

ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT & REUNION SERVICES FACT SHEET

The purpose of the Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services (ASCRS) Fact Sheet is to provide general information about the available adoption search services in Maryland. ASCRS consists of two components: the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR) and search services. MCVAR is a confidential, passive listing of adult adoptees, birth parents, and birth siblings. Information from applicants is entered into the data base and cross referenced with existing entrants. If a match occurs, the identities of the parties are confirmed and contact is facilitated. Search services are provided to adoptees and birth parents when no match is found. The adoption/birth record is reviewed. Non-identifying information is attained. Birth relatives are identified and questioned regarding willingness to have contact. Provided all are willing, contact is arranged.

Adoption search services may or may not lead to a reunion. Through MCVAR and search services, ASCRS are maintained to assist the adult adoptee, the birth family, and the adoptive family in obtaining medical history and establishing contact and reunions.

An Overview of the Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Process

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) provides oversight to ensure applications are complete and properly assigned, and to collect data used to measure outcomes of the search process. Locating information about birth family and the adult adoptee as well as locating individuals interested in reunions is similar to conducting a private investigation. Many staff hours are spent in achieving these efforts. The following information describes the general Adoption Search Contact and Reunion Services (ASCRS) process.

- Once your completed forms are received by DHR, the information is entered in the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry database to determine if a relative (birth parent or sibling) has also registered.
- If there is a match, the accuracy of the match is confirmed, usually by agency or court records. If confirmed, contact information is released to the individuals once they have submitted notarized consents.
- If a match is not made in the Registry, the following protocol is used.
 - a. The application is reviewed to determine the assignment of a confidential intermediary using information provided on an application. The more specific and relevant the information provided, the quicker an application can be assigned to a confidential intermediary.
 - b. An application with very little information, requires preliminary inquiries including an archive search, and where appropriate, inquiries with local departments of social services or private adoption or family services agencies that provides search services about adoption services that might have been provided to the applicant.
- Once the assignment of a confidential intermediary is determined:
 - a. the applicant and confidential intermediary will be notified in writing;
 - b. the applicant must then contact the confidential intermediary who will conduct the actual search;
 - c. the applicant and the confidential intermediary will enter into a service agreement and determine the confidential intermediary's fee (if applicable);
 - d. the confidential intermediary will also prepare the applicant for the receipt of

the desired information and/or the reunion.

- Search services do not begin until a confidential Intermediary receives a signed Service Agreement from the applicant, and one-half of the agreed upon fee (if applicable.)
- A request for acquisition of a copy of the birth certificate issued at birth can be honored only after the completion of a search during which the birth parent and the adult adoptee must have given consent for release of the birth certificate.
 - a. If there are two parents listed on the birth certificate and one birth parent
 - (1) refuses to consent to release of the birth certificate,
 - (2) is deceased, or
 - (3) whereabouts are unknown, the information about that parent must be redacted.
 - b. If the adult adoptee
 - (1) refuses to consent,
 - (2) is deceased, or
 - (3) whereabouts are unknown, the birth certificate may not be released to the birth parent.
- There is no guarantee that the person sought will be found, or if found, will grant permission for a reunion.
- There is no guarantee that information sought will be found.

Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services Fee Modification Requests

There is no administrative fee associated with applying for ASCRS at the Maryland Department of Human Resources/Social Services Administration. A fee may be charged by private agencies providing CI Services. Again refer to the fee chart regarding fees for CI Services. The fee for CI Services will be determined if and when your case is assigned to a private agency that will provide these CI services. Some cases are assigned to public agencies, and there is no fee associated with these services. If your case is assigned to a private agency, the CI fees will be determined by the private agency based on the scale below:

Search, Contact and Reunion Services Fee Schedule

Gross Income	Paid to DHR	Paid to DHR	No Payment Due	Paid to CI's Agency	Paid to CI's Agency
	Registry Application Only	Registry & Search Services Application	Documented Medical Emergency	Search Contact and Reunion w/ one person	Search, Contact and Reunion w/ Two Persons
\$ 0 – 10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$10,001 – 20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$125	\$225
\$20,001 – 30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$175	\$275
\$30,001 – 40,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$250	\$350
\$40,001 – 50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$325	\$425
\$50,001 – 60,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$400	\$500
\$60,001 – 70,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$475	\$575
\$70,001 – 80,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$525	\$625
\$80,001 – 90,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$625	\$725
\$90,001 & above	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$725	\$825