adopted person who is age 18 or older and who has access to identifying information.
- The original birth certificate is unsealed and becomes public record 99 years after the date of the adopted person's birth.

Vermont Adoption Registry, Department for Children and Families

Contact Info Last Updated: 07-April-2011

Web Link: <http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/districtoffices.html>

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