

POST-ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT, AND REUNION SERVICES FACT SHEET AND OVERVIEW

The Social Services Administration of Maryland's Department of Human Services (DHS) oversees Post-Adoption Search, Contact, and Reunion Services for adoptions that were finalized in Maryland. These services consist of two programs: the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR), and Search, Contact, and Reunion Services, which are the services provided by Confidential Intermediaries who are trained and certified by the Social Services Administration. MCVAR is a confidential, cross-referencing database of adult adoptees, birth parents, and birth siblings. If there is a match, the identities of the parties are confirmed and contact is facilitated. Search, Contact, and Reunion Services involves active searching for birth relatives by Confidential Intermediaries, who then assist in the facilitation of contact if the parties are interested.

The Social Services Administration provides oversight to ensure applications for these services are complete, and then enters the information contained in the applications into MCVAR. The MCVAR database then cross-references the new Registrant's information with information provided by existing entrants. If there is a match in MCVAR, the Social Services Administration confirms the accuracy of the match, and releases the contact information provided to the individuals in accordance with their notarized consent forms.

If a match is not made in the Registry and a Registrant so desires, the Social Services Administration assigns the search to a Confidential Intermediary (CI) based upon whether the adoption occurred through a private child placement agency, a local department of social services, or through the help of a private attorney.

The Registrant and the CI will be notified in writing of the search assignment, and the Registrant must then contact the CI to begin the actual search. The Registrant and CI then enter into a Service Agreement to clarify and document the services requested. If the adoption occurred through a private child placement agency that offers CI services, there may be a fee for CI services. Such fees are addressed in the Service Agreement. Search services do not begin until a CI receives a signed Service Agreement from the Registrant.

The CI will then identify and locate the birth relatives sought, and inquire into the birth relatives' willingness to have contact. If all parties are interested in contact, the CI will assist in arranging and facilitating contact.

There is no guarantee that information, or the person sought, will be found; and there is no guarantee that if found, the person sought will be interested in contact or reunion with the Registrant. While CI Services may or may not lead to a reunion, these services often assist the adult adoptee, the birth family, and the adoptive family in obtaining medical history.