**Birth Family Search Information**

According to North Carolina law, when an adoption is finalized the records are permanently sealed and remain closed to the public. Confidential Intermediaries, however, may access sealed adoption records to assist searches on behalf of eligible participants and share adoption information when all parties consent.

Adoptees in North Carolina looking for information about their birth family can go through one of two processes:

* Confidential Intermediary process to gain identifying information
* Requesting non-identifying information

The Confidential Intermediary process is open to adult adoptees, biological parents, full and half-siblings of adult adoptees, adult family members of a deceased biological parent, adult family members of a deceased adoptee, and adoptive parents of children younger than 18 who are seeking updated family health information through child-placement agencies, known as Confidential Intermediaries.

Also, with the written consent of all parties, individuals may share identifying information and/or meet each other through the coordination of the Confidential Intermediary.

[Review](http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2009/Bills/House/PDF/H1463v6.pdf) the Confidential Intermediary statutes.

**Requesting non-identifying information**

North Carolina adoptees are entitled to non-identifying information, also known as health history and background information. Non-identifying information, which is gathered at the time of the adoption, is maintained by the agency that approved the adoption and is available upon request of the approving agency. Adoptees have no obligation to participate in Confidential Intermediary services to obtain non-identifying information, which is provided at no cost. Non-identifying information may include the date and time of birth, weight at birth, and the reason the adoptee was placed for adoption.

Background information about the birth family, including age, nationality, ethnic background, race, religious preference, educational level, general physical description and any other general information may also be disclosed. Any health history of the birth family that could affect an adoptee's mental or physical health may also be released. Names, addresses or any other information that could lead to the identity of birth family members will be redacted before being shared with the requester.

A birth family member may update non-identifying information by contacting the approving agency at any time. Should an approving agency receive updated health information from an adoptee's birth family, the agency must make reasonable efforts to contact and forward the information to the adoptee or the adoptive parent of an adoptee who is younger than 18. With the consent of the birth parent, updated non-identifying information may also be gathered and shared with adoptees via a Confidential Intermediary.

If a requester seeking post-adoption information knows the agency that approved the adoption, they may contact the agency directly to make a request for non-identifying information and/or Confidential Intermediary services.

Requesters that do not know the approving agency may submit a written request, along with a valid photo ID, to:

Confidential Intermediary Services
NC Division of Social Services
820 S. Boylan Ave.
2425 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2425
(919) 527-6370

If the approving agency does not provide Confidential Intermediary services, the Division of Social Services will refer the requester to another licensed Confidential Intermediary provider.

Individuals seeking adoption information may wish to pursue an alternative method for obtaining identifying information. Pursuant to *G. S. 48-9-105* and *48-9-106*, any individual may file a motion with the Clerk of Superior Court in the county of original jurisdiction (the county courthouse where the adoption proceeding was originally filed) to request that an adoptee’s adoption record be opened and/or to obtain a certified copy of the adoptee’s original birth certificate.

Once the motion is filed, a hearing is scheduled wherein the petitioner will present evidence to the judge. The court, after giving primary consideration to the best interest of the adoptee, with due consideration to the interest of other family members, will ultimately decide what records, if any, will be released to the petitioner. Retention of a private attorney, although not required, is advised for those who are unfamiliar with legal protocol.