

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 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 or if you are the biological sibling of an adopted person, 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 anytime 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 several 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 an 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 \$20.00. In the case of adoptees and the biological sibling of adoptees, the adoption agency is also entitled to a non-identifying information report processing fee not to exceed \$50.00. 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 (adoptee, birth parent or biological sibling).

If you prefer to download forms they are available online at:

www.health.state.ny.us/vital_records/adoption.htm