



Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding your adoption information. Lutheran Family and Children's Services (LFCS) offers the following information to help you understand the steps involved in the release of adoption record information.

Information concerning any adoption finalized in Missouri is protected by state law. A request for information must be in writing, contain verification of your identity (photo ID) and should specify whether you are seeking non-identifying and/or identifying information. (*You may use the Request of the Adopted Adult letter.*) Persons requesting information must be 18 years of age and must have a direct relationship to the adoption.

Non-identifying information can be released to an adult adoptee or an adoptive parent upon their written request to the agency or the court. The fee at LFCS is **\$150.00**. Your payment should be submitted with your letter of request.

Requests for identifying information should be sent to the court that finalized the adoption. (*Contact person and court address are listed on the Request of the Adopted Adult letter*) The court will then authorize the agency to conduct a search for the birth parent. **We cannot begin a search without the court authorization.** A notarized consent of the birth parent is also necessary for the release of their identifying information. In most situations this requires that the agency research, or "*search*," for current information on the birth parent. Our fee for the first 10 hours of searching is **\$450.00** and \$65.00 for each additional hour. Most searches can be completed within the initial 10 hours. You will be contacted for your approval if additional time is necessary to complete the search.

We have found that a **non-identifying letter** written by you to explain, in your own words, your motivation and expectations from the contact is helpful in making the initial contact with your birth family. The letter need not be lengthy but must be non-identifying—no names, dates, or names of places can be included. You may, however, include information about yourself, your adoption, your current family and a list of questions that you would like answered, regardless of their decision about the release of their identifying information. You may include questions about medical history, as well as questions about nationality and family background. Some of this information may be included in the summary of non-identifying information. However in most situations, the medical information from the record is not current and only your birth parents can provide updated information. If you have specific medical concerns and questions, please include them in your letter.

Information on Bio-Siblings may also be requested. The court will need to authorize the agency to begin that process as well. Information can only be released if that sibling gives a signed, notarized consent.

The Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division, offers a free service called **Missouri Adoption Information Registry**, where an adoptee (age 18 or over), biological parent or biological sibling (age 18 or over) can indicate their desire to be contacted by each other. If there is a match, a third party contacts the birth parent or biological sibling and verifies that there is a signed consent form on file. If all parts of the law have been followed (and in the case of birth parents, the other birth parent has also consented in writing or has been proved to be deceased), the Missouri Department of Social Services will release the identifying information to the involved individuals. The Missouri Adoption Information Registry form can be found at the following site: <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/adoption/adoption-information-registry.htm>

You may make payment for our services with a credit card, personal check, cashier's check or a money order payable to Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri and send to the attention of the Adoption Search Team.

Sincerely,

Adoption Search Team