

## HOW DOES THE LAW AFFECT ADOPTIVE PARENTS?

The Department of Children and Families must attempt to notify the adoptive parents of a minor child when written information is received from a licensed physician verifying that a birth parent or biological sibling has developed a genetically transferable disease or condition.

Adoptive parents may request medical/genetic information and non-identifying social history information about their adopted child's birth relatives.

## HOW DOES THE LAW AFFECT SIBLINGS?

The current adoption search law does NOT allow siblings to request searches for each other. Some medical information about siblings may be included in the non-identifying social history record.

## OTHER PERSONS

The guardian or legal custodian of an adopted person or of an individual whose birth parents terminated parental rights, the offspring of an adopted person if he or she is at least 18, and an agency or social worker assigned to provide services to the adopted person may also receive medical and genetic information under this program.

Physicians can direct the program to pass on genetically transferable disease information about adopted persons, individuals, birth parents or siblings to adopted persons, individuals or birth parents.

## ADULTS WHOSE BIRTH PARENTS TERMINATED PARENTAL RIGHTS

Adults who were not legally adopted as children but whose birth parents terminated parental rights in Wisconsin have the same services available under this program as adult adoptees.

## SEARCH FEES

An hourly fee is charged for the release of medical, genetic and non-identifying social history information contained in existing closed adoption records. The maximum charge for preparing these materials is limited to \$150.

An hourly fee is also charged for a search for birth parents.

Some applicants may be eligible for a fee reduction. Additional information about Program fees can be found on the Adoption Records Search Program application form.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS PROGRAM OR TO REQUEST AN APPLICATION PACKET, CONTACT:

Adoption Records Search Program  
P.O. Box 8916  
Madison, WI 53708-8916  
(608) 266-7163

### You can e-mail either:

[Jacy.Boldebuck@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Jacy.Boldebuck@wisconsin.gov)

[Judy.Ranney@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Judy.Ranney@wisconsin.gov)

### Website:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children>

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# STATE OF WISCONSIN



## ADOPTION RECORDS SEARCH PROGRAM

A SPECIALIZED PROGRAM FOR:

- ADULT ADOPTED PERSONS
- ADULTS WHOSE BIRTH PARENTS TERMINATED PARENTAL RIGHTS BUT WERE NOT ADOPTED
- ADOPTIVE PARENTS
- BIRTH PARENTS



DIVISION OF SAFETY AND PERMANENCE

## THE WISCONSIN ADOPTION RECORDS SEARCH LAW

Wisconsin's adoption record search law is set forth in sections 48.432 and 48.433, Wisconsin Statutes. It is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

The primary purpose of this law is to help persons who have been adopted or whose birth parents have terminated their parental rights, to obtain information about themselves and their birth relatives. This information may include:

- Nonidentifying social history information.
- Medical and genetic information about birth parents and members of their families, including routine health information and any known hereditary or degenerative diseases.
- Most recent names and address of birth parents in Department of Children and Families files.
- A copy of the impounded birth certificate (the birth certificate on file prior to the time of adoption).

The law specifies conditions and protections under which the search may be conducted. Birth parents have the option to file a notarized statement (affidavit) with the Department consenting to the release of their identities or to refuse to allow the release of their identities.

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW

The law requires the State Department of Children and Families (DCF) to assist eligible persons to obtain medical and genetic information about birth relatives or locate their birth parents.

The law establishes procedures for adults whose birth parents have terminated parental rights and adopted persons to search for their birth parents.

The law also:

- Requires Circuit Courts to report medical and genetic information on both birth parents and relatives to the Department at the time parental rights are terminated in Wisconsin.
- Requires the Department to maintain a permanent centralized birth record file on all adoptions completed within the State.
- Allows adoptive parents to request medical and genetic and nonidentifying social history information from existing records or to request updated medical or genetic information on birth parents.
- Allows persons to petition the Circuit Court for an order requiring release of information not available under provisions of the Adoption Records Search Program – after a diligent search has been completed.

### HOW DOES THE LAW AFFECT ADOPTED PERSONS?

A person who was adopted in Wisconsin who is now age 18 or older may request a search for his or her birth parents. A birth parent must file an affidavit of consent before any identifying information can be released.

If an affidavit is not already on file, a search for the birth parent will be conducted. The birth parent is then contacted and given the option of signing an affidavit to release identifying information – or refusing.

When paternity was legally established, both birth parents must file affidavits before the identity of either one of them may be released to the adopted person. If the adopted person was born in Wisconsin, a copy of his or her impounded birth certificate can be released once the birth parents have filed affidavits.

An adopted person can also request non-identifying information from his or her adoption file and updated medical and genetic information about his or her birth parents and relatives. If updated information is requested, a search for the birth parent will be conducted to obtain the information.

The Department makes every effort to notify an adopted person or his or her adoptive parents (if not yet 18 years old), if we receive information that a birth parent or biological sibling has developed a genetically transferable disease or condition.

### HOW DOES THE LAW AFFECT BIRTH PARENTS?

A birth parent may file a notarized affidavit with the Department consenting to the release of his/her identity and location and a copy of the impounded birth certificate to the adopted person.

A birth parent may revoke the affidavit (withdraw their consent) at any time by writing to the Adoption Records Search Program.

Birth parents are required to provide medical/genetic information to the court at the time parental rights are terminated. Updated medical/genetic information may be filed with the Department any time. Forms are available from Adoption Records Search Program for this purpose.

Adopted persons may request the Program to notify birth parent(s), if they develop a genetically transferable disease or condition.

A birth parent may request the Program to notify an adoptee, if a genetically transferable disease or condition is present in the family. A statement from a licensed physician is required.

There is no statutory provision for a birth parent to request a search for his or her birth child.