

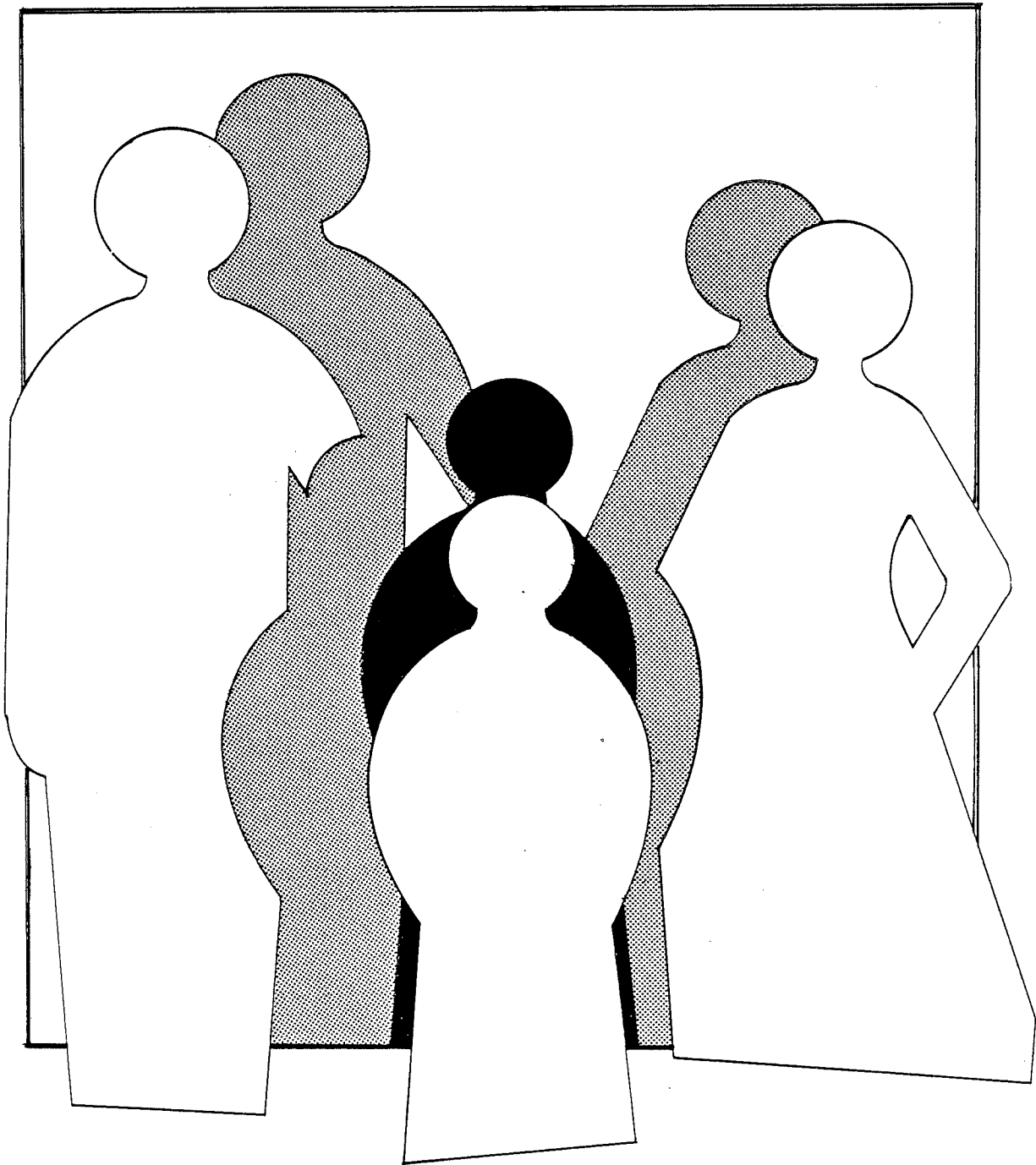
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POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION SERVICES IN MAINE AND OTHER STATES



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
1985

ERRATA

Post-Adoption Information Services in Maine and Other States

Table 3 on page 24 should be corrected to read:

<u>State</u>	<u>Number of Inquiries per Year</u>	<u>Number of Registrants per Year</u>	<u>Registrants per 1,000 Live Births</u>	<u>Number of People Registered to Date</u>
Maine	Unknown	48	2.91	317

POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION SERVICES
IN MAINE AND OTHER STATES

by

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INTRODUCTION

In July, 1984, the five-year-old Maine State Adoption Reunion Registry marked a major milestone. For the first time, a match was identified between an adopted person and his birth mother. This occurred during a period in which the efficacy of the Reunion Registry was being questioned and its strengths and weaknesses evaluated. As part of this effort, a brief survey of all states was conducted to compare the Maine Registry with similar activities in other states.

Preliminary findings, based on telephone contacts with approximately 40 states, were presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Vital Records and Health Statistics in July, 1984. A subsequent mail survey was used to confirm the verbal responses and to elicit more detailed information from all states.

This report describes the key features of post-adoption information programs in Maine and in the 29 other states which provide such services. Characteristics of each program, by state, are included, as well as a list of the contact persons in each state.

We are grateful for the participation of the individuals in each state who responded to the survey and to the additional telephone follow-up contacts. We hope that this document will provide them with a useful resource, as it has us, for evaluating post adoption services.

This report was prepared by Ellen Naor, Director of the Division of Data and Research and State Registrar of Vital Statistics. Statistician Robert Rand assisted in the conduct of the survey and prepared the tables, under the supervision of Donald Lemieux, Planning and Research Associate. Hope Harrington, Adoption Records Clerk, compiled the descriptive information on the Maine Adoption Reunion Registry. Deputy State Registrar Lorraine Gerard provided invaluable assistance and coordination of all the materials presented herein. The manuscript was typed and prepared for printing by Sue Whitley.

Requests for further information, on the survey and/or on the Reunion Registry, should be directed to:

Division of Data and Research
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BACKGROUND

The Maine State Adoption Reunion Registry was established in 1979 by legislation calling for a voluntary adoption contact file (Appendix 1). Its sponsors recognized the strong psychological need of many adopted persons to find their roots and learn more about their biological parents and heritage. Similarly, many birth parents feel an urgent need to find and perhaps contact children who were surrendered for adoption.

Prior to the establishment of the Registry, the only available procedure was to request the Judge of Probate in the individual's county of residence to issue a court order to open the sealed adoption record, which includes the original birth certificate. This procedure was unsatisfactory in many respects. Such requests were frequently denied and there was great variability among the probate courts in handling the requests. Finally, access to the original birth record, often 20 or more years old, was not very useful in locating the birth parent or surrendered biological child.

Adoption records in Maine were "open" until 1953; that is, those with a "direct and legitimate interest" in the record could obtain a copy of the original birth certificate. There is still ongoing debate within the state on whether or not the 1953 law which "closed" the records by prohibiting access to all adoption records including the original birth certificate, except in response to a court order, was intended to apply to the adoptee and the birth parents as well as to others. This viewpoint holds that "anyone with a valid interest in the record" should have access to it.

A bill was introduced in 1979 to facilitate contact between adopted persons and their biological parents without opening the sealed birth and adoption records. A key feature of the proposed program was its voluntary nature. Indeed, the original bill was entitled, "AN ACT to Provide for a Method of Arranging Voluntary Meetings between Adoptees and Adoptive Parents and Natural Parents." The sponsor intended the state government to play a passive role, and this bill provided protection against invasion of the privacy of any members of the "adoption triangle."

THE MAINE ADOPTION REUNION REGISTRY

As established in 1979, the Adoption Reunion Registry serves three groups of people:

- Adopted persons 18 years of age or older who were born in Maine or whose adoption was initiated, processed, or finalized in Maine.
- Adoptive parent(s) of an adopted child who is less than 18 years old, if the child was born in Maine, the adoption was finalized in Maine, or any part of the adoption procedure was initiated and/or processed in Maine.
- Biological or birth parent(s) who surrendered parental rights or had parental rights terminated in Maine, or whose child was born or adopted in Maine.

Applicants to the Registry are asked to provide the information necessary to ensure accurate identification. Both public and confidential files of the Department of Human Services may be reviewed to verify identification and assure a correct match between a birth parent and an adopted person.

When a request for contact has been received from both a biological (birth) parent and that parent's adopted child or the child's adoptive parent, each party is notified of the name and address of the other party. The Reunion Registry is a passive one: the persons whose names are included have voluntarily requested that their names and addresses be made available to the party they wish to contact.

The Maine Adoption Reunion Registry is administered by the State Registrar of Vital Statistics. It is part of the Division of Data and Research in the Office of Health Planning and Development. A registration fee is charged to offset the cost of maintaining the Registry; this fee was set at \$5.00 in January, 1985. Authority for operating the Registry is based on Title 22, M.R.S.A., Section 2706-A (Appendix 1).

The law requires that the existence of the Reunion Registry, and the assistance offered to applicants by the Department of Human Services, be publicized, although the manner and extent of such publicity is not specified.

CURRENT STATUS

Target Population

Each year there are approximately 16,500 births in Maine. The birth rate has decreased over time from the highest rate of 24.1 per 1,000 population (23,553 births) in 1961, to the current rate of 14.7 per 1,000. In recent years, approximately 15 percent of all births occur out of wedlock.

Approximately 1,000-1,200 adoptions of Maine-born children are processed each year; an additional 300-400 adoptions annually are finalized for children born outside the state.

Registry

As of May, 1985, nearly six years after the Registry was established, a total of 297 persons had registered. Between 35-50 persons apply each year and this number appears to be increasing. Two-thirds of the applicants (197) are adoptees; 29 percent (86) are birth parents; and 4.7 percent (14) are adoptive parents.

Matches

Only one "match" has been identified to date: the 232nd applicant, who registered in July, 1984. The adoptee, a man in his twenties, was linked with his birth mother. The adoption occurred in 1964-1965, when the adoptee was about four years old. The individuals were notified that an apparent match had been identified; they were asked to reaffirm their desire for contact before the actual names and addresses were released.

Publicity

The Department of Human Services has publicized the Maine State Adoption Reunion Registry in various ways. Press releases are prepared and distributed every 6-12 months. A front page newspaper article in 1984 further publicized the service. Coordination with Maine-based search groups has resulted in presentations on the Registry to group members.

Brochures describing the Registry were developed originally by a search group; they were reprinted and updated recently by the Department of Human Services. Brochures are distributed by the Office of Vital Records, the Bureau of Social Services, search groups, and adoption agencies.

Success

The Reunion Registry can be considered to be a qualified success. The "match rate" to date is less than half a percent of those registered and less than 0.1 percent of the annual number of adoptions. Use of all adoptions ever completed in Maine or involving Maine-born children as the denominator would, of course, yield a "match rate" much lower than 0.1 percent.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the Registry as it is presently constituted; efforts to counteract some of these problems are being actively considered. These include the fact that the process is permanently blocked if a birth parent (or an adoptee) has died; the State Registrar is not presently authorized to release such information. Siblings cannot make contact through the Reunion Registry, as its present form limits participants to adoptees and their biological parents. Other relations, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles cannot participate in the Registry.

The principal search group in Maine has expressed a range of feelings about the Registry. Many individuals are disappointed with the low success or "matching" rate. They believe that the Department's publicity about the Registry is inadequate, and they would like to broaden the Registry to an active one, which would include siblings, grandparents, and other blood relatives.

Other search groups within the State have expressed their general approval of the Registry. They indicate that it is a well known resource to people who are already involved in the search process. They are eager to participate with the Department in increasing public awareness of the Registry.

All groups are agreed that they would like to have the Department undertake active search activities; this would be contrary to present law, however, and would require legislative action and allocation of additional funds.

POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES

In July, 1985, there were post-adoption information programs in 30 states. Most were established in the late 1970s and in the 1980s; only four were initiated prior to 1970, and a fifth was started in 1970. At this time, programs are being proposed in an additional fourteen states (Table 1).

The structure and function of post-adoption information programs varies considerably depending on their organizational placement (Table 2). Approximately half of the programs are located in the vital records or vital statistics office. In almost all cases, these are passive programs, in which both the adopted person and the birth parent or sibling must register before any identifying information is provided to either party. In nine states, an active search for the other party is conducted upon registration by an adopted person or birth parent. All but two of these active registries are located in social services agencies.

The number of inquiries in most states exceeded the number of registrants in the post adoption information programs. The ratio of registrants to births (per year) was calculated as a crude indicator of the relative use of the programs; the ratio ranges from .03 per 1,000 to 50.56 per 1,000 births annually. In one state, all adoptions are considered to be registered (Table 3).

The number of matches or exchanges of information varied considerably from state to state, reflecting the different criteria for eligibility and release of information (Table 4).

The youngest age at which adoptees can request information on their own, rather than through the adoptive parents, ranges from 18, in fifteen states, to 25, in three states (Table 5).

In most states with post-adoption information programs, the consent of the adoptee and the birth mother are sufficient for the release of identifying information to each other (Table 6). Eligibility to receive non-identifying and/or identifying information varies somewhat by state (Tables 7 and 8). In general, access to non-identifying information is less restrictive. Post-adoption information programs differ in their policies for providing identifying information to siblings of adopted persons. In about half of the states with programs, biological siblings may receive such information (Table 9). In some states, the disclosure of identifying information to a sibling is permitted only under certain conditions: if the sibling had had a relationship with the adopted person prior to the adoption, if the birth parents are deceased, or if the adoptee has already accessed the confidential adoption information and original birth certificate.

The role of the courts in the post-adoption provision of identifying information (Table 10) ranges from no involvement at all to mandatory approval before disclosure of identifying information. In some states the courts may serve as an alternative to a registry or as an ancillary source for verifying matches between adoptees and birth parents or other relatives.

Publicity about post-adoption information programs is required by statute in some states. The type of material and manner of dissemination, as well as budgetary support, differ substantially among the states. This may reflect the relative newness of the program in most states (Table 11).

The cost to the client for registration in a post-adoption information program (Table 12A) ranged in 1985 from no cost to \$150.00. In some states the fee for obtaining identifying information is different than that for non-identifying information (Table 12B). Several states make no provision for disclosure of non-identifying information. The fee for registration of

the adopted person may differ from the fee charged for other persons. The information program may be required to be self-supporting, or, on the other extreme, it may be provided as a free service to eligible applicants.

ISSUES

Considerations of the characteristics of the post-adoption information services offered by many states highlights several key issues. Eligibility for inclusion in a reunion registry or access to identifying information about birth parents, biological children, and biological siblings is a subject of vigorous debate. The degree of search activity which should be undertaken by the state agency on behalf of an applicant for post-adoption information and/or reunion is another critical issue. The organizational placement of the post-adoption information program both reflects the State's position on these issues and determines the program's capabilities. Finally, the questions of costs and charges reflect the overall State policies on post-adoption services.

Eligibility

At least five people are involved in the typical "adoption triangle": the adopted person, the adoptive parents, and the biological mother and father. All may be affected by disclosure of identifying information about the adoption and the original birth certificate. There are a number of questions which must be considered in operating a post-adoption information program:

- Should approval or participation of the adoptive parents be required in all cases?
- Should approval or participation of both of the natural parents be required before any information is released?
What if the biological father is unknown or cannot be located?
- Must all five of the "adoption participants" register and/or approve disclosure before a match is declared and information is released?

- What if one or more of the biological parents or the adopted person is deceased and thus can never register? Should the fact of death be disclosed without providing any further information or identification?
- Should siblings be eligible for post-adoption information programs? In all cases? Only if the biological parents are deceased? Only if the adoptee and the natural parents once lived together as a family?
- What about other relatives - grandparents, biological aunts and uncles? Should information be disclosed in all cases or only if the biological parents are deceased?

Search Activities

Among the most difficult issues are those regarding the level of activity undertaken to locate the other party or parties when an adopted person or birth parent registers with a post-adoption information program. A critical issue is the possibility of invasion of privacy - of the birth mother or father, the adoptive parents, and/or the adoptee. In a passive registry, most concerns about invasion of privacy are met automatically, since the biological parent(s) and the adult adoptee have actively initiated the search process. On the other hand, a passive registry is viewed by many adopted persons and biological parents as better than nothing but still inadequate and frequently unproductive. The initiation of an active search by the registry as an option, with a fee charged to cover the costs involved, is proposed by some as a more effective approach.

Counseling is offered or mandated in some states with post-adoption information programs, e.g., in Louisiana, Delaware, New Hampshire, North Dakota and Texas, as part of the registry application process. Many search groups

provide counseling for participants through meetings and other support activities. Representatives of adoptees and birth parents seeking reunion believe that, for the most part, the "searcher" does not need further counseling since initiation of the search process itself demonstrates commitment and readiness for disclosure. The "found" person, on the other hand, may well have greater need for professional counseling and assistance. The adoptive parents, too, may find the post-adoption information search threatening and may also benefit from counseling or other therapy.

The issue of search activity is closely linked to the organizational location of the post-adoption information program. Most vital records and statistics agencies are not equipped for active searches in which the starting point may be many years earlier and sensitive personal interactions may occur. On the other hand, social services agencies are likely to be overburdened already with current cases and unable to undertake additional search activity without provision of additional staff and funds. The cost of active searches for matching members of the adoption pair may be quite high in terms of staff time, document fees, court fees, etc. Implementation of an active search program must provide adequate funding and staff resources in order to be effective.

There are several ways in which the productivity of passive reunion registries may be increased. For example, non-identifying information may be released at the time of application to the registry. Another possibility is to provide an opportunity for the birth mother or father to insert a "waiver of confidentiality" in the adoption file at the time the adoption is finalized, allowing disclosure of name and address at any time it is requested by the adoptee after he or she has reached adulthood. Such a waiver should be reversible and be able to be withdrawn at any time. Inclusion of siblings,

grandparents, and/or other blood relatives in the post-adoption information program would also make a passive registry more responsive to the needs of adopted persons and biological relatives.

Publicity

A frequent criticism of passive registries, i.e., those in which both adoptee and birth parent must register before identifying information is released, is that they are not used enough to be an effective means for achieving contacts or reunions. Indeed, registries now in operation in a number of states include a relatively small number of participants. Vigorous efforts by search/reunion organizations are needed in order to increase the pool from which matches of adoptee and birth parent may occur. Likewise, increased publicity efforts by the agencies responsible for the post-adoption information programs should be undertaken and supported by adequate budgetary resources.

Exchange among states of materials describing their post-adoption information services, on a regular basis, would provide an additional means for disseminating information about search/reunion activities.

V. CONCLUSION

This document describes the Maine Adoption Reunion Registry, as a supplement to the brochure distributed by the Office of Vital Records. Characteristics of post-adoption information programs in approximately 30 other states are included as well in order to provide a context for evaluating the Maine Registry. A list of contact persons in all states currently offering post-adoption information services is included as Appendix 2. This material also is made available as a service to the agencies, organizations and individuals involved in facilitating contacts among adopted persons and their biological parents.

Coordinated efforts by state and private agencies and appropriate organizations are essential in order to promote responsive and functional programs for the post-adoption release of information and the promotion of contact between adoptees and biological relatives in an appropriate manner. We hope that the information presented in this document will facilitate such efforts.

TABLES

POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION SERVICES
BY STATE

State	States with Post-Adoption Information Program		States Without Post-Adoption Information Program		
	Total	Year Program Started	Total	With Proposed Program	Without Proposed Program
TOTAL	30	N/A	20	14	6
Alabama	X	1940			
Alaska	X	1960			
Arizona			X	X	
Arkansas			X	X	
California	X	1983			
Colorado	X	1982			
Connecticut			X	X	
Delaware	X	1952			
Florida	X	1983			
Georgia			X	X	
Hawaii			X	X	
Idaho	X	1985			
Illinois	X	1985			
Indiana			X	X	
Iowa			X	X	
Kansas	X	1951			
Kentucky	X	1970			
Louisiana	X	1983			
Maine	X	1979			
Maryland			X	X	
Massachusetts			X	X	
Michigan	X	1980			
Minnesota	X	1977			
Mississippi			X	X	
Missouri			X	X	

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION SERVICES
BY STATE

State	States with Post-Adoption Information Program		States Without Post-Adoption Information Program		
	Total	Year Program Started	Total	With Proposed Program	Without Proposed Program
Montana			X		X
Nebraska	X	1980			
Nevada	X	1979			
New Hampshire	X	1984			
New Jersey			X		X
New Mexico	X	1984			
New York	X	1984			
North Carolina			X		X
North Dakota	X	1981			
Ohio	X	1985			
Oklahoma	X	1983			
Oregon	X	1984			
Pennsylvania ^a	X	1978			
Rhode Island			X	X	
South Carolina	X	1985			
South Dakota	X	1985			
Tennessee	X	1980			
Texas	X	1984			
Utah			X	X	
Vermont			X	X	
Virginia			X		X
Washington			X		X
West Virginia	X	1984			
Wisconsin	X	1982			
Wyoming			X		X

^aRegistry underwent major changes in December, 1984, suspended operations in February, 1985, and will reopen as soon as regulations can be written and published.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT OF PROGRAM, TYPE OF SERVICE PROVIDED
AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY
BY STATE

State	Organizational Placement of Program	Type of Service Provided	Level of Agency Activity
Alabama	Vital Statistics	Open Record	Passive
Alaska	Vital Records	Open Record and Letter in File	Passive
California	Health Planning & Statistics	Voluntary Registry	Passive
Colorado	Health Statistics	Registry	Passive
Delaware	Children's Services	Contact + Counseling	Active Search
Florida	Vital Statistics	Registry	Passive
Idaho	Vital Records	Registry	Active
Illinois	Vital Records	Registry	Passive
Kansas	Vital Statistics	Open Record	Passive
Kentucky	Social Services	Registry	Active Search
Louisiana	Social Services	Register + Counseling	Passive
Maine	Vital Statistics	Register	Passive
Michigan	Social Services	Consent	Passive
Minnesota	Human Services	Contact	Active Search
Nebraska	Vital Statistics	Letter in File	Active Search for Biological Parent if Letter on File
Nevada	Social Services	Registry	Passive
New Hampshire	Child & Youth Services	Contact + Counseling	Active
New Mexico	Social Services	Consent	Passive
New York	Health Statistics	Registry	Passive
North Dakota	Child + Family Services	Contact + Counseling	Active
Ohio:			
Prior to 1965	Vital Statistics	Open Record	Passive
After 1965	Vital Statistics	Register	Passive
Oklahoma	Children and Youth	Register	Passive

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and
Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
 ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT OF PROGRAM, TYPE OF SERVICE PROVIDED
 AND LEVEL OF ACTIVITY
 BY STATE

State	Organizational Placement of Program	Type of Service Provided	Level of Agency Activity
Oregon	Children's Services	Register	Passive
Pennsylvania	Vital Records	Consent	Passive
South Carolina	Children's Bureau	Register	Passive
South Dakota	Social Services	Register	Passive
Tennessee	State Registrar's Office	Register & Consent	Passive
Texas	Vital Statistics	Registry & Counseling	Passive
West Virginia	Social Services	Register	Active
Wisconsin	Community	Contact	Active Search

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and
 Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 3

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
 NUMBER OF INQUIRIES AND NUMBER OF REGISTRANTS PER YEAR, REGISTRANTS
 PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED TO-DATE
 BY STATE

State	Number of Inquiries per Year	Number of Registrants per Year	Registrants per 1,000 Live Births ^a	Number of People Registered To-Date
Alabama	81	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Alaska	36	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
California	6110	518	1.14	Unk.
Colorado	210	200	3.67	350
Delaware	1000	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Florida	600	140	.90	159
Idaho	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Illinois	200 ^b	Unk.	Unk.	12
Kansas	192	1950 ^c	50.56	Unk.
Kentucky	500	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Louisiana	38	11	.13	11
Maine	Unk.	48	2.91	317
Michigan	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Minnesota	500	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Nebraska	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Nevada	260	260	17.02	260
New Hampshire	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
New Mexico	50	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
New York	Unk.	400	1.59	400
North Dakota	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.

NOTE: Unk. = Unknown.

^aDenominators used to calculate rates are 1984 occurrence data from the
 NCHS Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Vol.33, No.12, March, 1985, p.4.

^bEstimated number of inquiries for first six months of 1985.

^cEvery adoption is considered to be a registration in the Post-Adoption
 Information Program.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and
 Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 3

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
 NUMBER OF INQUIRIES AND NUMBER OF REGISTRANTS PER YEAR, REGISTRANTS
 PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED TO-DATE
 BY STATE

State	Number of Inquiries per Year	Number of Registrants per Year	Registrants per 1,000 Live Births ^a	Number of People Registered To-Date
Ohio	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Oklahoma	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Oregon	334	201	5.08	35
Pennsylvania	1500	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
South Carolina	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
<hr/>				
South Dakota	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Tennessee	1200	8	.11	8
Texas	33	8	.03	8
West Virginia	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Wisconsin	839	167	2.28	431

NOTE: Unk. = Unknown.

^aDenominators used to calculate rates are 1984 occurrence data from the
 NCHS Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Vol.33, No.12, March, 1985, p.4.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and
 Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 4

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
NUMBER OF MATCHES OR EXCHANGES OF IDENTIFYING INFORMATION
BY STATE

State	Adoptee to Birth Parent	Adoptee to Sibling	Adoptee to Other Relative
Alabama	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Alaska	11	3	Unk.
California	62	Unk.	Unk.
Colorado	5	1	1
Delaware	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Florida	0	0	9
Idaho	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Illinois	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Kansas	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Kentucky	25	11	0
Louisiana	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Maine	1	Unk.	Unk.
Michigan	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Minnesota	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Nebraska	20	Unk.	Unk.
Nevada	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
New Hampshire	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
New Mexico	120	Unk.	Unk.
New York	0	Unk.	Unk.
North Dakota	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Ohio	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Oklahoma	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Oregon	1	Unk.	Unk.
Pennsylvania	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
South Carolina	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
South Dakota	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Tennessee	Unk.	39	Unk.
Texas	0	0	Unk.
West Virginia	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.
Wisconsin	Unk.	Unk.	Unk.

Notes: Unk. = Unknown.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health
Planning and Development, Maine Department of
Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 5

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
EARLIEST AGE ADOPTEES CAN REQUEST IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON THEIR OWN
BY STATE

State	Age
Alabama	19
Alaska	18
California	21
Colorado	21
Delaware	21
Florida	18
Idaho	18
Illinois	21
Kansas	18
Kentucky	18
Louisiana	25
Maine	18
Michigan	18
Minnesota	19
Nebraska	25
Nevada	18
New Hampshire	18
New Mexico	18
North Dakota	21
New York	21
Ohio	21
Oklahoma	18
Oregon	18
Pennsylvania	18
South Carolina	21
South Dakota	18
Tennessee	25
Texas	21
West Virginia	18
Wisconsin	21

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of
Health Planning and Development, Maine Department
of Human Services, [July, 1985].

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
THE TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN AND WHO MUST AGREE TO RELEASE INFORMATION
TO THE ADOPTEE BY STATE

State	Type of Information Released				Persons Who Must Agree to Release Information to the Adoptee		
	Entire Adoption File	Selected Facts From the Adoption File	No Information Provided Except Current Name and Address	Meeting Arranged	No One	Birth Parents ^a	Adoptive Parents
Alabama	X				X		
Alaska	X				X		
California							
Adoptions occurring prior to 1984			X			X	X
Adoptions occurring after 1983			X		X	b	
Colorado			X			X	
Delaware				X		c	d
Florida			X			X	d
Idaho			X			X	
Illinois		X				X	
Kansas	X				X		
Kentucky				X		X	
Louisiana				X		X	
Maine			X			X	
Michigan							
Adoptions occurring prior to 1980		X				X	
Adoptions occurring after 1979		X			X	b	
Minnesota							
Adoptions occurring prior to 1977		X		X		e	d
Adoptions occurring after 1976		X		X	X	b	
Nebraska		X				X	
Nevada			X			X	

^aFather's agreement usually applies only if the father is known.

^bAgreement to release information is presumed. A non-consent/denial must be filed to prevent disclosure.

^cOnly the consenting parent receives information. No information is released about non-consenting parent.

^dNeeds the assistance of adoptive parents if the adoptee is under age 21 in Delaware, 18 in Florida, or 19 in Minnesota.

^eMust go to court to release information if birth parents have died.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985]

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
THE TYPE OF INFORMATION GIVEN AND WHO MUST AGREE TO RELEASE INFORMATION
TO THE ADOPTEE BY STATE

State	Type of Information Released				Persons Who Must Agree to Release Information to the Adoptee		
	Entire Adoption File	Selected Facts From the Adoption File	No Information Provided Except Current Name and Address	Meeting Arranged	No One	Birth Parents ^a	Adoptive Parents
New Hampshire				X		X	
New Mexico	X					X	
New York							
Adoptions occurring prior to 1984		X				X	X
Adoptions occurring after 1983						X	
North Dakota				X	X		
Ohio							
Adoptions occurring prior to 1985	X				X		
Adoptions occurring after 1984			X			X	
Oklahoma			X			X	
Oregon		X				f	
South Carolina			X			X	X
South Dakota			X		X		
Pennsylvania	X					X	
Tennessee	X			X		X	
Texas			X			X	
West Virginia			X			X	
Wisconsin		X				X	

^aFather's agreement usually applies only if the father is known.

^fA wide range of relatives may agree to release information including Adoptee's Children.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985]

Table 7

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
PERSONS WHO MAY RECEIVE NON-IDENTIFYING INFORMATION
BY STATE

State	Adoptee	Birth Parents	Adoptive Parents	Siblings	Other Relatives
Total	22	16	10	10	5
Alabama	X				
Alaska	X				
California	X	X	X		
Colorado					
Delaware	X	X		X	X
Florida					
Idaho	X	X	X	X	X
Illinois					
Kansas	X				
Kentucky	X	X		X	
Louisiana	X	X			
Maine					
Michigan	X	X			
Minnesota	X	X	X		
Nebraska					
Nevada	X	X			
New Hampshire	X	X	X	X	X
New Mexico ^a	X	X		X	
New York	X				
North Dakota	X	X	X	X	
Ohio					
Oklahoma	X		X		
Oregon	X	X	X	X	X
Pennsylvania					
South Carolina	X	X	X		
South Dakota	X	X	X	X	
Tennessee	X	X		X	
Texas					
West Virginia	X	X	X	X	X
Wisconsin	X				

^aThe agency will tell them that there is a file and if whether or not identifying and non-identifying information is available.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 8

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
PERSONS WHO MAY RECEIVE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION
BY STATE

State	Adoptee	Birth Parents	Adoptive Parents	Siblings	Other Relatives
Total	30	25	6	14	5
Alabama	X				
Alaska	X	X			
California	X	X	X		
Colorado	X	X		a	b
Delaware	X	X		X	
Florida	X	X	X	X	X
Idaho	X	X			
Illinois	X	X			
Kansas	X				
Kentucky	X	X	X	X	X
Louisiana	X	X			
Maine	X	X	X		
Michigan	X	X			
Minnesota	X	X		X	X
Nebraska	X				
Nevada	X	X			
New Hampshire	X	X	X	X	X
New Mexico	X	X			
New York	X	X			
North Dakota	X	X		X	
Ohio	X	X		X	
Oklahoma	X	X		X	
Oregon	X	X	X	X	
Pennsylvania	X				
South Carolina	X	X		c	
South Dakota	X	X			
Tennessee	X	X		X	
Texas	X	X		X	
West Virginia	X	X		X	
Wisconsin	X				

^aUpon death of parents.

^bUpon death of adoptee and both birth parents.

^cThe rights of siblings are unknown at this time. Regulations are being written.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 9

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
THE RIGHT OF SIBLINGS TO RECEIVE INFORMATION
BY STATE

State	No Right	Yes May Receive	Restrictions on Right to Receive Information
Total	14	17	
Alabama	X		
Alaska	X		
California	X		
Colorado		X	Must have proof of death of birth parents
Delaware		X	None
Florida		X	None
Idaho		X	Only after adoptee accesses the records and proof of death of birth parents is presented
Illinois	X		
Kansas	X		
Kentucky		X	Must have had relationship prior to adoption
Louisiana	X		
Maine	X		
Michigan	X		
Minnesota		X	None
Nebraska	X		
Nevada	X		
New Hampshire		X	None
New Mexico		X	Limited
New York	X		
North Dakota		X	
Ohio:			
Adoptions occurring prior to 1965	X		
Adoptions occurring after 1964		X	Must have letter in file
Oklahoma		X	
Oregon		X	None
Pennsylvania	X		
South Carolina	X		
South Dakota		X	Non-identifying information only
Tennessee		X	Must have had relationship prior to adoption
Texas		X	Restricted to using the state central registry only.
West Virginia		X	Must have a consent on file
Wisconsin	X		

NOTE: Total does not add to 30 states. Ohio has two program levels and is counted twice.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and
Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
THE COURT'S ROLE IN POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION SERVICES
BY STATE

State	Court Has No Role	Court Has A Limited Role	Court Must Be Used	Description of Court's Role
Total	20	5	5	
Alabama	X			
Alaska	X			
California	X			
Colorado	X			
Delaware	X			
Florida	X			
Idaho	X			
Illinois	X			
Kansas		X		Persons other than adoptee must use court
Kentucky			X	Court must recognize the mutual request to meet
Louisiana		X		Court can be requested to verify a match
Maine	X			
Michigan		X		Court functions as the point of information about about an adoption
Minnesota		X		Court may order records opened upon the death of the parties
Nebraska		X		Court can open record for cause
Nevada	X			
New Hampshire			X	Court acts as a clearing house for requests to open records
New Mexico			X	Court acts as a clearing house for requests to open records
New York			X	Court must verify the match and the final consents to exchange information
North Dakota	X			
Ohio	X			

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and
Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
THE COURT'S ROLE IN POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION SERVICES
BY STATE

State	Court Has No Role	Court Has A Limited Role	Court Must Be Used	Description of Court's Role
Oklahoma	X			
Oregon	X			
Pennsylvania	X			
South Carolina	X			
South Dakota	X			
Tennessee			X	Court is notified once a match is made and then grants a meeting
Texas	X			
West Virginia	X			
Wisconsin	X			

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and
Development, Maine Department of Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 11

STATE WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
PUBLICITY ABOUT POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION SERVICES
BY STATE

State	Mandated by Law ^a		Type of Publicity
	No	Yes	
Total	26	4	
Alabama	X		None
Alaska	X		Unknown
California		X	None
Colorado	X		Brochure
Delaware	X		Brochure
Florida		X	Press releases; adoption agencies required to inform clients
Idaho	X		Brochure
Illinois		X	None. First year of operation so publicity is just starting
Kansas	X		None
Kentucky	X		None
Louisiana	X		Unknown
Maine		X	Press releases; brochure
Michigan	X		Press releases; brochure
Minnesota	X		Unknown
Nebraska	X		None
Nevada	X		Brochure
New Hampshire	X		None
New Mexico	X		Brochure, training, toll-free telephone line
New York	X		Brochure; informational services
North Dakota	X		None
Oregon	X		Press releases; newspaper articles
Ohio	X		None
Oklahoma	X		Press releases; TV interviews
Pennsylvania	X		Newspaper articles
South Carolina	X		Will be using press releases and T.V. news
South Dakota	X		Brochure
Tennessee	X		None
Texas	X		None
West Virginia	X		None
Wisconsin	X		Brochure

^aAssumed not mandated unless respondent indicated existence of a statutory requirement.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health Planning and Development, Maine Department of Human Services [July, 1985].

Table 12A

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
SERVICE FEES BY STATE

State	Service Fee
Alabama	None
Alaska	None
California	None
Colorado	\$15
Delaware	None
Florida	\$35 (\$10 to update file)
Idaho	\$10 to Register (\$10 to update; \$10 to withdraw)
Illinois	\$40
Kansas	\$ 6
Kentucky	None
Louisiana	\$25
Maine	\$ 5
Michigan	\$10
Minnesota	\$10
Nebraska	\$ 5
Nevada	None
New Hampshire	None
New Mexico	Legal Fees
New York	\$20 to register for persons other than adoptee. Adoptees pay \$75 and automatically receive non- identifying information. If a match is found, each party to the reunion pays an additional fee of \$20.
North Dakota	\$150.00
Ohio	None
Oklahoma	None
Oregon	\$25
Pennsylvania	\$ 4
South Carolina	\$35.00
South Dakota	None
Tennessee	None
Texas	\$15 (\$5 to inquire if record exists)
West Virginia	No fee currently but one will be charged in the near future
Wisconsin	\$28 per hour of State search \$28 to \$35 per hour for Private Agency

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health
Planning and Development, Maine Department of
Human Services, [July, 1985].

Table 12B

STATES WITH POST-ADOPTION INFORMATION PROGRAMS
FEES FOR NON-IDENTIFYING INFORMATION
BY STATE

State	Service Fee
Alabama	None (Open Record State)
Alaska	None (Open Record State)
California	None
Colorado	N.A.
Delaware	None
Florida	None
Idaho	None
Illinois	N.A.
Kansas	None (Open Record State)
Kentucky	None
Louisiana	None
Maine	N.A.
Michigan	None
Minnesota	None
Nebraska	N.A.
Nevada	None
New Hampshire	None
New Mexico	Lawyer's Fee
New York	\$75 for the adoptee (includes the service fee for registration). \$20 for all other parties.
Ohio	None
Oklahoma	None
Oregon	\$45
Pennsylvania	N.A.
South Carolina	None
South Dakota	None
Tennessee	None
Texas	N.A.
West Virginia	None
Wisconsin	None

NOTE: N.A. = not applicable. Non-identifying information is not released.

Prepared by: Division of Data and Research, Office of Health
Planning and Development, Maine Department of
Human Services, [July, 1985].

Maine Revised Statutes Annotated, Title 22

§ 2706-A. Adoption contact files

1. File. The state registrar shall maintain files of the names and addresses of adopted persons and their adoptive and biological parents, who have registered under this section.

2. Registration. The following persons may register their name and address with the state registrar and request contact:

A. An adopted person 18 years old or more;

B. An adoptive parent of an adopted person who is less than 18 years old; and

C. A biological parent of an adopted person.

3. Requesting additional information. The state registrar may request from each person registering or requesting contact any information that is necessary to insure accurate identification of that person and to assist in identifying the other party.

4. Reviewing departmental files. The state registrar may review both public and confidential departmental files to assist in identifying or verifying the identification of the other party. If both parties have registered, he may release those names and addresses even if the relationship was identified or verified by the use of confidential departmental files. He may charge a fee for the assistance which shall reasonably reflect the cost of providing it.

5. Request for contact. When the state registrar has a request for contact from both a biological parent and that parent's adopted child or the child's adoptive parent, he shall notify each party of the name and address of the other party.

6. Confidentiality. Except as provided in subsection 5, the files established under this section shall be confidential and not open to public inspection.

7. Public information. The state registrar shall, by appropriate means, make known to the public the existence of the adoption contact files, the assistance the department may offer and the purposes of those files.

State Contact Persons
Post-Adoption Information Program

Alabama

Bureau of Vital Statistics
211 State Office Building
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1701

Contact Person: Forest E. Ludden, Ed.D
Tel: (205) 261-5033

California

Department of Social Services
744 P Street, M.S. 19-31
Sacramento, California 95814

Contact Person: Anne Huff
Tel: (916) 324-8044

Delaware

Children's Bureau of
Delaware Social Services
2005 Baynard Blvd.
Wilmington, Delaware 19802

Contact Person: Terry Gilcrest
Tel: (302) 658-5177

Idaho

State Registrar and Chief
Bureau of Vital Statistics
Standards and Local Health
Services
Department of Health and Welfare
State House
Boise, Idaho 83720

Contact Person: Bee Biggs, R.N.
Tel: (208) 334-5084

Kansas

Dept. of Health & Environment
Office of Vital Statistics
Topeka, Kansas 66620

Contact Person: Donald E. Hinshaw
Tel: (913) 862-9360

Alaska

State Registrar of Vital Statistics
Dept. of Health & Social Services
Pouch H-026
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Contact Person: Joan P. Brooks
Tel: (907) 465-3391

Colorado

Colorado Department of Health
Division of Health Policy
Planning and Statistics
4210 E 11th Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80220

Contact Person: Linda Eisnach
Tel: (303) 320-8333 Ext. 3154

Florida

Dept. of Hlth. & Rehab. Svcs.
Office of Vital Statistics
P.O. Box 2197
Jacksonville, Fla. 32732

Contact Person: J.L. Ballard III
Tel: (904) 359-6650

Illinois

Dept. of Public Health
535 West Jefferson Street
Springfield, Illinois 62751

Contact Person: Aaron Vangeison
Tel: (217) 782-6553

Kentucky

Dept. for Human Resources
Adoption Section
275 East Main Street
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Contact Person: Sue Howard
Tel: (502) 564-3540

State Contact Persons
Post-Adoption Information Program

Louisiana

Dept. of Health & Human Res.
Office of Human Development
Div. of Evaluation and Services
P.O. Box 3318
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

Contact Person: Gloria Barrow
Tel: (504) 342-6711

Michigan

Dept. of Social Services
P.O. Box 30037
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Contact Person: Julie Horn, Specialist
Tel: (517) 373-3513

Nebraska

Bureau of Vital Statistics
P.O. Box 95007
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

Contact Person: Jane A. Applebee
Tel: (402) 471-2871

New Hampshire

Division of Children and Youth
Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Contact Person: Flow Skintze
Adoption Specialist
Tel: (603) 271-4457

New York

State of New York Dept. of Health
Office of Public Health
Adoption Information Registry
Room 208
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12237

Contact Person: Dolores S. Greagan
Public Health Representative
Tel: (518) 474-2121

Maine

Dept. of Human Services
Office of Hlth. Plng. & Dev.
Division of Data and Research
State House Station #11
Augusta, Maine 04333

Contact Person: Hope Harrington
Tel: (207) 289-3181

Minnesota

Dept. of Public Health
717 Delaware St., S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440

Contact Person: Frederick L. King
Tel: (612) 623-5000

Nevada

Div. of Human Resources
Welfare Division
251 Jeanell Drive
Capital Complex
Carson City, Nevada 09710

Contact Person: Rota Rosaschi
Tel: (702) 885-5767

New Mexico

Social Services
Adoption Unit
P.O. Box 2348
Room 203-B Pera Bldg.
Santa Fe, N.M. 87503

Contact Person: Doris Robertson
Tel: (505) 827-4372

North Dakota

Division of Children and Family Services
North Dakota Department of Human NYS
- South Capitol Building
South Capitol Building
Bismarck, North Dakota 58502

Contact Person: Virginia Peterson
Adoption Administrator
Tel: (701) 224-2372

State Contact Persons
Post-Adoption Information Program

Ohio

Vital Statistics
Supervisor of Registration
Division of Vital Statistics
Room G-20, 655 Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Contact Person: John Connor
Tel: (614) 466-0538

Oregon

Children's Services
Adoption Services
198 Commercial St., S.E.
Salem, Oregon 97310

Contact Person: Beth Myers
Tel: (503) 378-4452

South Carolina

Children's Bureau of South Carolina
1001 Harden Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29205

Contact Person: Francis E. Lewis, ACSW
Executive Director
Tel: (803) 758-2702

Tennessee

Dept. of Human Services
111-19 7th Avenue
Nashville, Tenn. 37219

Contact Person: Anne Miller
Tel: (615) 741-5935

West Virginia

Department of Human Services
1357 Milton Street
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Contact Person: Dora Grubb
Tel: (304) 348-4098

Oklahoma

Department of Human Services
P.O. B
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125

Contact Person: Jane Conners
Tel: (405) 521-2475

Pennsylvania

State Reg. & Dir.
Div. of Vital Records
P.O. Box 15228
101 So. Mercer St.
New Castle, Penn. 16103

Contact Person: Charles Hardester
Tel: (615) 741-5935

South Dakota:

Social Services
7000 N. Illinois Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Contact Person: Pat Steward
Tel: (605) 773-3165

Texas

Texas Dept. of Health
Chief, Bureau of Vital Records
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 76013

Contact Person: W.D. Carroll
Tel: (512) 458-7111

Wisconsin

Department of Health
Division of Comm. Svcs.
Adoption Search Coordin.
P.O. Box 7581
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

Contact Person: Cathleen Sweeney
Tel: (608) 266-7163