Central Adoption Registry

General

Michigan's adoption law requires adoption agencies, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and courts to release certain information from adoption records to adult adoptees, former family members and adoptive parents of a minor child. The law divides the information in adoption records into two categories: nonidentifying and identifying information:

Non-Identifying Information

The agency or court having the adoption record must release the following information concerning the adoptee and the adoptee's family of origin within 63 days if available:

- Date, time, and place of birth of the adoptee including the hospital, city, county and state.
- An account of the health, psychological and genetic history of the adoptee.
- An account of the health, psychological and genetic history of biological parents and siblings.
- Description of the adoptee and the adoptee's birth family including:
  - given first name of adoptee at birth,
  - age and sex of sibling(s) of adoptee,
  - adoptee's enrollment and performance in school, educational testing results, and special education needs,
  - adoptee's racial, ethnic and religious background,
  - general description of birth parents including age at termination of parental rights and length of time parents had been married at time of placement,
  - account of adoptee's past and existing relationship with any individual or facility with whom the adoptee had lived or visited on a regular basis,
  - educational, occupational, professional, athletic or artistic achievement of the birth family,
  - hobbies, special interests and school activities of the birth family,
- Circumstances of any court order terminating parental rights of birth parent.
- Length of time between termination of parental rights and child's placement.
- Status of termination; voluntary, or court ordered.
- Any information necessary to determine child's eligibility for state or federal benefits.

Identifying Information

Identifying information is defined as:

- Name of child before placement in adoption,
- Name of each biological parent at the time of termination of parental rights,
- Most recent name and address of each biological parent,
- Names of biological siblings at the time of termination.

Release of Information to Adult Adopted Person

You may request information from the agency that placed you or the court that finalized your adoption. You must submit a request for identifying information in writing.

Release of identifying information to an adult adoptee is different depending on when parental rights were terminated:

a. On or after May 28, 1945 but before September 12, 1980

You can obtain your name, the names of biological siblings at the time of termination, and identifying information on both birth parents **if** both parents have filed statements of consent to release identifying information in the Central Adoption Registry (CAR).

You can obtain your name, the names of biological siblings at the time of termination and identifying information on one birth parent **if** that parent has filed a statement of consent in CAR.

You can obtain your name, the names of biological siblings at the time of termination and the name of a birth parent **who is deceased**.

b. Before May 28, 1945 or on or after September 12, 1980

You can obtain your name and the names of biological siblings at the time of termination **if** a birth parent has not filed a statement of denial with CAR.

You can obtain identifying information on any birth parent who **has not filed** a statement of denial with CAR.

Release of Information to Former Parent or to an Adult Former Sibling

Non-identifying information may be released by the court that finalized the adoption and the placing agency upon request providing the adoptee is an adult. The name and address of an adult adoptee may be released by an adoption agency or court to a biological parent or an adult sibling if the adoptee has authorized the release in writing to the court and/or agency. The former parent(s) and adult former sibling may register statements of consent or denial with CAR.

Central Adoption Registry

The Central Adoption Registry (CAR) is a file kept by DHS of only former parents and former adult siblings' statements consenting to or denying the release of identifying information. These statements will be forwarded to adoption agencies and courts upon request so they can determine what type of information can be released to an adult adoptee. **The Registry is accessed by the court or agency only.**

A former parent may consent to or deny the release of their name and address by submitting a Parent's Consent/Denial Statement (DHS-1919) to CAR. A former

adult sibling may register with CAR by completing the Adult Former Sibling Statement (DHS-1917).

One may revoke or update their information by completing a new form and submitting it to the Registry. A statement of denial is not effective after the death of a former parent.

Forms are available from the courts, DHS local offices, adoption agencies, the Registry, or by downloading from the website listed. The address of the Registry is:

State of Michigan
Department of Human Services
Central Adoption Registry
PO Box 30037
Lansing, MI 48909

Release of Information to Adoptive Parents

Non-identifying information contained in adoption records must be given to adoptive parents of a minor child at the time of placement and upon request thereafter.

Locating an Adoption Record

All adoptions have a court record and may have an agency record too. There is no one central location of adoption records.

The court record of adoption is usually located in the family division of circuit court located in the county where the adoptive parents lived when the adoption took place.

A court, upon receiving a request for information from an adoption record in its possession from an adult adoptee, former parent or adult former sibling, must identify the placing agency. An agency receiving a request for information from an adoption record in its possession must identify the court that finalized the adoption.

The adult adoptee may make a written request to the Department of Community Health (DCH), Vital Records, Lansing, MI 48909 to request the name of the court that finalized the adoption.

Confidential Intermediary Program

The Confidential Intermediary Program is available through the court where the final order of adoption was entered. This program allows for search and contact by eligible individuals. Individuals (meeting certain timeframes) who may petition the court for an intermediary are:

- An adult adoptee, adoptive parent of a minor child, or an adult child of a deceased adoptee seeking contact with and/or information about a former family member.
- A former family member, which includes biological parent, birth grandparent, or adult birth sibling seeking contact and/or information with an adult adoptee person or an adult child of a deceased adoptee.

A confidential intermediary shall make a reasonable search for an individual whose identity is sought by a petitioner. Fees are generally charged for this service. For more information contact the Family Division of Circuit Court where the adoption was finalized.

Added Features of the Adoption Law

A petition to gain access to adoption records may be filed with the court that finalized the adoption. Such a petition may be advisable if the information sought cannot be obtained any other way.

The direct descendant of the deceased adoptee is eligible for the same information as the adoptee.

The law applies to all adoptions including relative and stepparent adoptions.

A court, adoption agency, or DHS may charge $60 or the actual cost of releasing information, whichever is less. Part or the entire fee may be waived in case of indigence or hardship.

In some instances, an adult adopted person may obtain a copy of his/her original certificate of live birth from DCH:

- For adoptions where parental rights were terminated prior to May 28, 1945 and after September 12, 1980 and no parental denial statement is on file with the Registry.
- Through court order. (Contact the court where the order of adoption was entered for more information).

QUANTITY: 25,000
COST: $3,018.71 (.1207 ea.)
AUTHORITY: DHS Director

The Department of Human Services will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office in your area.

DHS Pub 439 (Rev. 7-05) Previous edition obsolete.

Release of Information From

Michigan's Adoption Records

State of Michigan
Department of Human Services

PARENT'S CONSENT/DENIAL
TO RELEASE INFORMATION TO ADULT ADOPTEE

Michigan Department of Human Services
CENTRAL ADOPTION REGISTRY

- A new statement may be sent to the Central Adoption Registry any time to withdraw a previous consent or to withdraw a previous denial. Release of identifying information will be based on the most recent statement on file in the Central Adoption Registry.
- A parent giving consent should send to the Central Adoption Registry a new statement if either his/her name or address changes.
- A separate form must be filled out for each child for whom you are giving consent/denial.
- Send the original copy to the Central Adoption Registry, address below:
  MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
  CENTRAL ADOPTION REGISTRY
  PO BOX 30037
  LANSING MI 48909

I state that I am the ☐ **father** ☐ **mother** of the child described below.

I hereby ☐ **give consent** ☐ **do not give consent*** to the release of my name and address to this child when he/she is 18 years of age or older.

(*If the denial box is checked, the parent may provide an explanation as to why he/she **does not** wish to release name and address).

Reason:

CHILD INFORMATION:

Child's Full Name at Birth (Last, First, Middle)		Child's Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)
Child's City of Birth	Child's County of Birth	Child's State of Birth
Child's Birth Mother's Name When Parental Rights were Released or Terminated (Last, First, Middle)		

PARENT INFORMATION:

My Current Name (Last, First, Middle)			My Birth Date (Mo., Day, Yr.)
My Current Address (Street Number and Name)			Apartment or Lot Number
City	State	Zip Code	Telephone Number ( )
Signature			Date

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office in your county.	AUTHORITY: MCLA 710.68. COMPLETION: Voluntary. PENALTY: None

DISTRIBUTION: ORIGINAL - Michigan Department of Human Services
Central Adoption Registry
P.O. Box 30037
Lansing, Michigan 48909
COPY - Keep for your records.

ADULT FORMER SIBLING STATEMENT
TO RELEASE INFORMATION TO ADULT ADOPTEE

Michigan Family Independence Agency
CENTRAL ADOPTION REGISTRY

- A new statement may be sent to the Central Adoption Registry any time to withdraw a previous consent or to withdraw a previous denial. Release of identifying information will be based on the most recent statement on file in the Central Adoption Registry.
- A sibling giving consent should send to the Central Adoption Registry a new statement if either his/her name or address changes.
- A separate form must be filled out for each sibling for whom you are giving consent/denial.
- Keep the yellow copy for your records.
- Send the White copy to the Central Adoption Registry address below:

MICHIGAN FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY
CENTRAL ADOPTION REGISTRY
PO BOX 30037
LANSING MI 48909

I state that I am the ☐ **brother** ☐ **sister** of the child described below.

I hereby ☐ **give consent** ☐ **do not give consent** to the release of my name and address to this child when he/she is 18 years of age or older.

CHILD INFORMATION:

Child's Full Name at Birth (Last, First, Middle)		Child's Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)
Child's City of Birth	Child's County of Birth	Child's State of Birth

COMMON BIRTH PARENT INFORMATION (If known):

Current Name of Birth Mother (Last, First, Middle)	Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)
Mother's Name When Parental Rights Were Released or Terminated (Last, First, Middle)	
Name of Birth Father (Last, First, Middle)	Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)

SIBLING INFORMATION:

My Current Name (Last, First, Middle)	Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)		Phone No. ( )
Name at Time Parental Rights Were Released or Terminated, if Different (Last, First, Middle)			
Current Address (Street Number and Name)	City	State	Zip Code
Brother/Sister Signature			Date Signed

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Adoptee's Birth Name (Last, First, Middle)

Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)

AUTHORITY: P.A. 288 of 1939, as amended, MCLA-710.27(5)
COMPLETION: Voluntary.
PENALTY: None

The Family Independence Agency will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to an FIA office in your county.

DISTRIBUTION: ORIGINAL - Michigan Family Independence Agency Central Adoption Registry P.O. Box 30037 Lansing, Michigan 48909
COPY - Sibling's File Copy

RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO ADULT ADOPTEE BY BROTHER/SISTER AS PROXY FOR DECEASED PARENT

Michigan Department of Human Services
CENTRAL ADOPTION REGISTRY

INSTRUCTIONS:

- A separate statement must be completed for each child/adoptee.
- This form MUST be accompanied by a copy of the death certificate of the deceased parent.
- Send a new statement to the Central Adoption Registry if your name or address changes.
- The address of the Central Adoption Registry is:
  MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
  CENTRAL ADOPTION REGISTRY
  PO BOX 30037
  LANSING MI 48909

I state that I am the biological ☐ **brother** ☐ **sister** of the child described below. Our biological parent is deceased and the death certificate is enclosed. In accordance with Michigan Complied Laws Annotated 710.27, I hereby give consent to the release of our deceased parent's name to this child when he/she is 18 years of age or older.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD:

Child's Full Name at Birth (Last, First, Middle)		Child's Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)
Child's City of Birth	Child's County of Birth	Child's State of Birth

INFORMATION ABOUT DECEASED BIOLOGICAL PARENT:

Deceased Parent's Name When Parental Rights Were Released or Terminated (Last, First, Middle)

INFORMATION ON BIOLOGICAL BROTHER/SISTER WHO IS CONSENTING TO RELEASE OF INFORMATION:

My Current Name (Last, First, Middle)			My Birth Date (Mo., Day, Yr.)
My Name at Time Parental Rights Were Terminated, If Different (Last, First, Middle)			
Address (Street Number and Name)			Apartment or Lot Number
City	State	Zip Code	Telephone Number ( )
Brother/Sister Signature			Date

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DISTRIBUTION: ORIGINAL - Michigan Department of Human Services
Central Adoption Registry
P.O. Box 30037
Lansing, Michigan 48909
COPY - Keep for your records.

For Office Use Only

Adoptee's Birth Name (Last, First, Middle)

Birth Date

REQUEST BY ADULT ADOPTEE FOR IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

State of Michigan
Department of Human Services

I hereby request, from my adoption records, my name before placement in adoption, the names of my biological parents, including their current names, if available, most recent address or addresses of biological parents, and names of biological siblings at the time of termination.

CURRENT INFORMATION

Current Name (Last, First, Middle)	Birth Date Month Day Year
Current Address (Street Number and Name)	Apartment Number
City State Zip Code	Telephone Number A/C ( )

ADOPTION INFORMATION

Adoptive Name (Last, First, Middle)	Name Before Adoption (If Known)
Adoptive Mother's Name	Adoptive Father's Name
Birth Mother's Name	Birth Father's Name
Name of Probate Court	Name of Placing Agency

☐ Also, please send me non-identifying information from my file.

Additional Comments

DISTRIBUTION: Original - Adoption Agency or Court that Finalized the Adoption Copy - Keep for Your Records	Adult Adoptee's Signature Date
AUTHORITY: MCLA 710.68. COMPLETION: Voluntary. PENALTY: None.	Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office in your area.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION AUTHORIZATION ADULT ADOPTEE

State of Michigan – Department of Human Services

I hereby authorize the adoption agency and/or the probate court named below, in accordance with P.A. 288 of 1939, Chapter 10, to release, upon request, my name and address to:

☐ **My Biological Parent(s)** ☐ **An Adult Brother/Sister**

CURRENT INFORMATION

Current Name (Last, First Middle	Birth Date Month Day Year
Current Address (Street Number and Name)	Apartment Number
City State Zip Code	Telephone Number A/C ( )

ADOPTION INFORMATION

Adoptive Name (Last, First, Middle)	Name Before Adoption (If Known)
Adoptive Mother's Name	Adoptive Father's Name
Birth Mother's Name	Birth Father's Name
Name of Probate Court	Name of Placing Agency

Additional Comments

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AUTHORITY: MCLA 710.68.
COMPLETION: Voluntary.
PENALTY: None.

DISTRIBUTION:
1st Copy – Probate Court that Finalized Adoption
2nd Copy – Adoption Agency
3rd Copy – Keep for Your Records

Adult Adoptee's Signature Date

ADOPTION BOOK LIST: SEARCH AND REUNION

The Adoption Life Cycle
By: Elinor B. Rosenberg, M.D.
Impact of adoption on all adoption members throughout their lives.

The Adoption Reader: Birth Mothers, Adoptive Mothers and Adopted Daughters Tell Their Stories
By: Susan Wadia-Ellis
Thirty women explore adoption, illustrating many faces of adoption and issues surrounding it; works include well known writers and activists.

Adoption Reunions: A Book for Adoptees, Birth Parents, and Adoptive Families
By: Michelle McColm
Fears, joys, hopes, dreams and anguish that accompany reunions. Exploration of roots and reunion, process of search and how to support the reunion process.

Adoption Searchbook
By: Mary Jo Rillera
Techniques for search.

The Adoption Triangle
By: Arthur D. Sorosky, Annette Baran, and Reuben Pannor
Understanding of adoption as a lifelong process for adoption members.

Being Adopted: The Lifelong Search for Self
By: David M. Brodzinsky, Ph.D., Marshall D. Schnechter, M.D., and Robin Marantz
A demonstration of adoption as a lifelong impact that adoption has on an individual.

Birthbond: Reunions Between Birth Parents and Adoptees
By: Judith Gediman and Linda Brown
Impact of reunions on the lives of all members of adoption.

Birth Mothers: Women Who Have Relinquished Babies for Adoption Tell Their Stories
By: Merry B. Jones
Birth mothers share their experiences of giving birth, adoption planning, raising subsequent children, searching and being found.

Birthright: Guide to Search and Reunion for Adoptees, Birth Parents, and Adoptive Parents
By Jean A.S. Strauss
First book details information about searching. Second book deals with reunions and the effect reunions have on adoption members.

Giving Away Simone: A Memoir
By: Jan L. Waldron
Memoirs of one woman's adoption story and subsequent reunions with that child years later.

Lost and Found: The Adoption Experience
By: Betty Jean Lifton, Ph.D.
Adoptee's search for birth family.

Lifeline: Action Guide to Adoption Search
By: Virgil L. Klunder
Search book.

A Man and His Mother
By: Tim Green
A story about a former professional football player in search for his birth mother.

Out of the Shadows: Birth Father's Stories
By: Mary Martin Mason
Birth fathers tell their stories ~ men who become fathers who never got the opportunity to be one.

Saying Good-Bye to a Baby: Birth Parents Guide to Loss and Grief in Adoption
By Patricia Roles
Loss and grief experiences by birth parents.

Searching for a Past: Adopted Adult's Unique Process of Finding Identity
By: Jayne Schooler
Guide to understanding the search and reunion process.

Shadow Train: A Journey Between Relinquishment and Reunion
By: Patricia E. Taylor
Building a relationship after years to separation.

Whose Child?
By: Kasey Hamner
Lifelong issues of adoptions from an adoptee's perspective.

You, Too, Can Find Anybody
By: Joseph Culligan
A reference manual providing various sources nationwide to assist with the search process (updated and revised yearly). NOTE: This author provides other search books.

Adoption Reunion Stories
By: Shirley Budd Pusey
Chronicles the experiences of 38 adoptees and 56 of their birth and adoptive family members through the process of reuniting.

The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade
By: Ann Fessler