



Lutheran Social Service
for changing lives

BACKGROUND INFORMATION REQUEST PACKET

We have received your request for non-identifying background information. Adoptive parents and/or adopted adults (nineteen years of age or older) may receive non-identifying genetic information from the agency file.

You may request either the FULL background report or the medical background ONLY. Each of these reports is based on information, which the birth parent(s) provided to the agency during the adoption planning process.

The full report typically includes non-identifying information on the following: hospital of your birth, ethnic background of birth parent(s), religion, education, physical description, talents, hobbies, career areas, personality descriptions, family (number of siblings, physical descriptions, education, jobs, etc.), any health history which has been provided, and information, if available, as to the reasons for adoptive placement. Any updated information, which the birth parent provided with a signed consent to be released, would be added to the report as well.

The medical background report would contain the health information, which the birth parent(s) gave the agency at the time of adoption. If they have provided for the release of additional health updates over the years, this would be provided as well.

The length and content of background report will vary, depending upon the information obtained by the birth parent at the time they made their adoption plan.

The fee for the full background report is \$125.00 and the fee for the medical background report is \$60.00. Please complete the enclosed form and return it to us with your fee payment. Unless you specify that you want only certain information, this report will contain all the allowable information from the agency file.

Usually, it takes four to six weeks for the background report to be prepared. If you are requesting the information because of a medical problem or emergency, please indicate this on your request form. You may select to have us mail the report to you, or you may come to the office to receive the report in person.

If you are interested in checking to see whether your birth parent has filled an affidavit giving permission for the Minnesota Department of Health to release your original birth certificate, you may fill out and send the "Search for Affidavit of Disclosure" form to the Minnesota Department of Health. This can be obtained through our web site. The Health Department will then inform you as to whether an affidavit of disclosure has been filed.

We periodically sponsor an "Orientation to Searching" workshop, which provides information and support to those who are thinking about, or planning to begin the search process through Lutheran Social Service. This workshop includes adopted adults, birth parents, and adoptive parents who have been through the search process. Please inquire if you are interested in attending an upcoming workshop. We welcome you to attend!

I hope that the process outlined above is clear and helpful to you. Please contact us at (612) 879-5248 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lutheran Social Service Post Adoption Staff

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I begin the process of searching for my birth parents or searching for my son or daughter?

Simply call us at (612) 879-5348 and request that search forms be sent to you. Be sure to identify whether you are an adopted adult or a birth parent. Send the completed forms with the deposit back to us and your search will be placed on our waiting list.

Can I search for both of my birth parents?

We only search for a birth parent if (s)he was **legally** identified as the birth parent. **Therefore, we can always conduct a search for your birth mother.** We only conduct a search for a birth father if he signed paternity affidavits or was adjudicated in court. We can check the file to let you know if this is an option. The fee that you pay covers the cost of one search.

What happened if my birth parent does not want any contact with me, or if the search reveals that (s)he is deceased?

If your birth parent initially does not desire contact, we would encourage her/him to think about it further and we would attempt to provide support/resources to the birth parent. If a firm decision for no contact is made, we would attempt to gather updated health history from your birth parent and provide that information to you, along with any other information your birth parent may provide. If your birth parent is deceased, we would attempt to contact a closed relative if you desire contact with a relative. Also if birth mother is deceased you may want to consider petitioning the court for your original birth certificate.

I have a health problem and I am wondering what to do to get updated health information from my birth family?

We can check the file for any health history, which had previously been recorded. We can also search for your birth parent (legally established birth parent). We request that your physician provide us with a list of specific medical questions as well as a statement as to the medical urgency of the request. Requests deemed urgent **by you physician** are given priority.

I am searching on my own, how do I get a copy of my original birth certificate?

If you were born in Minnesota your original birth certificate is at the Minnesota Department of health. You need to submit a "Search for Affidavit of Disclosure" form, to find out whether your birth mother has given permission for the birth certificate to be released. If the health Department has her permission on file they will release the birth certificate to you. Download this form from the Health Department web site at www.health.state.mn.us and link to "birth records after an adoption."

I am not sure which agency handled my adoption, what do I do?

You should write Sallie Shepheard at Minnesota Department of Human Services, Adoption Unit, 444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155. Include your date of birth and your adoptive parents' names. She will refer you to the correct agency.

How does LSS search and how do you contact my birth parents? (or son or daughter)

We utilize many different computer databases, as well as public records and other resources such as newspapers, historical societies, vital records, etc. We attempt to reach the person directly if possible. We contact a family member on if it becomes necessary, and we do not violate and confidentiality in this process. When we locate the person for whom we are search, we contact him/her by phone. We present your request for contact and offer much support throughout that phone call.

If my birth parent (or son/daughter) refuses to have contact with me, or cannot be found, will my search fee be refunded to me?

No, the fee is not refunded, as it covers the costs of conducting the search, but is not contingent upon the outcome.

If my birth parent (or son/daughter) wants contact with me, what are my options?

Some of this depends upon what information you have decided to release to this person on you Release of Information Form included in the search packet. The other party will also make decisions regarding preferences for contact. Your LSS worker is able to facilitate contact if needed, by forwarding letters, and/or helping to arrange phone calls, meetings, etc. for those who are not yet in direct contact with one another.

I would like to search for my siblings, is this possible?

If you are adopted and are aware of a sibling placed for adoption it is possible to conduct a search for this sibling, provided that neither of you know the birth parent's identity. If one of you has had prior contact with a birth parent then the birth parent's permission must be granted prior to the search for the sibling.

If you are adopted and are aware of an older child who remained with your birth parent, it is not possible to search for that sibling without the birth parent's permission.

If your parent (who raised you) placed a child for adoption, you must provide us with you parent's permission to search for your sibling, or if your parent is deceased, verification of death in order for you to search for this sibling.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION REQUEST

DATE _____

FILE NO. _____
(OFFICE USE ONLY)

NAME _____

MARRIED NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

BIRTHDATE _____

HOME PHONE _____

WORK PHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

DRIVERS LICENSE _____

SOCIAL SECURITY _____

ADOPTIVE FATHER AND MOTHER _____

ADDRESS AT TIME OF PLACEMENT _____

DO YOU WISH ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION? YES _____ NO _____

(If no give instructions) _____

I hereby authorize Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota to release to me the information from my file/my child's file. (If the adopted person is under 19 years of age, the parent must sign.)

ADOPTED PERSON

DATE

PARENT

_____ I will come to the agency to receive the information in person.

_____ I request that the information be mailed to me.

_____ I have enclosed the \$125.00 fee for the full Background Report.

_____ I have enclosed the \$60.00 fee for the medical Background only.

Please address all requests and correspondence to the attention of Post Adoption

POST ADOPTION SERVICE FEES

I. Background Information

- Full Background Report \$125.00
- Replacement Background (copy) \$35.00
- Medical Background Only \$60.00
- Non-identifying Background of adoptive family, for birth parent \$15.00

II. Search/Outreach Options

- Full Search/Outreach to family of origin or adopted Adult (counseling is also provided within the parameters of the outreach) \$625.00
- Search/Outreach to birth family or adopted adult if LSS has current address \$250.00
- Medical Only Search/Outreach \$300.00
(by adopted adult/adoptive parents, for updated medical information only; NO FACILITATION OF CONTACT)
- Providing adoptive parents/adopted adult with updated medical information (of a genetic basis) received from birth parent FREE

III. Post Korean Adoption

- Copy of Original Korean Referral \$35.00
- LSS Facilitation of information/communication with Korea Social Service \$35.00

IV. Request for Updates/Forwarding Letters & Packages

- Requests to check file for updates \$35.00
- Forwarding of letters/packages to triad members (client provides postage for letters and packages and must have all packages ready to be mailed)

V. File Copying/Preparation of Materials

- Per Court Order \$35.00
- Documents signed by birth parents or summary of agency contacts for birth parent \$15.00

VI. Support Groups

- Orientation to Search Workshop \$15.00

*** Search fee will be adjusted for individuals whose family income is \$25,000 a year or less. Verification of income is required.**