

# Adoption Information Registry

If you are adopted, or if you placed a child for adoption, or if you are the biological sibling of an adopted person, you may wish to learn more about your birth family. The New York State Health Department's Adoption Registry can help and even facilitate a reunion.

## What kinds of information are available?

Three kinds of information are available: non-identifying, identifying and medical.

- **Non-identifying Information:** If you are adopted you can get non-identifying information about your birth parents even if they do not register with the Adoption Registry or consent to sharing. This includes their general appearance, religion, ethnicity, race, education, occupation, etc; and the name of the agency that arranged the adoption, and the facts and circumstances relating to the nature and cause of the adoption.
- **Identifying Information:** If all are registered and all have given their final consents, adoptees and their birth parents, or adoptees and their biological siblings can share their current names and addresses. If only one parent signed the surrender agreement or consented to the adoption, then the registration of the other parent is not needed for the exchange of identifying information between the adoptee and the registered birth parent.
- **Medical Information:** Birth parents can give medical and psychological information to the Registry any time after the adoption. If the adoptee is already registered, the information will be shared with him or her. If the adoptee is not registered, the information will be kept until the adoptee registers. The information is important to adoptees because it can indicate if they have a higher risk of some diseases. Medical information updates must be certified by a licensed health care provider.

## The Adoption Information Registry cannot:

- search for missing registrants;
- release copies of original birth certificates or adoption records;
- release non-identifying information or medical information to birth parents;
- respond to medical emergencies.

## Who can register?

The Registry can only accept a registration from an adoptee who was born and adopted in New York State; and is at least 18 years old. However, an adoptee who is under 18 years old can register to receive medical information updates if an adoptive parent signs the application.

A birth parent may not register unless the adoptee is eligible to register and the birth parent's consent to the adoption or signature on an instrument of surrender was required at the time of the adoption.

The Adoption Registry may not accept a biological sibling's application unless the adoptee was born and adopted in New York State and is at least 18 years old.

## How long will it take?

Any medical information already submitted by birth parents will be given shortly after an adoptee registers. It will take at least six months to obtain general non-identifying information. It may take years to receive identifying information or it may never be available. This is because it cannot be released until all necessary parties have registered and consented to the release of the information.

## What are the fees?

There is no fee to register with the Adoption Registry. However, some adoption agencies charge up to \$50 to provide non-identifying information to the Adoption Registry. The adoptee must pay any agency fee.

## What if the adoption was handled by an adoption agency?

Some adoption agencies will provide non-identifying information directly to an adoptee. They can provide information more quickly than the Adoption Registry. An adoptee can contact the adoption agency to ask what services they provide and what fees they charge for providing those services. Adoption agencies are entitled to a registration fee not exceeding \$20. The adoption agency is also entitled to a non-identifying information report processing fee not to exceed \$50. Most adoption agencies do not charge a fee.

## How do I register?

If you want to register, you must submit an application. The application must be signed and notarized.

To request an application, write to:

*Adoption Information Registry  
New York State Department of Health  
P.O. Box 2602  
Albany, NY 12220-2602*

\*\*Please be certain to include your name, mailing address and the type of application you need (i.e., adoptee, birth parent or biological sibling).

**If you prefer, you can download your application as a PDF document from the choices listed below:**

- [Adoptee Registration Form](#) (pdf, 24 kb, 2 pp.)
- [Birth Parent Registration Form](#) (pdf, 18 kb, 2 pp.)
- [Biological Sibling Registration Form](#) (pdf, 19 kb, 2 pp.)

## Printing Instructions:

- Use the "Print" button in the **Adobe® Reader®** menu bar to print the application.
- Do not attempt to print the application using the print command in your browser.

## Birth Parent Consent Program

The services of the Adoption Information Registry have been expanded so that birth parents can register whether they give consent or do not give consent for the release of their contact information (name and address) to the adoptee. If the parents have registered their consent, the contact information will be released to the adoptee only after he or she reaches at least eighteen years of age and registers with the Adoption Information Registry.

The new service is referred to as the Birth Parent Consent Program and began on November 3, 2008.

The Birth Parent Consent Program **requires** birth parents to complete the Birth Parent Registration Form (DOH-4455) at the time of surrender. The form will be filed by the attorney or the adoption agency handling the adoption with the court. The court will forward the form to the Adoption Information Registry when the adoption is finalized.

The Birth Parent Consent Program does not replace the traditional Adoption Information Registry and differs from the traditional Adoption Information Registry in two important ways.

- First, birth parents who are currently placing a child for adoption are **required** to complete the Form DOH-4455 at the time of surrender.
- Second, a birth parent who gives permission for the release of his or her contact information via Form DOH-4455 will not be asked for final consent nor will they be notified of the release of their contact information to the adoptee when the adoptee registers.

Birth parents whose children have already been adopted may also participate in the Birth Parent Consent Program by completing and submitting Form DOH-4455 directly to the Adoption Information Registry. Please note that the adoptee must still be born and adopted in New York State to participate in the Birth Parent Consent Program.

For more information, please consult the attorney or adoption agency handling your child's adoption or the back of Form DOH-4455.

**You can download DOH-4455 as a PDF document below:**

[Adoption Information Registry Birth Parent Registration Form](#) (pdf, 121 kb, 2 pp.)

### **Printing Instructions:**

- Use the "Print" button in the **Adobe® Reader®** menu bar or the "Print Form" button that appears in the form.
- Do not attempt to print the application using the print command in your browser.

Questions or comments: [vr@health.state.ny.us](mailto:vr@health.state.ny.us)

Revised: March 2012