

## HOW DOES THE LAW AFFECT ADOPTIVE PARENTS?

The DCF 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 parents.

## OTHER PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO REQUEST MEDICAL/GENETIC INFORMATION

- 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.
- an agency or social worker assigned to provide services to the adopted person.
- The parent or guardian of a deceased adoptee's child.

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 AFFIDAVIT OR APPLICATION PACKET, CONTACT:

Adoption Records Search Program  
DCF/DSP  
P.O. Box 8916  
Madison, WI 53708-8916  
(608) 422-6928

### E-mail:

[dcfadoptionssearch@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfadoptionssearch@wisconsin.gov)

### Website:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/adoption/search>

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please call (608) 266-8787. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.

## 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 (DCF).

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:

- Non-identifying 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 DCF 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 DCF consenting to the release of their identities or to refuse to allow the release of their identities.

Adult adoptees may also file a consent allowing for their contact information to be released to a birth parent who requests it.

### ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAW

The law requires DCF to assist eligible persons to obtain medical and genetic information from their birth parents and/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 DCF at the time parental rights are terminated in Wisconsin.
- Requires DCF to maintain a permanent centralized birth record file on all adoptions completed within the State.
- Allows adoptive parents to request medical and genetic and non-identifying social history information from existing records or to request updated medical or genetic information from their children's birth parents.

### 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. If updated information is requested, a search for the birth parent will be conducted to obtain the information.

An adopted person may file a notarized affidavit with DCF consenting to the release of his/her identity to a birth parent upon request.

The DCF 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 DCF 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.

A birth parent may request the most recent name and address of the birth child they placed for adoption if the birth child has an affidavit of consent on file with DCF.

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 DCF any time. Forms are available from Adoption Records Search Program for this purpose.

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.

### 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.