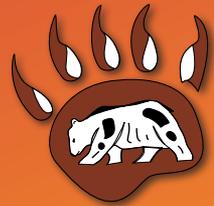
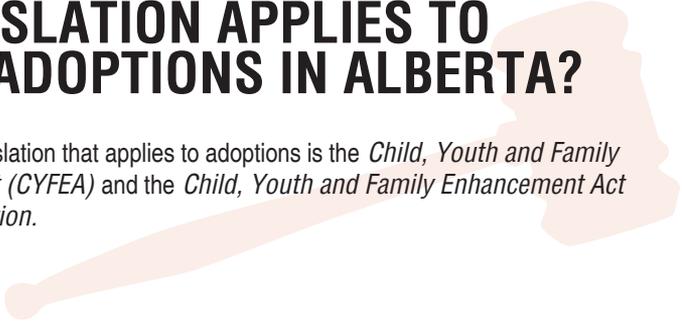


HOW TO FIND YOUR
BIOLOGICAL
FAMILY
IN
ALBERTA



WHAT LEGISLATION APPLIES TO ADOPTIONS IN ALBERTA?



In Alberta, the legislation that applies to adoptions is the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA)* and the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act Adoption Regulation*.

WHAT DOES THIS LEGISLATION MEAN FOR REUNITING WITH YOUR BIOLOGICAL FAMILY?

In 2004, under the CYFEA, access to adoption records became available in Alberta. This means that adoptees who are 18 years or older, birth parents, and a descendant of a deceased adopted person may be able to get *identifying information* about one another, such as names, ages, birthdates, and places of birth.

Birth parents can request identifying information of an adopted person six months after they turn 18 years old. Information about adoptive parents remains confidential.

However, if a *Disclosure Veto* (a document that keeps birth registration and identifying information of a person confidential) has been filed by either party, adoptees or birth parents will only get *non-identifying information* such as province of birth, marital status or occupation.

WHO HELPS INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES GET ADOPTION INFORMATION IN ALBERTA?

The Post Adoption Registry is a department of Alberta Human Services that helps people get adoption information and, if possible, reunite with their biological family members.

The registry has three social workers on staff to help people search for this information. You can contact them at:

Phone: 780-427-6387

Toll free: 310-0000, and ask to be transferred to 780-427-6387

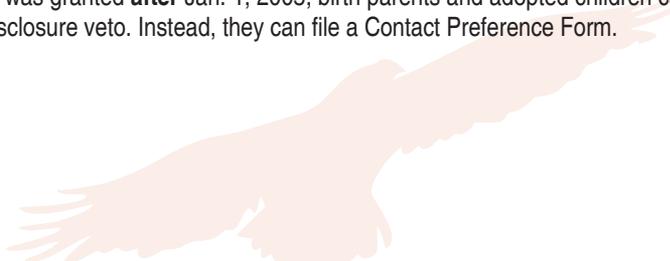
WHO DOES THIS LEGISLATION APPLY TO?

These laws apply to all adoptions arranged in Alberta *before Jan. 1, 2005*.

If the adoption was granted **before** Jan. 1, 2005, and you want your birth registration or identifying information to remain confidential, you can still file a veto.

The veto document can be requested by phoning the Post Adoption Registry. The completed veto document can be mailed or faxed to the registry. Once processed, it will become a part of the adoption record.

If the adoption was granted **after** Jan. 1, 2005, birth parents and adopted children can no longer file a disclosure veto. Instead, they can file a Contact Preference Form.



WHAT

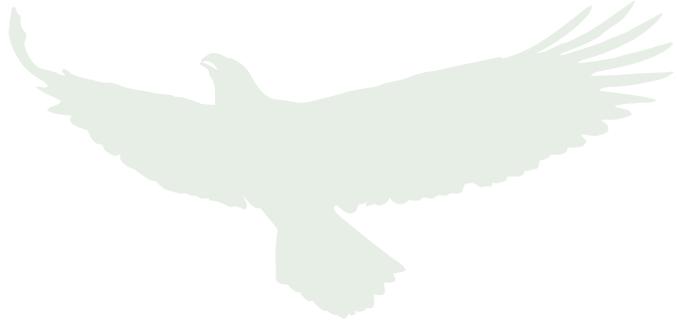
IS THE PROCESS OF SEARCHING FOR YOUR BIOLOGICAL FAMILY IN ALBERTA?

In Alberta, there are three processes available to search for, and potentially reunite with, your biological family members. An adopted person and birth parents have the following three options:

1) APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTARY CONTACT (REGISTER FOR VOLUNTARY CONTACT WITH BIRTH FAMILY)

- An adult adopted person, an adopted person between 16 and 18 years old who is living on their own, or an adult descendant of a deceased adopted person may apply. The person applying may also obtain non-identifying information about the birth family, a copy of the adoption order, and a birth surname.
- An adoptive parent filing on behalf of an adoptee who is a minor may apply. The person applying may also obtain non-identifying information about the child's birth family and a copy of the adoption order.
- Parties who are eligible to apply (i.e., birth mother, birth father, adopted person, etc.) for voluntary contact must be registered with the Mutual Contact Registry for voluntary contact to begin.
- Consent is necessary from birth parents for adult siblings or other family members to register for voluntary contact.
- As well, other birth family members can register, such as maternal and paternal family members. However, they need written consent of both birth parents. If they cannot obtain written consent, they will need to verify that the birth parents are deceased, cannot be located, or are mentally incapable of consenting to the application.
- If an adult adoptee is deceased and contact is being requested, the Post Adoption





Registry needs a document indicating this.

- First Nation band members or members of a Métis settlement can also register as interested parties. However, they must have written consent from both birth parents, or they must confirm that both birth parents are incapable of consent.
- Once two or more people have registered, a match can happen in the system, and a reunion can be arranged by a reunion consultant from the Post Adoption Registry.
- The registry will help a reunion happen by sharing basic information with each party, and registry staff will help each party decide what type of contact they would like to have at the beginning.
- This type of contact is voluntary, so you do not have to meet the other party or parties until you are ready.
- If you decide it is best for you not to be registered, you can write a letter asking the Post Adoption Registry to remove you from the registry.
- The average processing time for the Application for Voluntary Contact is four to six months.

2) REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF ADOPTION INFORMATION

- This applies to adoptions that occurred before January 1, 2005.
- An adopted person 18 years or older, a parent of an adopted person six months after the adopted person's 18th birthday, or an adult descendant of a deceased adopted person can request the release of identifying information from a sealed adoption record.
- A parent of an adopted person is defined as a biological parent who has been named in the adoption record or an adoptive parent under a previous adoption record.
- If you are an adult descendant of a deceased adopted person, you need to provide a death certificate, obituary notice or funeral card.
- Requesting a release of adoption information is the only way an adopted person can get their birth parent's identifying information. It is also the only way a birth parent can get the adopted person's identifying information.
- If a veto has been filed by any party (birth parent(s) adopted person, etc.), their identifying information will not be released from the adoption record. However, you will still get non-identifying information such as education level and marital status.
- If the release of identifying information is approved, you will get a package of information.
- If identifying information cannot be released, you can still get non-identifying information of the person with the veto, your own information and that of other parties in the adoption record as long as there is no veto.
- At this point, if some identifying information cannot be released, some people will do their own search for the information they need. There are private search companies that can help you, but these can be very costly.
- The processing time, from getting a match to reunion, is about eight weeks.



3) ONGOING INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- This applies to adoptions occurring prior to January 1, 2005 and those after January 1, 2005.
- The Post Adoption Registry also offers a voluntary way to connect adoptive parents and birth family members through an exchange of non-identifying information. This is called the Ongoing Information Exchange (OIE).
- This exchange can include letters, cards, and pictures, but cannot include money, gifts, or gift cards.
- It can help you stay in touch and see pictures of the adopted person.
- It can also help with healing and be one more step on the journey to future contact if you decide it is right for you.
- Since this information exchange is voluntary, it can be cancelled at any time.
- You should be informed of this option before the Adoption Order is granted.
- Both parties must submit a completed OIE Application and a photocopy of two pieces of ID.
- Because both parties must voluntarily apply for the OIE, if only one party applies, the Post Adoption Registry will not contact the other party to ask if they want to participate.
- After the Adoption Order has been granted, adoptive parents and birth family members can apply for the OIE.
- Once the applications have been submitted, an exchange of information can begin. Each piece of correspondence is sent directly to the Post Adoption Registry, where it is reviewed to see if it contains identifying information. If it does not, it is forwarded to the party it is addressed to.
- All correspondence is sent by express post, so unclaimed correspondence is sent directly back to the Post Adoption Registry. This is why it is important to keep the registry updated with any changes to your address or other contact information.
- The OIE will stop assisting if information cannot be forwarded for three consecutive years. The Post Adoption Registry will contact the first party to ask that they stop sending correspondence to the office. The exchange of information can begin again once the second party contacts the registry.

SERVICES

PROVIDED BY POST ADOPTION REGISTRY (ALBERTA HUMAN SERVICES)

ADOPTION ORDER

This document provides some basic information about the adoption, including the name of the person being adopted, name(s) of the adoptive parents, and the adoption date.

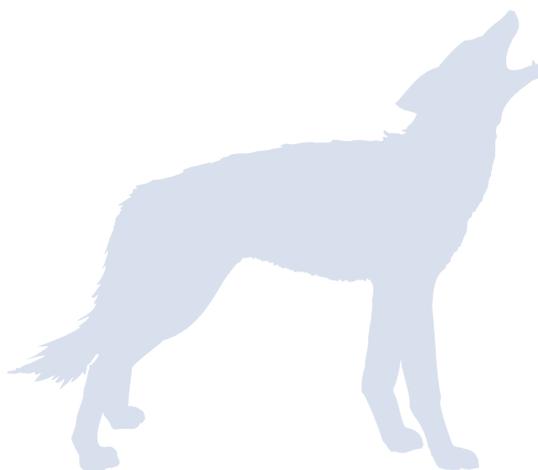
An adult adoptee or adoptive parent/guardian on behalf of a minor can send a written request to the Post Adoption Registry to get a copy of this document.

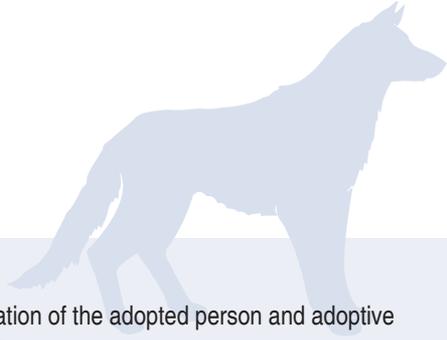
NOTIFICATION OF A MEDICAL CONCERN

Alberta laws allow the Post Adoption Registry to apply for consent from the birth parents to contact the adopted person and adoptive family to notify them of a medical concern.

The birth parent must send the Post Adoption Registry a physician's letter that confirms the medical diagnosis and talks about the severity of the medical concern.

For example, the letter should say whether the medical concern is hereditary, life-threatening and whether it is in the best interest of the adopted person and adoptive family to be notified.





PROFILE OF ADOPTIVE FAMILY

This profile contains non-identifying information of the adopted person and adoptive family that was gathered at time of adoption.

Such information might include:

- Adopted person: eye and hair colour, medical issues at time of adoption.
- Adoptive family: age, ethnicity, education, religion and personality traits.

TREATY STATUS

The Post Adoption Registry can help you find out if an adopted person has First Nation or Métis status.

If you would like the registry to help in this search, you must give them a copy of the Adoption Order and a written request.

Once they have this document, they will send it to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada in Ottawa. If the Post Adoption Registry cannot assist, you can still send a copy of the Adoption Order and a written request on your own.

Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada will ask if the records in the Adoption Order can be examined. Once they are examined, they will write to the Post Adoption Registry, who will then notify the person who placed the request.

While the registry usually completes its part of this process within about a month, the process can become very long once it gets to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION NEEDED FOR FORMS

You will need different pieces of information, depending on what you are requesting.

However, if you are making any request, it must be *in writing and accompanied by a photocopy of two pieces of identification*, one being picture ID. **Please do not submit original identification with your request.**

Examples of acceptable identification include:

- driver's licence
- birth certificate
- health-care card
- passport.



RESOURCES

To begin your search for your biological family, contact:

Post Adoption Registry

11th Floor, Sterling Place
9940 106th St. NW
Edmonton AB
T5K 2N2

Phone: 780-427-6387

Toll-free in Alberta: first dial 310-0000, then ask for Post Adoption Registry

Fax: 780-427-2048

Website: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/adoption/14846.html>

Forms: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/adoption/15577.html>

Note: If you are accessing forms on the Post Adoption Registry website, be aware they work best with Internet Explorer 8.0+. If you cannot access the forms electronically, please phone the Post Adoption Registry and staff will send the forms to you.

To enquire about the First Nation or Métis status of an adopted person, contact:

FIRST NATION STATUS

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington Street, North Tower
Gatineau, Quebec

Postal address:

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0H4

Email: InfoPubs@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca

Phone (toll-free): 1-800-567-9604

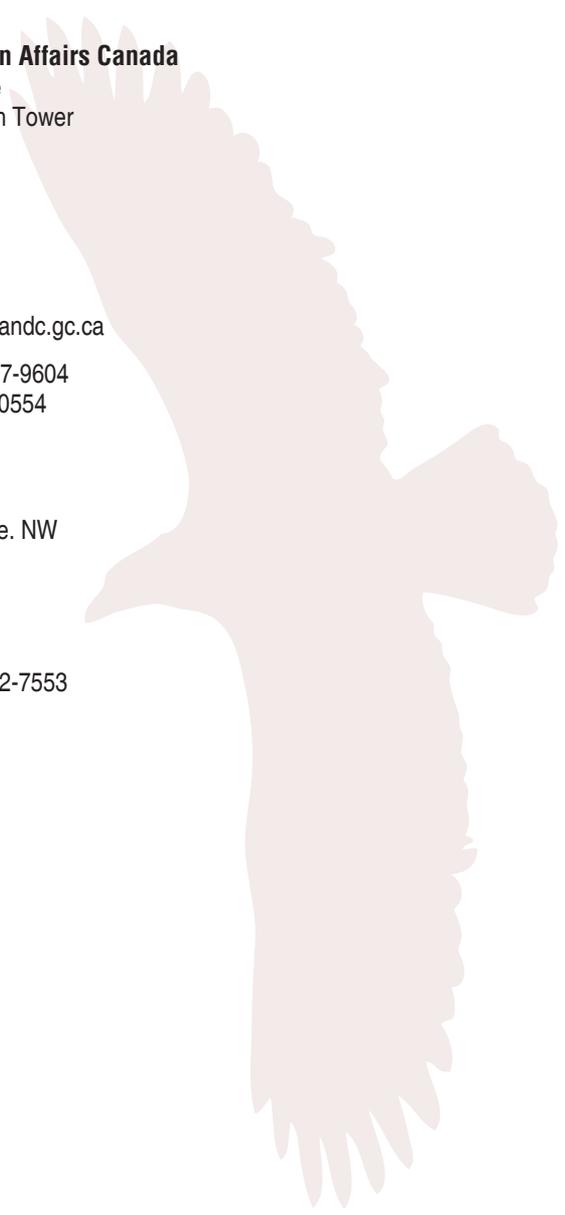
TTY (toll-free): 1-866-553-0554

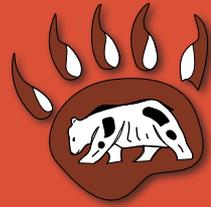
MÉTIS STATUS

#100, 11738 Kingsway Ave. NW
Edmonton, AB
T5G 0X5

Phone: 780-455-2200

Phone (toll free): 1-800-252-7553





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