

**Maryland Department of Human Resources
Social Services Administration**

***ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT
AND
REUNION SERVICES***

SERVICE MANUAL

October 2015

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SECTION ONE

**Introduction to Adoption Search, Contact
And Reunion Services
(ASCRS)**

SECTION	ONE
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND Family Law Article Title 5, Subtitles 4B, 4C	Introduction to Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services (ASCRS) COMAR: 07.02.13.01 to .09

I. OVERSIGHT

The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR), Social Services Administration (the Administration) oversees the statewide Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services (ASCRS) implementation as outlined below:

- A. Establishes regulations, policies and standard operating procedures.
- B. Reviews Confidential Intermediary (CI) applications for certification.
- C. Develops training standards and conducts initial certification and refresher training.
- D. Provides technical assistance to Confidential Intermediaries (CIs).
- E. Assigns cases to CIs at local departments of social services (LDSS), licensed private child placement agencies (CPA), or individuals qualified by the Director of the Administration for the purpose of providing search, contact, and reunion services.
- F. Monitors CI activities and tracks outcomes of LDSS, CPAs, or individuals qualified by the Director of the Administration for the purpose of providing search, contact, and reunion services.
- G. Administers the Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR).
- H. Sets and assesses reasonable fees for the ASCRS provided.
- I. Interfaces with various public and private organizations to facilitate the overall ASCRS process, and
- J. Conducts ASCRS searches.

II. SERVICES

Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services consist of two interrelated services:

- A. The Maryland Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR) also referred to as the “Registry,” is a confidential cross-referencing database of adult adoptees, birth parents and birth siblings.
- B. Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services (ASCRS) When a match is not made on MCVAR, search services are available to birth parents, adoptees and siblings who meet the criteria as established in the Statutes.

III. PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

This manual will provide a description of Maryland's Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services as well as useful guidelines for CIs to follow. It will also present the responsibilities and duties of CIs, as well as the service policies and procedures to be followed by each CI.

There are three Appendices:

Appendix A contains the forms that CIs use in the search and reunion process.

Appendix B contains the relevant Family Law Articles and the Maryland Code of Regulations (COMAR).

Appendix C contains some helpful guidelines, bibliography and articles.

SECTION TWO

Glossary of Terms

SECTION	TWO
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND Family Law Article Title 5, Subtitles 4B, 4C	Definitions COMAR: 07.02.13.02

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. Administration:

The Social Services Administration of the Department of Human Resources, which oversees the Adoption Search, Contact and Reunions Services at all Local Departments of Social Services and licensed private child placement agencies.

2. Adoption:

A legal proceeding finalized: a) by which an individual becomes the child of an adoptive family; and b) which confers on the adopted child all the legal rights and privileges to which a child born to the adoptive family is entitled.

3. Adoption Agency:

The licensed child placement agencies that provide adoption services to birth parents, adoptive parents and children who need permanent families. The agencies may be public or private.

4. Adoption Attorney:

An attorney experienced in working with birth parents and adoptive parents to match them, counsel them, prepare all necessary legal documents, represent them in court, and perform other adoption-related functions.

5. Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services (ASCRS):

Services to adult adoptees, adopted siblings, and birth parents through the use of a Confidential Intermediary. Services are also provided to Directors of Local Departments of Social Services acting on behalf of a minor child in out-of-home-placement.

6. Adoption Triad:

The three major parties in an adoption: the birth parent(s), the adoptive parent(s) and the adoptee. The triad is also referred to as the adoption triangle or adoption circle.

7. Adoptive Family:

An adoptive parent, grandparent, brother or sister of an adopted individual who is at least 21 years of age.

8. Adoptive Parent:

A person who legally adopts a child.

9. Adult Adoptee:

A person who is at least 21 years of age, whose adoption was initiated and/or finalized in the State of Maryland upon issuance of an adoption decree by a Maryland Court.

10. Adult Adopted Sibling:

A brother or sister, of the whole or the half-blood, who is at least 21 years of age and has been adopted.

11. Birth Parent:

An adopted person's biological mother or father as named on the original birth certificate. Other possible definitions of a birth father include, a man who:

- a. was married to the adoptee's birth mother at the time of conception.
- b. was married to the adoptee's birth mother at the time of the adoptee's birth.
- c. was named as the father on the adoptee's pre-adoption birth certificate unless the man has signed a denial of paternity, or his non-paternity has been determined by a Court.
- d. was identified by the birth mother as the father of the adoptee unless the man has signed a denial of paternity, or his non-paternity has been determined by a Court.
- e. has been adjudicated to be the father of the adoptee.
- f. has acknowledged himself orally or in writing to be the father of the adoptee.

12. Birth Sister/Brother

A biological sibling who has the same birth parent(s) as the adoptee but was not adopted.

13. Birth Relative:

A parent, brother, sister, child, aunt or uncle of the biological parent.

14. Closed Adoption:

An adoption in which the records are sealed and there is total confidentiality among all involved parties.

15. Confidentiality:

A legal requirement that prevents the disclosure of specific information unless a valid consent

has been obtained from the appropriate party.

16. Confidential Intermediary (CI):

An individual or a child placement agency qualified by the Director of the Social Services Administration to provide ASCRS to eligible adults. The individual must meet the qualifications for a CI as established by the Administration.

17. Confidential Intermediary (CI) Agency:

A public local department of social services; a private adoption agency licensed by the Social Services Administration to provide child placement services; or a former child placement agency that functions as a private family services agency and provides adoption search services to clients whose adoptions were facilitated by the agency during its former existence as a child placement agency. Each type of agency provides adoption search, contact and reunion services through confidential intermediaries in the State of Maryland.

18. Conflict of Interest:

A situation in which the CI's personal interests may create the possibility that the CI may not act in an objective manner.

19. Consent to Release Information:

A signed notarized form authorizing a CI to release identifying information to individuals or agencies indicated therein with the exception of an original or amended birth certificate that can only be released to a registrant by Vital Records of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene or by a Circuit Court.

20. Contact:

A written, face-to-face and/or verbal communication between a Registrant and the person(s) being sought.

21. Decree of Adoption:

A legal declaration issued by the Court that finalizes an adoption.

22. Director:

The Executive Director of the Social Services Administration of the Department of Human Resources.

23. Disclosure Veto (DV):

A signed notarized form that is completed by a birth parent or an adult adoptee, 21 years of age or older, that prohibits the release of their information.

24. Fee:

A monetary charge for Confidential Intermediary (CI) services, as established by the Director.

25. Finalization:

The final stage in the adoption process, involving a Court hearing that results in a Court order conferring all parental rights and responsibilities to the adoptive parents.

26. Identifying Information:

Information that, when disclosed alone or in combination with other information, such as, but not limited to: names, dates of birth and/or death, names of hospitals and names of schools attended, could reveal the identity or the location of the person to whom it relates.

27. Independent Adoption:

An adoption that is facilitated by an attorney, rather than one facilitated by a licensed Child Placement Agency (CPA); sometimes referred to as a private adoption.

28. Local Department of Social Services (LDSS):

A public agency in one of the twenty-four jurisdictions within the State of Maryland established to deliver social services. The Social Services Administration oversees all Local Departments of Social Services in Maryland.

29. Match:

Affirmation of a familial relationship between a Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry Registrant and another eligible birth relative (adoptee, birth parent or birth siblings) and confirmation of the relationship by a Local Department of Social Services or a private licensed Child Placement Agency. A match is established when the Registrant and the person who is being sought are both listed on the Registry.

30. Minor adopted birth sibling:

The birth brother and/or sister of an adoptee who is under the age of 21.

31. Non-identifying information:

Any information that does not lead to the identification of another person (such as physical descriptions, age, religious preference, level of education, profession and medical and/or family history.)

32. Notarized:

A process whereby a notary public has verified the identity of the signatory of a document.

33. Open Adoption:

An adoption in which some identifying information has been exchanged between the parties.

34. Out-of-Home Placement:

Placement of a child into foster care, kinship care, group care or residential treatment Care.

35. Passive Registry:

A registry where a Registrant's name is entered, but not matched, until the other related registrant registers.

36. Registrant:

An adult adoptee, birth parent or adopted adult sibling who requests and/or receives Adoption, Search, Contact and Reunion Services and/or Mutual Consent Voluntary Registry; or a Director of a Local Department of Social Services acting on behalf of a minor in out-of-home placement.

37. Registry:

The Maryland Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR), also referred to as the "Registry," is a database system that allows birth parents, adult adoptees and adult birth siblings to register for a potential match and to subsequently have identifying information released to each other.

38. Reunion:

A face-to-face contact between the Registrant and the person(s) being sought.

39. Search:

The process whereby the CI attempts to locate and make contact with the person being sought to determine willingness to have contact.

40. Service Agreement:

A written agreement between the Registrant and the CI concerning the services to be provided by the CI.

41. Termination of Parental Rights (TPR):

When the rights of a parent are voluntarily or involuntarily terminated in a Court of law, thereby rescinding that individual's right to legally make parental decisions for, or about, a child who was formerly in their care.

42. Waiver:

The reduction or elimination of search related fees when the Registrant's gross income or other circumstances warrant.

SECTION THREE

General Overview

SECTION	THREE
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND Family Law Article Title 5, Subtitles 4B, 4C	General Overview COMAR: 07.02.13.03, .04 and .09

I. HISTORY

- A. In most cases prior to July 1, 1947, birth parents and adoptees who wanted to find or to learn about each other had free access to adoption information that could help them to discover important family history and/or to possibly pave the way to a reunion.
- B. Access to adoption records became significantly more difficult after July 1, 1947. The Maryland Legislature passed a law to prevent the release of any identifying information from sealed records, Court records and agency records without a Court order from the Maryland Circuit Court that granted the adoption.
- C. In 1986, legislation creating MCVAR, also known as the “Registry,” was passed.
 - 1. MCVAR presented an avenue for adult adoptees, 21 years of age or older, birth parents and birth siblings to reconnect and share identifying information about themselves.
 - 2. A match may be made between a Registrant and eligible family members, if the familial relationship between the parties is verified by a third party, independent of MCVAR.

II. 1998, Chapter 679 – ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT AND REUNION SERVICES AND ACCESS TO BIRTH FAMILY RECORDS

- A. On October 1, 1999, Chapter 679 of (Legislative Session) 1998 entitled Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion and Access to Birth and Family Records was implemented as the result of tenacious lobbying for a law that would allow adult adoptees and birth parents to search for one another when a match was not made through MCVAR.
- B. The law made it possible for ASCRS to be provided to:
 - 1. Adult adoptees:
 - a. who are age 21 years of age or older, and
 - b. who do not have birth siblings younger than 21 years who have the same adoptive parents;
 - 2. Birth parents:

- a. of an adult adoptee 21 years of age, or older, and
 - b. whose parental rights were not involuntarily terminated.
- C. Chapter 679 of Legislative Session 1998 also grants adoptees age 21 years of age or older, and birth parents, the right to file a Disclosure Veto (DV) which prohibits the release of their identifying information.
- D. It is the responsibility of the Administration to forward DVs to the Division of Vital Records so that the birth parents or the adoptee's identifying information is not released.

III. 1998, Chapter 679: STIPULATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

- A. Chapter 679 of Legislative Session 1998 authorized the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to establish regulations to:
- 1. Allow adoptees to obtain their original birth certificates after their 21st birthday if their adoptions were finalized in Maryland on or after **January 1, 2000**, and
 - 2. Allow birth parents to obtain amended birth certificates, once the adoptee is 21 years of age or older, if their parental rights were not involuntarily terminated if their adoptions were finalized in Maryland on or after January 1, 2000.
 - 3. Allow an adoptee or birth parent to maintain their confidentiality by filing a DV, preventing the release of their identifying information.
 - 4. The Department of Vital Records is responsible for the implementation of adoption regulations related to birth record access.

IV. 2004 (Special Session), Chapter 7: ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT AND REUNION SERVICES FOR SIBLINGS

A. Chapter 7 of 2004, Special Session, amends Chapter 679 of 1998 and was enacted October 1, 2004. The law made it possible for CIs to provide ASCRS to biological siblings under the following conditions:

- 1. They are brother or sister of the whole or half blood who are at least 21 years of age, and
- 2. Have been adopted.

V. 2006, Chapter 312: ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT AND REUNION SERVICES FOR RELATIVES AND MEMBERS OF THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY

- A. Chapter 312 of 2006 was enacted on October 1, 2006 and was the result of continuous efforts to ensure that adult adoptees and birth parents can search for other family members or relatives when the individual being sought is found to be deceased.
- B. The law made it possible for CIs to provide ASCRS to Registrants who renegotiate a Service Agreement when the person being sought is deceased.
 - 1. If the Registrant is a birth parent, the CI may contact certain members of the adoptive family. This includes an adoptive parent, grandparent, adult brother and/or adult sister of an adopted individual.
 - 2. If the Registrant is an adult adoptee, the CI may contact certain members of the birth family. This includes a parent, grandparent, adult brother, adult sister, child, adult aunt and/or uncle.

VI. 2011, Chapter 326: ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT AND REUNION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF A MINOR IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

- A. Chapter 326 of 2011 was enacted on October 1, 2011. It allows for the provision of search services, in specific circumstances, on behalf of minors who are in an out-of-home placement.
 - 1. The law authorizes a Director of a LDSS to request ASCRS on behalf of a minor child who is in out-of-home placement in order to search for adult adopted sibling(s) of the minor for the purpose of developing a placement resource for the minor or to facilitate a family connection.
 - 2. The CI will search for adult adopted siblings of the minor child, if the adult adopted siblings were adopted through a LDSS.
 - 3. If the CI is able to locate an adult adopted sibling, the CI will ascertain if the sibling(s) is interested in contact with their minor sibling. If the sibling(s) is receptive, then the CI will facilitate contact between that sibling and the minor child.
- B. The CI may not charge a fee for these services.

VII. 2014, Chapter 86: ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT AND REUNION SERVICES –BIOLOGICAL RELATIVES OF ADOPTED MINORS IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

- A. Chapter 178 was enacted on October 1, 2014. It allows for the provision of Search, Contact, and Reunion Services to adopted minors who have returned to out-of-home placement, as well as determining the range of individuals eligible to be resources to adopted minors who are in Out-of-Home Placement.
1. The law authorizes a director of a local department acting on behalf of a minor in out of home placement to apply for ASCRS to develop a placement resource or facilitate a family connection with biological relatives when: (1) the minor in out of home placement was adopted through a local department of social services and (2) **the local department has determined reunification with the adoptive family is not in the minor’s best interests.**
 2. The CI will search for and contact biological relatives of the minor to develop a placement resource or facilitate a family connection with the relatives.
 3. The law defines “relative” of an adopted minor in out-of-home placement as an individual at least 21 years old who is related to the minor by blood or marriage within five degrees of consanguinity or affinity under the civil law rule.

VIII. STATUTE AND REGULATION REFERENCES

- A. All policies and procedures mentioned hereafter, in this manual, are in accordance with the Family Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and COMAR.
- B. MCVAR regulations can be found in COMAR 07.02.13.02 and 07.02.13.03 and the statutes are in the Annotated Code of Maryland §5-4C-01 through 07.
- C. ASCRS regulations can be found in COMAR 07.02.13.01., .02, .04 through .09 and the statutes are in the Annotated Code of Maryland §5-4B-01 through 12.

SECTION FOUR

**Confidential Intermediary
Qualifications and Requirements**

SECTION	FOUR
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND Family Law Article Sections 5-4B-03	CI Qualifications and Requirements COMAR: 07.02.13.03 and .04

I. GOVERING ENTITIES

Any individual wishing to be certified as a CI shall meet the requirements as set forth by the:

- A. Family Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland
- B. COMAR
- C. Executive Director of the Social Services Administration

II. QUALIFICATIONS

The Maryland Department of Human Resources is an equal opportunity organization and is committed to ensuring equality in personnel practices. The requirements to be certified as a CI are the same for LDSS employees and CPA employees or former employees. Those requirements are as follows:

- A. The candidate must be currently employed by a LDSS, or a licensed CPA, or a licensed family services agency, or be a former employee of one of these agencies. An individual may be employed by a family services agency that once provided adoption services but no longer does so.
- B. If the candidate has not already submitted to a FBI and Maryland State Police criminal background check as a condition of his/her current position, he/she must do so.
 - 1. Candidates may attend certification training while the results of the background checks are pending, but certification will not be granted until the Administration receives the results.
 - 2. Training fees will not be refunded if the criminal background checks result in the ineligibility of the candidate for CI certification.
- C. CI candidates must submit the following to the Executive Director of the Administration or the Executive Director's designee:
 - 1. A State of Maryland application, the MS 100, or a resume;
 - 2. An application for certification; and

3. The current application fee.

Submission of an application for certification does not obligate the Administration to certify the registrant. The application will be reviewed by the Administration to ensure that the required minimal qualifications are met.

- D. The minimum educational requirements include a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, and a major in one of the following disciplines:
 1. Social Work, Psychology, Counseling, Human Services, Mental Health Services, Education, Juvenile Justice, Criminology, Nursing, Sociology, Child Development, Human Growth and Development, or
 2. Human Resources Management (a bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management must include at least 30 credit hours in Human Services or Human Development).
- E. State employees who have been grandfathered into a social work classification may also qualify.
- F. Each candidate must have a minimum of two years experience providing casework or adoption services. Possession of a Social Work Associate license may be substituted for one year of experience.
- G. Candidates that have a bachelor's degree and a LSWA must be supervised by a Licensed Certified Social Worker or a Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical.
- H. CIs that have a master's degree must be licensed in one of the following classifications and be employed in an ASCRS agency or a family services agency that once provided adoption services but no longer does so.
 1. Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW)
 2. Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical (LCSW – C).
- I. CI's that are LCSW's or LCSW-C's do not require supervision.
- J. If an application for certification is denied, the registrant will receive notification from the Administration.

III. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Only CIs may provide ASCRS in the State of Maryland. All CIs must:
 1. Receive at least eight hours of Initial Training, provided by DHR or their designee, and

2. Attend approved Refresher Training every two years in order to maintain their certification.
- B. Reasonable fees can be charged for the above required training.
- C. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) may be issued at the completion of the Initial Training and at each Refresher Training.
- D. Reasons to deny certification include, but are not limited to:
1. The registrant has not attended the Initial Training.
 2. It is discovered that falsified information was presented on the application, and/or
 3. The Social Services Administrative staff determines that the registrant would be unable to perform the duties of a CI based on previous work history.
- E. All CIs must adhere to ASCRS regulations, policies and procedural guidelines, including:
1. Submitting all documentation and status reports to the Administration within the specified time frames.
 2. Performing duties in accordance with Maryland laws and regulations, and
 3. Maintaining all rules of confidentiality as specified in the ASCRS regulations.
- F. Training requirements for CIs may cover an array of topics including:
1. Adoption Law.
 2. Search Techniques.
 3. Counseling Methods, and
 4. DHR Policy and Procedures

IV. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. CIs receive requests from the Administration to work on behalf of adult adoptees, adult adopted siblings, birth parent(s) and LDSS directors who have applied for ASCRS.
- B. All services must be delivered in accordance with established Administration policy and procedural guidelines, the Confidential Intermediary Code of Ethics and the Oath of Confidentiality.

SECTION FIVE

**Mutual Consent Voluntary
Adoption Registry
(MCMAR)**

SECTION	FIVE
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND Family Law Article Subtitle 4C	Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR) COMAR: 07.02.13.02 and .03

I. ELIGIBILITY

The Mutual Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry (MCVAR), also referred to as the “Registry,” was established in 1986 as a result of the passage of legislation authorizing services to the following individuals who are searching for birth relatives:

- A. Adult adoptees 21 years, or older.
- B. Birth parents, and
- C. Birth siblings who are 21 years of age or older and who do not have a birth sibling younger than 21 years of age who have the same adoptive parents.

II. OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. MCVAR is the first point of entry in the ASCRS process. A confidential database containing all MCVAR entries is maintained by the Administration.
- B. All Registrants receive an ASCRS application packet which includes the following documents:
 - 1. A Cover Letter Regarding Contents of Application Packet
 - 2. An ASCRS Application
 - 3. A Consent to Release Information Form
 - 4. A Request for Reduction or Waiver of Confidential Intermediary services Form
 - 5. Statistical Information Form
 - 6. A Fact Sheet.
- C. The completed application packet, and a copy of the Registrant’s photo identification, must be returned to the Administration before the Registrant’s name is entered into MCVAR. Fee waiver requests for Confidential Intermediary services will be considered when applicable.
- D. If the Administration determines that the Registrant does not qualify for ASCRS, the Registrant should be informed of the reason for the denial within thirty (30) days. Reasons for denial include, but are not limited to:

1. The Registrant or the person being sought is under the age of 21.
 2. The Registrant or the person(s) being sought is not a birth relative or an adoptee.
 3. The adult adoptee being sought has a birth sibling, under the age of 21 who has the same adoptive parents as the 21 year old.
 4. The adoption was not initiated or finalized in Maryland.
- E. A match on MCVAR may be established if:
1. Both the adoptee and birth parents are currently registered on MCVAR, or
 2. The adoptee and one birth parent register if:
 - (i) notice of the filing of the petition for adoption or guardianship was given to the nonregistering parent and the parent did not participate in the judicial proceedings that terminated the parent-child relationship or declared the parent-child relationship was nonexistent;
 - (ii) an adoptee and the natural mother of the adoptee register and there is no known natural father;
 - (iii) the natural mother of the adoptee, or in the case of an agency adoption, the agency submits, or the Administration obtains from a court of competent jurisdiction in the state of the adoptee's birth or adoption, a copy of a judgment that declares that the identity of the natural father is unknown;
 - (iv) the Administration has information that indicates that the other natural parent is dead;
 - (v) notice of the filing of the petition for adoption or guardianship was not given to the nonregistering natural parent of the adoptee; or
 - (vi) 1 year has elapsed since the registering natural parent filed the affidavit and the nonregistering natural parent has not filed a notarized affidavit stating the nonregistering parent's refusal to permit the match
 3. Two or more birth siblings are currently registered on MCVAR.
- F. The relationship between the Registrant and the person(s) being sought must be verified by a third party before either party is notified of the match. A third party may be, but is not limited to:
1. The Agency that placed the child for adoption.
 2. The Division of Vital Records, or
 3. The Court of jurisdiction.

- G. Before contact is made with the person who is being sought, the Administration must verify that a DV was not filed after the person registered with MCVAR.
- H. Registrants may withdraw from MCVAR at any time by notifying the Administration.
- I. If a MCVAR query does not result in a match, the Administration will assign the Registrant to a CI for ASCRS.

SECTION SIX

**Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services
(ASCRS)**

SECTION	SIX
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND Family Law Article Sections: 5-4B-02, -05-11	Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services COMAR 07.02.13.02, .04 and .05

I. ELIGIBILITY

A. Currently, CIs may provide ASCRS to:

1. Adult adoptees who are 21 years of age or older and who do not have a birth sibling younger than 21 years of age and has the same adoptive parents.
2. Birth parent(s) if:
 - a. their parental rights were not involuntarily terminated, and
 - b. the adoptee sought is 21 years of age or older and has a birth sibling younger than 21 years of age and has the same adoptive parents.
3. Adult birth siblings if they:
 - a. are at least 21 years of age, and
 - b. have also been adopted.
4. A Director of a LDSS acting on behalf of a minor in out-of-home placement for the purpose of developing a placement resource or to facilitate a family connection.
5. Adult adoptees may receive services to locate birth parents whose parental rights were involuntarily terminated if the birth parent(s) have not filed a DV with the Administration.

B. In order for a Registrant to receive ASCRS, the adoption must have been initiated or finalized in the State of Maryland.

C. Proof of identity is mandatory for anyone requesting ASCRS. Identity must be verified with a copy of a photo ID or other proof of identity determined to be acceptable by the Administration.

II. OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. Search inquiries may be made through the:
1. The Administration via regular mail at
Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services
Maryland Department of Human Resources
Social Services Administration
311 W. Saratoga Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-3521
 2. The Administration via the 1.800.39.ADOPT information line;
 3. The SSA contact at 410-767-7171;
 4. The DHR website at <http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/> → Services → Adoption → Mutual Consent Voluntary Registry → How Do I Register?
for a request form for the Mutual Consent Voluntary Registry or Adoption Search, Contact and Reunion Services
- B. Following an inquiry, the Administration will send an application packet to the Individual. The packet includes a cover letter, the application, the consent form, the request for reduction or waiver of the Confidential Intermediary services fee, the statistical survey, and the ASCRS fact sheet describing services.
- C. Once the completed application packet is received by the Administration, the application is reviewed to ensure all parts are complete. The Administration is responsible for gathering and verifying data submitted by the registrant from the Maryland Archives or the agency that might have facilitated the adoption. Using the verified information, a CI is assigned to the case. A letter of assignment is sent to the Registrant and the CI. When a Registrant contacts the agency that provided adoption services first, the CI may provide the application to the Registrant and instruct the Registrant to send the completed application to the Administration.
- D. Registrants adopted independently must be assigned to a CI who works in an agency. The agency must agree that the CI will be allowed to process search cases emanating from independent adoption finalizations.
- E. A request for non-identifying information may be sent to the agency that facilitated the adoption.
- F. A Consent to Release Information permits a certified CI to obtain identifying information from agencies that will provide verification of data submitted by the registrant.
1. If the registrant seeking identifying information or desires contact and reunion

wants his/her identifying information to be released to the CI and/or individual sought, the consent form must be signed and notarized by the registrant.

2. When the individual sought is contacted by a CI, that individual must consent to the disclosure of his/her identifying information if the individual wants to be contacted by the registrant.
 3. The two consents most often used are:
 - a) Consent to Release Confidential Information from an Adult Adoptee; and
 - b) Consent to Release Confidential Information from a Birth Parent.
 4. A third consent used less often is the Consent to Release Confidential Information from an Adoptive Parent when the adult adoptee is sought and found to be deceased. If the birth parent or adopted sibling wants to locate an adoptive family member and the adoptive family member is found, the adoptive family member must consent to disclosure if that individual wants to be contacted or disclose information.
- G. When the registrant decides not to release identifying information the registrant must inform the CI of his or her decision. The CI must record the decision in the ASCRS case file.
- H. Any individual seeking another or being sought who decides not to release identifying information and was adopted on or after January 1, 2000, must file a disclosure veto with the CI. The CI will submit the disclosure veto to the MD Department of Health and Mental Hygiene-Vital Records Department,
- I. Birth Certificate Requests
1. For adoptions finalized on or after January 1, 2000

A request from an adult adoptee for a copy of an original or an amended birth certificate, or a request from a birth parent for a copy of the original or amended birth certificate can only be honored by Vital Records of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene if the adoption was finalized on or after January 1, 2000. If Vital Records determines that it cannot issue the birth certificate, the individual may petition the Circuit Court that issued the adoption decree to order Vital Records to issue the birth certificate. There is no guarantee that the petition will be granted.
 2. For adoptions prior to January 1, 2000
 - a) A request from an adult adoptee for an original or amended birth certificate cannot be honored by Vital Records or the CI.

- b) The individual may petition the Circuit Court that issued the adoption decree to release a copy of the birth certificate. There is no guarantee that the petition will be granted.
- 3. The Administration and CI's may obtain copies of original and amended birth certificates for information gathering purposes only.
- J. Once the CI assignment has been made, the Registrant and the CI then have their first contact, typically by phone. During this conversation, the CI can explain the search process and gather important information from the Registrant. The Registrant can ask questions and discuss their motivation and hopes for the search.

III. SERVICE AGREEMENTS

- A. There must be a Service Agreement in place between the CI and the Registrant in all ASCRS cases before the search can begin.
- B. The Service Agreement shall state the services to be provided by the CI.
- C. The Service Agreement becomes effective on the day that it is signed by the CI and the Registrant.
- D. A copy of the signed Service Agreement must be sent to the Administration.
- E. Once the Service Agreement is executed, and all fees are paid (if applicable), the CI will initiate a search on behalf of the Registrant.
- F. Within 90 days after executing the Service Agreement, the CI must file a report with the Administration reporting the outcome of the search.
- G. If the person sought has not been located within 90 days, the CI and the Registrant can renegotiate the Service Agreement to allow for more time for the search. A copy of the amended Service Agreement must be sent to the Administration.
- H. If the person sought is found to be deceased, do not reveal the identity of the person. The CI shall report the fact that the person is deceased, but may not disclose the identity of the deceased person. The CI and the Registrant may execute a new Service Agreement to allow the CI to search for other family members or relatives over the age of 21, specifically, parent, grandparent, brother, or sister of an adopted individual. The familial relationship may be based on blood or marriage of the person being sought. A copy of the new Service Agreement must be sent to the Administration. The CI may charge the Registrant a fee(if applicable) for the additional services provided based on the fee schedule at the end of this manual. The

CI may choose to reduce or waive fees when searching for additional family members or relatives.

IV. PRE-SEARCH INTERVIEWS

- A. Although it is not mandated by law for the assigned CI to conduct a face-to-face interview with the Registrant prior to initiating a search, it is highly recommended. The interview provides the opportunity to:
1. Prepare the Registrant for all possible search scenarios.
 2. Discuss in detail the Registrant's goals and expectations for the search.
 3. Answer any questions that the Registrant may have.
 4. Assess the Registrant's readiness to search.
 5. Determine if there is any reason that the search should be delayed or denied.
 6. Discuss the suggested Letter of Introduction to be written by the Registrant to the person being sought.

In situations where the Registrant lives at a great distance or outside of Maryland, it is recommended that the interview be conducted by a professional who has experience in the ASCRS and is able to conduct a readiness assessment prior to beginning the actual search. Some private child placement agencies require a pre-search readiness interview regardless of a client's geographical location.

The professional shall have experience providing therapy to individuals engaged in ASCRS, and may or may not be directly involved in the search process. However, the following adoption professionals may conduct a pre-search interview:

1. Social Worker
 2. Psychologist
 3. Psychiatrist, or
 4. Mental Health Counselor
- B. As a result of the interview, the CI may recommend delaying or denying the search at the time, if the CI has concerns regarding the motivations and/or the emotional stability of the Registrant. Some reasons to delay or deny a search include, but are not limited to:
1. Active addiction.

2. Serious mental illness.
 3. Significant anger issues, especially with regard to their adoption.
 4. Arrests and/or incarceration for certain crimes.
 5. A threat to one or both parties.
- C. To resolve a difficult issue leading to delay of the search, the CI should recommend actions that the Registrant can take to resolve the issue, such as:
1. Substance abuse treatment.
 2. Mental health counseling, and/or
 3. A search support group.
- D. If the CI has no concerns about the Registrant, then the search process can continue.
- E. A pre-search interview is not conducted in cases where a Director of a LDSS is receiving services on behalf of a minor in out-of-home placement.

V. SEARCH STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

- A. The first place that the CI should look for information which will be helpful in finding a person is in the agency file. Many times, there is sufficient information in the file on which to base a search.
- B. If there is insufficient information available, or the file is missing, the CI can obtain helpful information from the original birth certificate, Court records and/or Archive records.
- C. In order to review Court and/or Archive records, the CI must obtain a notarized letter of authorization from the Administration.
- D. In order to obtain an original birth certificate, the CI must order it from the Division of Vital Records.
- E. If assistance is needed, The Administration may be contacted for help in obtaining information beyond the information provided in the application, such as current names, addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth and social security numbers, which can assist the CI in locating the individual being sought.
- F. Some other useful sources of data:
1. State Department of Assessments and Taxation can be used to check if the individual or a relative is still living at the address listed in the records. If they

have moved, the database will sometimes show you when they moved, which can be useful.

2. Facebook can be helpful in finding the person being sought by sending that person a message using this media.
 3. Social Security Death Index can be checked to see if the individual being sought, or any close relative, is deceased.
 4. Death notices and obituaries can provide a wealth of information, such as current names and locations. You may have to pay a small fee to look at a death notice online or to have a library look one up for you.
 5. Maryland Judiciary Case Search is a free online data base that can be checked to determine if the individual is known to the judicial system and if more current information has been provided to the Court. If you learn that the individual being sought has been involved in a serious crime, you must proceed with caution and ultimately determine if a reunion is safe and in the best interest of the Registrant.
 6. Other helpful databases include: Ameridex, LocatePlus.com and Ancestry.com, which contain information, such as, current names, addresses, phone numbers, and dates of birth. You have to register a credit card and make deposits. Each inquiry is then charged to your account.
- G. In the case of a Registrant who is interested in searching for both birth parents, it is recommended that attempts be made to locate the birth mother first to establish contact with her for the following reasons:
1. The birth father may not have been informed of the pregnancy.
 2. The birth mother may have misidentified the birth father at the time of placement and may now provide accurate information.
 3. The birth mother may know how to contact the birth father. If she does, it would save the Registrant time, and would decrease costs, as there would be no need for a CI to search for the birth father.
 4. However, should the Registrant not want to make direct contact with the birth father, then the CI can continue to provide intermediary services.
- H. In the case of a Registrant who is a birth parent searching for an adult child who was adopted, the CI may facilitate contact or the exchange of information between the birth parent and an adoptive parent only if the adoptee has consented to disclosure of the information to the birth parent, or if the adult adoptee is dead as stipulated in FL 5-4b-11.

VI. SEARCH OUTCOMES

There are several possible outcomes of a search:

- A. The person being sought is found and is open to contact with the Registrant. In this case, with the notarized consents for release of information on file, the CI can give each party the other party's identifying information to allow direct contact between the two.
 1. While not mandated, many CIs believe that it is good practice to have the two parties communicate by letters, with the CI as intermediary, before having direct contact with one another.
 2. This step involves having the Registrant write an introductory letter, not including identifying information, along with some photos, that is sent to the CI to send to the person who has been found.
 3. The CI passes the letter along to the found individual with the suggestion that the individual write their own introductory letter, with photos, for the CI to pass along to the Registrant.
 4. This process allows each party the opportunity to have some current information about one another and some time to consider the information and their feelings before making the decision to go forward with direct contact.
 5. Should the parties decide to have direct contact, the CI will only release that contact information which is specified on the release of information form (i.e. telephone number or email address or mailing address).
- B. The individual being sought is located but is not immediately receptive to contact.
 1. It is not uncommon for the person who has been located to feel caught off guard and in some emotional turmoil when receiving the news that the Registrant is seeking contact with them. This does not necessarily mean that the individual is not open to contact, but rather that they may need some time and support before coming to a decision.
 2. In such a case, it is important for the CI to be respectful of the individual's feelings and not to put any pressure on the person to make a decision at that point.
 3. The CI should ask the individual if they would accept the Registrant's introductory letter and, if so, send it along to the individual in a timely manner.
 4. The CI can provide supportive services and can make the individual aware of any resources, such as a search support group or counseling services, that the CI feels may be helpful to them.

5. The CI should inquire as to any information that the individual would be willing to share with the Registrant at the time and then attempt to work out a plan with the individual as to how they wish to move forward with the search process.
 6. For birth parents, especially birth mothers, there is sometimes the added element that they have not told others about the adoption, which may include their current spouse and other children. In such a case, the birth parent may want time, and perhaps support, such as counseling, referral to a support group and recommended readings from the CI, to help them prepare to tell significant others in their life about the adoption before they can feel ready for contact with the Registrant.
 7. If the person sought has mental health issues, the CI must determine with that individual their readiness for meeting the Registrant. This may entail, with the individual's permission, (1) consultation with the individual's therapist, or (2) referral to a counseling service for assessment of the individual's mental health status.
- C. The individual being sought is located and does not want any contact with the Registrant.
1. In cases where the individual decides that they do not want direct contact with the Registrant, the CI should thoroughly explain the Disclosure Veto process to the individual and the reasons why it is highly recommended that the individual complete and return a DV form to the CI. The CI should then send the DV form to the individual, with instructions to return the completed form to the CI. The CI should keep a copy of the completed DV form in the agency file and send the original to the Administration.
 2. If the individual refuses receipt of the DV form or does not return a completed DV form to the CI, then the CI should note, in the agency record, the individual's verbal refusal of contact as well as the CI's offer, and the individual's refusal, of the DV form. In such a case, the CI should comply with the individual's verbal refusal of contact and, therefore, not disclose any of the individual's identifying information to the Registrant.
 3. The CI shall report the refusal to the Registrant.
 4. The CI should still attempt to obtain as much information as possible from the individual, including family and medical information, to pass along to the Registrant. The CI shall then provide, to the Registrant, all non-identifying heritage and health information contained in the agency record and obtained from contact with the individual.
- D. The individual being sought is found to be deceased.

1. If it is the birth parent who is deceased, the CI is authorized by law to search for other specified birth family relatives over the age of 21, if the Registrant so desires. The specific birth family relatives the CI is authorized to search for are: the parent, brother, sister, child, aunt, or uncle of the birth parent.
 - a. The CI shall execute a new Service Agreement. A copy of the new Service Agreement must be sent to the Administration. Administration.
 - b. If a birth relative is located, the CI will explore the individual's willingness to exchange information or have direct contact with the Registrant.

 5. If it is the adoptee who is deceased, the CI is authorized by law to search for other specified adoptive family members over the age of 21, if the Registrant so desires. The specific adoptive family members who the CI is authorized to search for are: the adoptive parent, grandparent, brother or sister of the adoptee.
 - a. The CI shall execute a new Service Agreement. A copy of the new Service Agreement must be sent to the Administration. Administration.
 - b. If an adoptive family member is located, the CI will explore the individual's willingness to exchange information or have direct contact with the Registrant.

 6. A death certificate can be ordered through the Division of Vital Records if the death occurred in Maryland. For deaths that occurred in another state, the CI may check the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) to obtain pertinent information.
- E. The individual being sought cannot be located.
1. In some cases, despite the best efforts of the CI, the individual being sought cannot be located.
 2. In such a case, the CI shall notify the Registrant that the individual could not be located.
 3. The CI can provide supportive services and can make the individual aware of any resources, such as a search support group or counseling services, that the CI feels may be helpful to them.
- F. The individual is located but is found to have a serious problem, such as mental illness, serious addiction, criminal history, or is incarcerated at the time.
1. In such a case, the CI should still assess if the individual found is interested in contact with the Registrant.
 2. If the individual is not interested in contact, then the DV procedure should be followed.

3. If the individual is interested in contact and consents to disclosure of information, then the CI should inform the Registrant of the problems that the individual found is having. Should the Registrant still be interested in contact, the best course of action for the CI is to offer to act as the intermediary for contact between the parties for an indefinite period of time.

This course of action still allows for contact while giving each party, as well as the CI, an opportunity to acquire more information about the situation. The CI would then use their professional discretion in deciding if, or when, it would be appropriate to facilitate direct contact between the two parties, should they desire that contact.

VII. CASE CLOSURES

There are three steps to formally close a case:

- A. The CI shall inform the Registrant, both verbally and in a written letter, of the search outcome. Sending a letter, outlining the search results, provides clarity as to the search outcome as well as written documentation, should there be any misunderstanding on the part of the Registrant in the future.
- B. The CI shall send a Client Satisfaction Survey to the Registrant. This allows the CI to receive valuable client feedback about the overall CI services that were provided. The CI shall advise the Registrant to return the completed Client Satisfaction Survey to the Administration. A client satisfaction survey is not sent in cases where the Registrant is a Director of a LDSS receiving services on behalf of a minor in out-of-home placement.
- C. The CI is to send a completed Search Outcome Report to the Administration. A search outcome report is not required when the Registrant is a Director of a LDSS receiving services on behalf of a minor in out-of-home placement.

VIII. DISCLOSURE VETO

- A. The Disclosure Veto :
 1. 1998, Chapter 679 made provisions that, for all adoptions finalized on or after January 1, 2000, an adoptee, age 21 or older, can have access to his/her original birth certificate and amended birth certificate and any information related to the birth certificate unless the birth parent(s) has filed a DV to prohibit access. Likewise, the birth parent(s) can have access to the adoptee's amended birth certificate, once the adoptee turns 21, unless the adoptee has filed a DV to prohibit access.

2. The DV is a signed notarized document that must be signed by the adult adoptee or birth parent.
 - a) When the birth parent completes a DV when the adoption is finalized, the original must be submitted to the Administration and a copy should be kept in the adoption file.
 - b) The adult adoptee may submit a DV to the Administration upon his/her 21st birthday.
 - c) The Administration sends the original to Vital Records to be filed with the birth certificate and keeps a copy in its ASCRS file.
- B. A DV may be cancelled or reactivated at any time.
- C. The DV's, one for the adult adoptee and one for the birth parent, may be accessed on the Department of Human Resources' website at: www.dhr.state.md.us; the weblink location for the two forms is in DOCUMENTS→SSA FORMS→DISCLOSURE VETOES at http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?page_id=2836.

IX. PROCEDURE TO PROVIDE ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT AND REUNION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF A MINOR IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT:

- A. The Director/Designee of a LDSS applies (DHR/SSA 2088) to the Administration, on behalf of a minor child in an out-of-home placement, to do a search for adult adopted sibling(s) age 21 and over of the minor child who was adopted through an LDSS for the purpose of developing a placement resource and/ or facilitating a family connection.
- B. If the application is approved the Administration will then assign the case to a CI in the same local department.
- C. The CI will obtain consent prior to the search beginning and submit the form to the Administration.
 - The consent (DHR/SSA 2090) shall be signed by the parent, guardian, or attorney of the child in out-of-home placement if the child is younger than 16 years old, unless the local department has a court order granting the local department the right to release the information.
 - The consent may be signed by the child if the child is age 16 or older.
- D. The CI and Director/Designee who applies for search, contact & reunion services shall execute a written agreement (DHR/SSA 2091) concerning the provisions of search, contact & reunion services.

- E. The CI will conduct a search for the minor child's adult adopted sibling(s).
- F. If the CI is able to locate an adopted sibling(s), the CI will ascertain if the sibling(s) is interested in contact with their minor sibling.
- G. If the sibling(s) is interested in contact, the CI will inform the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS. The CI will complete the Search Outcome Report (DHR/SSA 2092) which includes recommendations for future case planning. The CI will assist in facilitating contact between the adult sibling(s) and their minor sibling if requested by the Director/Designee of the LDSS.
- H. If the adopted sibling is not interested in contact:
 - 1. The CI will inform the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS.
 - 2. The CI will request medical/health history information from the adopted sibling for the benefit of the minor sibling and, if given, pass that information along to the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS.
 - 3. The CI will refrain from any further contact with the sibling.
- I. If the CI is unable to locate the adopted sibling(s), the CI will inform the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS.
- J. If the CI determines that the adopted sibling (s) is deceased:
 - 1. The CI shall report the fact that the individual sought is deceased.
 - 2. The CI shall not disclose the identity of the sibling.
 - 3. With the consent of the Director/Designee the CI may attempt to contact a member of the adopted sibling's family; who is at least 21 years old to assess the willingness of the member to communicate or exchange medical information with the applicant.
 - 4. If the Director/Designee consents to contacting a member of the adopted family, the Director/Designee shall execute another written agreement with the CI.

X. PROCEDURE TO PROVIDE ADOPTION SEARCH, CONTACT, AND REUNION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF A MINOR WHO WAS ADOPTED THROUGH A LOCAL DEPARTMENT AND IS IN OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT:

- A. The law authorizes a director of a local department acting on behalf of a minor in out of home placement to apply for ASCRS to develop a placement resource or facilitate a family connection with biological relatives when: (1) the minor in out of home placement

was adopted through a local department of social services and (2) **the local department has determined reunification with the adoptive family is not in the minor's best interests.**

B. The Director/Designee of a LDSS applies (DHR/SSA 2088) to the Administration, on behalf of a minor child who was adopted through a local department and is in an out-of-home placement, to do a search for adult relatives (age 21 and older) of the minor child for the purpose of developing a placement resource and/or facilitating a family connection.

C. The CI will obtain consent prior to the search beginning and submit the form to the Administration.

- The consent (DHR/SSA 2090) shall be signed by the parent, guardian, or attorney of the child in out-of-home placement if the child is younger than 16 years old, unless the local department has a court order granting the local department the right to release the information.
- The consent may be signed by the child if the child is age 16 or older.

D. The Administration will then assign the case to a CI in the same local department.

E. The CI and Director/Designee who applies for search, contact & reunion services shall execute a written agreement (DHR/SS 2091) concerning the provisions of search, contact & reunion services.

F. The CI will conduct a search for the minor relatives.

G. If the CI is able to locate relative(s), the CI will ascertain if the relatives are interested in contact with the minor in out-of-home placement.

H. If the relative is interested in contact, the CI will inform the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS. The CI will complete the Search Outcome Report (DHR/SSA 2092) which includes recommendations for future case planning. The CI will assist in facilitating contact between the relative(s) and the minor if requested by the Director/Designee of the LDSS.

I. If the relative is not interested in contact:

1. The CI will inform the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS.
2. The CI will request medical/health history information from the relatives for the benefit of the minor and, if given, pass that information along to the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS.
3. The CI will refrain from any further contact with the relatives.

J. If the CI is unable to locate the relatives, the CI will inform the Administration and the Director/Designee of the LDSS.

K. If the CI determines that the birth relative(s) is deceased:

1. The CI shall report the fact that the individual sought is deceased
2. The CI shall not disclose the identity of the relative
3. The CI shall continue to search for other birth relatives

SECTION SEVEN

**Adoption Search Contact and Reunion Services (ASCRS)
Confidential Intermediary Fees**

SECTION	SEVEN
ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND Family Law Article Sections: 5-4B-02, -05, -11	Adoption Search Contact and Reunion Services Administrative and Search Fees COMAR 07.02.13.03 to .06, .08

ADMINISTRATIVE FEES AND FEE SCHEDULES

I. Effective October 1, 2015, there are no longer any Administrative or Search fees associated with Adoption, Search, Contact and Reunion Services, for services provided by DHR/SSA and any Local Department of Social Services/public agency.

The Administrative fee schedule, effective October 1, 2015 is subject to change:

Gross Income	Documented Medical Emergency	Paid to DHR	Paid to DHR
		Registry Application Only	Registry & Search Services Application
\$0 – 10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$10,001 – 20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$20,001 – 30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$30,001 – 40,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$40,001 – 50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$50,001 – 60,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$60,001 – 70,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$70,001 – 80,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$80,001 – 90,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$90,001 & above	\$0	\$0	\$0

II. ASCRS FEES AND FEE SCHEDULE (These fees only apply to Private Agencies providing CI services.)

- A. ASCRS fees, payable to the agency providing the CI services, are collected to cover the cost of:
1. Staff time required to complete all steps of the search process.
 2. Completing database searches.
 3. Obtaining Court and Archive records.
- B. The ASCRS fee rate is based on the Registrant's total gross income. The maximum ASCRS fee is \$825 for two parents or two adult adoptees.
- C. ASCRS fees may be waived or reduced in certain circumstances. If a registrant thinks, using the fee schedule, the initial fee should be less than the stated amount for a given income level in the rate schedule, the registrant must request a fee reduction or a fee waiver in writing and provide income verification before the reduction or waiver is granted. Verification of income might include:
1. the Federal Tax Form 1040,
 2. a copy of the registrant's most recent unemployment statement that reflects unemployment payment and the number of weeks remaining for unemployment collection;
 3. a statement regarding expiration of unemployment payments;
 4. a statement regarding receipt of Medical Assistance and/or Food Stamps based on the registrant's unemployment or other sources of income;
 5. receipt of Public Assistance to Adults (PAA), which is a monthly payment of State funds to a person who has been certified for Assisted Living, a CARE Home or Rehabilitative Residence;
 6. An award letter regarding receipt of Social Security Disability funds, Supplemental Security Income, Veterans Benefits, retirement, or any other benefits you might be receiving.
- D. ASCRS fees are non-refundable, even when the search does not result in the outcome that the Registrant desired, as time and expenses will already have been incurred in the provision of the requested services.
- E. The Registrant may pay the ASCRS fee on an installment schedule.
- F. ASCRS fees only apply to Private Agencies providing CI Services.

Gross Income	Documented Medical Emergency	Search and Reunion with One Parent or One Adoptee	Search and Reunion with Two Parents or Two Adoptee's
\$ 0 – 10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$10,001 – 20,000	\$0	\$125	\$225
\$20,001 – 30,000	\$0	\$175	\$275
\$30,001 – 40,000	\$0	\$250	\$350
\$40,001 – 50,000	\$0	\$325	\$425
\$50,001 – 60,000	\$0	\$400	\$500
\$60,001 – 70,000	\$0	\$475	\$575
\$70,001 – 80,000	\$0	\$525	\$625
\$80,001 – 90,000	\$0	\$625	\$725
\$90,001 & above	\$0	\$725	\$825

ASCRS Fee Schedule. This fee scale only applies to private agencies providing CI services. The Local Departments of Social Services shall waive all fees.