

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

**Birth mothers and birth fathers** (named on the original birth certificate, adjudicated, or willing to acknowledge paternity in writing) have a right to request:

1. A copy of any document they signed for the agency, including the Agreement Conferring Authority to Place Child (“surrender”).
2. Non-identifying information about the adopted person’s family. The adoptive parents can refuse the request.
3. Updated non-identifying information about the adopted person’s placement. The adoptive parent can refuse this request on behalf of the adopted person younger than 19 years of age.
4. To have contact with the adoptive parents, either directly or with the agency as an intermediary. The adoptive parents can refuse the request.
5. To have contact with the adopted person 19 years of age or older, either directly or with the agency acting as intermediary. The adopted person can refuse this request. The knowledge or consent of the adoptive parents is not required.
6. A copy of the original birth certificate available from the Minnesota Department of Health, Section of Vital Statistics to the birth parent(s) named on the original birth certificate.
7. A birth parent can sign an affidavit of disclosure or non-disclosure of the original birth certificate information. This affidavit is filed with the Minnesota Department of Health. If an affidavit of disclosure is filed, the original birth certificate information will be given directly to the adopted adult, if the adopted adult requests it from the Minnesota Department of Health.

**Adoptive parents** have the right (for themselves or on behalf of the adopted person under 19 years of age) to request:

1. Non-identifying genetic background history information about either birth parent.\*
2. Updated non-identifying information about either birth parent.\* The birth parent can refuse this request.
3. To have contact with one or both birth parents,\* either directly or with the agency acting as intermediary. The birth parent can refuse this request.

**Adopted persons at least 19 years of age** have the right to the following without the adoptive parent’s knowledge or consent:

1. Non-identifying information about either birth parent.\*
2. Updated non-identifying information about either birth parent.\* The birth parent(s) can refuse this request.
3. To have contact with one or both birth parent(s),\* either directly or with the agency acting as intermediary. The birth parent(s) can refuse this request.
4. At age 19, to request a copy of the information contained on the original birth certificate from the Minnesota Department of Health Section of Vital Statistics. For those placed prior to August 1, 1982, the request can only be granted if the birth parent(s) has filed an Affidavit of Disclosure with the Minnesota Department of Health. For those placed after August 1, 1982, the request will be granted unless an Affidavit of Non-Disclosure has been filed by the birth parent(s) with the Minnesota Department of Health.

**Other adopted persons at least 19 years of age born to either birth parent** have a right to request: Information about or contact with any other adopted adult or person under State Guardianship, born to either birth parent, who is also at least 19 years of age. The other person can refuse this request. The consent of the birth parent(s) is also required if the identity of the birth parent(s) is known to either person.

**Medical Information:** The agency will make a diligent effort to transmit any medical information, which may affect the mental or physical health of biologically related persons. This information is provided to the adoptive parents until the adopted person reaches 19 years of age, at which time the information is provided directly to the adopted person.

\*The birth mother and/or birth father named on the original birth certificate, adjudicated or having acknowledged paternity or named in the file.

**Death and Terminal Illness Notification:** Adoptive parents of a child under 19 years of age, or adopted persons age 19 or older, who wish to be notified of the death or terminal illness of a birth parent, must inform the adoption agency of this desire, and must keep the agency informed of their current address and telephone number. Then, if the agency receives verification of the death or terminal illness of a birth parent, this information will be passed on.

A birth parent that wishes to be informed of the death or terminal illness of the child that was adopted, must notify the adoption agency of their desire, and must keep the agency informed of their current address and telephone number. Then, if the agency receives verification of the death or terminal illness of the child, this information will be passed on.

**Petitions and Court Orders on Confidential Records:** Confidential records include sealed original birth certificates, agency adoption records and court files on adoption.

If a birth parent is deceased, cannot be located, has signed an affidavit of non-disclosure or has failed to file either an affidavit of disclosure or non-disclosure on the original birth certificate, the adopted person has the right to petition the court for a court order releasing the requested information about him/her self only.

The law provides for the right of any party to the adoption to petition the court for the release of identifying information for “good cause.” “Good Cause” is determined by the court ruling on the petition. The petitioner does not need an attorney to petition the court, but simply writes a letter of petition “pursuant to Minnesota Statute, Sec. 259.61” to the judge explaining what information is requested and the reasons for wanting that information.

Adoptive parent and adopted persons have the right to know which court finalized the adoption. Birth parents can petition the court in the county where court termination of their parental rights occurred, or the court in their county of residence.

#### **General Information**

1. The agency has the right to charge reasonable fees for providing information or search assistance. Further, the agency has the right to require that the fee be paid in full before service is provided.
2. It is the client’s responsibility to clarify his/her service needs, respond promptly to agency correspondence and to be timely with fee payments.
3. The client has the right to be given a reasonable time frame in which the search will be completed.
4. If the client is dissatisfied with the services received, the matter should be discussed with the worker assigned to the case. If this does not result in a satisfactory solution to the problem, the client should contact the worker’s supervisor. If there still are service concerns, the client should contact the Adoption Unit, Minnesota Department of Human Services, 444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN. 55155-3831.

#### **Another Resource**

**INTERNATIONAL SOUNDEX REUNION REGISTRY** is available to persons over the age of 18, and there is no charge to register. It is not a search service. Because it is a passive system, it only works if both parties are registered. The International Soundex Reunion Registry is not affiliated with Minnesota’s public or private adoption agencies. Information regarding this registry can be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: **I.S.R.R., P. O. BOX 2312, CARSON CITY, NV 89702-2312.**

