

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM CLOSED FILES and SEARCH SERVICE

The DCFS Closed File Information and Search program provides information from closed DCFS files and helps locate relatives separated because of an adoptive or foster care placement through the department. These services are available to adoptees, adoptive parents and guardians of minors, former wards who were never adopted and birth family members. Search service through this program is also available to current wards. The department has contracted with MIDWEST ADOPTION CENTER to provide this program. There is no fee for this service.

Who may use this program?

If the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services was involved in the completion of the adoption or in the provision of foster care, there may be records available through DCFS. The following individuals may request service:

- adopted person (18 or over may request file information, 21 or over may request search service)
- adoptive parent(s) of a child who is under the age of 21
- guardian(s) of a child who is under the age of 18
- birth parent(s) of a child who was placed in adoption or guardianship through DCFS
- birth sibling of a person who was placed in adoption or guardianship through DCFS
- other birth relative of a person who was placed in adoption or guardianship through DCFS
- person who was a ward of DCFS but never adopted (in foster care or institutional care)
- caseworker or caregiver of a current ward may request search service
- professionals providing service to an individual party to an adoption completed through DCFS or who was under the guardianship of DCFS but never adopted

In many instances, the adoption of a child who was a ward of DCFS was completed in cooperation with a private adoption agency. If a private agency was involved in the placement about which you are requesting service, you are eligible to receive service through this program.

Requests for Information from DCFS Files

Adult adoptees and adoptive or guardianship parents of a minor requesting information will receive a written summary of the data found in the file(s). The amount and type of information in department files varies from very little to extensive social and medical history. All information specified to be released under current Illinois law will be provided if it is available.

The law does not permit the agency to release identifying information such as names, addresses and social security numbers without the written consent of the other person.

“Non-identifying information” given to adult adoptees and adoptive or guardianship parents of a minor child may include the following:

1. Data about biological relatives, including:
 - Parents’ general appearance
 - Parents’ age at the time of the birth of the child
 - Parents’ race, religion and ethnic background
 - Parents’ education, occupation, hobbies, interests and talents
 - Existence of any other children born to the biological parents
 - Information about biological grandparents, including reason for immigrating to the U.S. and country of origin

- Relationship between the biological parents
 - Detailed medical and mental health history of the child, the biological parents and their immediate relatives
2. Actual date and place of birth of the adopted person
 3. A description of the circumstances leading to the child coming into the care of the department
 4. Record of placements prior to adoption

An adult who was a ward of DCFS but never adopted may request a copy of his or her own DCFS file. All names and information pertaining to other individuals (even family members) must be removed.

Requests for search service

Adult adopted persons and former wards who were never adopted may request a search for birth parents, siblings or other biological relatives through this program. Birth parents may request a search for all children placed. Adoptive or guardianship parents of minors may request searches for as many birth relatives as they believe to be in the best interest of their child.

Individuals requesting search service may only want information from a biological relative, may want to communicate with the relative while not revealing his/her identity, or may be seeking a face-to-face meeting. If the relative is located, MAC staff will explain to him/her the reason for the contact and what is being requested. If an adoptee being sought is a minor, contact will be made with the adoptive or guardianship parent(s) who make the decision about how to proceed. If the adopted person is 21 or over, contact will be made directly with him/her. Every attempt will be made to negotiate an arrangement that is comfortable for everyone. No identifying information will be released without the written consent of both parties.

This program is not intended to provide in-depth counseling but assistance and support will be offered throughout the process.

For a Service Request form, contact:

DCFS Closed File Information and Search Service
c/o Midwest Adoption Center
2720 South River Road - suite 50
Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
Phone 847-298-9096
Fax 847-298-9097
MAC@macadopt.org
www.macadopt.org