

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Instructions for Requesting Search of Minnesota Fathers' Adoption Registry and Sending Notice and Forms to Putative Father if Match Identified</b></p>
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### **Registering on Minnesota Fathers' Adoption Registry**

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 259.52, a man who believes he is the father of a child (born or unborn) may register with the Minnesota Fathers' Adoption Registry (MFAR) maintained by the Minnesota Department of Health. A putative father may register any time after the conception of a child he believes he has fathered. Once registered, a putative father's information is placed in the MFAR data base. The woman named by the putative father in his MFAR registration will be notified by mail within two weeks of his registering. The notification to the mother will consist of a letter explaining the MFAR and a copy of the putative father's completed registration form.

There are two time sensitive requirements the putative father must meet to ensure he receives notice of any pending adoption of the subject child:

1. The putative father must file a registration form with the MFAR within 30 days after the birth of the child; and
2. After an adoption petition is filed, the registered putative father must receive an additional 30 days during which he must file his intention to either relinquish his parental rights or claim his parental rights and take affirmative steps toward establishing paternity.

### **Searching Fathers' Adoption Registry**

Before the adoption of any U.S. born child is finalized in the State of Minnesota, a search of the MFAR is required. The only exceptions to the requirement to search the MFAR are foreign born children and "safe place" babies.

A search of the MFAR must be conducted no sooner than 31 days following the birth of the child. Upon request of the birth mother, prospective adoptive parents, or agency supervising the adoption, staff in the Office of the State Registrar at the Minnesota Department of Health will search the MFAR and provide to the requester certified proof of the search along with the results of the search. Licensed child placing agencies, agencies supervising an adoption placement, birth mothers, prospective adoptive parents, and social services agencies responsible for the report related to stepparent adoptions under Minn. Stat. § 259.53, subd. 1 may request a search of the MFAR at any time. The responsible social services agency as a petitioner in a juvenile protection matter under Minn. Stat. § 260C.150 may request a search of the MFAR at any time.

MFAR staff will send certified proof of the search and the results of the search to the birth mother or agent/agency requesting the search. If a match is found, the person requesting the search must file the results with the court and must send additional forms to the putative father. The court cannot finalize the adoption or issue an adoption decree unless the results have first been filed and reviewed.

## Notice and Forms to be Served Upon Putative Father

If a search of the MFAR results in a match, Minn. Stat. § 259.52, subds. 2 and 9, requires the person requesting the search to serve upon the putative father the following forms, which are located on the Minnesota Judicial Branch website and may be downloaded at [http://www.courts.state.mn.us/ctforms/putative\\_fathers\\_index.asp](http://www.courts.state.mn.us/ctforms/putative_fathers_index.asp):

- **Notice to Registered Putative Father and Notice of Jurisdiction**
- **Admission of Paternity and Intent to Claim Parental Rights** form
- **Denial of Paternity** form
- **Consent to Adoption** form

The **Notice to Registered Putative Father and Notice of Jurisdiction** (Notice) informs the registered putative father that an adoption petition has been filed in a specific Minnesota county and that he has 30 days from the date he received the Notice to respond by completing and filing with the district court in the county where the adoption petition has been filed either an **Admission of Paternity and Intent to Claim Parental Rights**, a **Denial of Paternity**, or a **Consent to Adoption**.

### Filling out the Notice to Registered Putative Father and Notice of Jurisdiction

When filling out the Notice to Registered Putative Father, you must type the information or use BLACK ink (do not use blue ink).

1. Fill in the top of the Notice form, including:
  - a. The county where the adoption proceeding is pending,
  - b. The judicial district where the adoption proceeding is pending,
  - c. The court file number,
  - d. The name of the Petitioner(s), and
  - e. The name(s) of the child(ren) to be adopted.
2. Fill in the name of the registered putative father, the date the child was born or is expected to be born, and the name of the child's mother.
3. Fill in the name of the county where the adoption petition has been or will be filed.
4. Fill in the address of the court administration office where the adoption petition has been or will be filed.
5. Fill in the date the Notice to Registered Putative Father was mailed to the father by certified mail, return receipt requested.
6. Sign and date the **Notice to Registered Putative Father and Notice of Jurisdiction**.

7. On the **Admission of Paternity and Intent to Claim Parental Rights** form, **Denial of Paternity** form, and **Consent to Adoption** form, fill in the top of each forms, including:
  - a. The county where the adoption proceeding is pending,
  - b. The judicial district where the adoption proceeding is pending,
  - c. The court file number,
  - d. The name of the Petitioner(s), and
  - e. The name(s) of the child(ren) to be adopted.

### **Serving the Notice and Other Documents on the Registered Putative Father**

The **Notice to Registered Putative Father** and **Notice of Jurisdiction, Admission of Paternity and Intent to Claim Parental Rights, Denial of Paternity**, and **Consent to Adoption** forms must be served upon the registered putative father by personal service. In lieu of personal service, service may be made by serving the documents by certified mail, return receipt requested. The putative father will return the receipt for certified mail to the sender.

### **Filing Notice and Return Receipt with the Court**

Once the return receipt is received from the putative father, it must be filed with the court in the county where the adoption will take place along with the original notice to registered putative father. The court administrator shall note the fact of service in a permanent record.

### **Additional MFAR Information and Instructions**

For instructions for registering on the MFAR, instructions for requesting a search of the MFAR, information about how long a search may take, the fees for conducting a search, and related MFAR questions, call the MFAR toll free at 1-888-345-1726, send an email to [far@state.mn.us](mailto:far@state.mn.us), or go to the MFAR website <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/registry/top.htm>.