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Health and Human
Services

**Texas Department of State
Health Services**

Vital Statistics and Adoption Information

Presentation to the House Committee on Human Services

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Topics

- Amending a Birth Certificate Based on Adoption
- Paternity Registry
- Courts of Continuing Jurisdiction Registry
- Central Adoption Registry
- Closed Child-Placing Agencies

Amending a Birth Certificate Based on Adoption



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Amending a Birth Certificate Based on Adoption

- Department of State Health Services (DSHS) adoption-related birth certificate functions begin after the adoption is granted by a court and a decree of adoption is issued.
- DSHS receives and processes requests for new birth records once an adoption is granted by a court.
- DSHS is authorized in statute to issue a new birth record based on adoption to reflect the adoptive information.
- Applicants must work with their attorney and/or clerk of the court to submit the following:
 - Completed [Certificate of Adoption \(VS-160\) application](#), certified by the clerk's office.
 - Certified copy of final Decree of Adoption.

Paternity Registry



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Paternity Registry

- [Texas Family Code Chapter 160](#) establishes a paternity registry within DSHS Vital Statistics.
- A man who desires to be notified of a proceeding for an adoption, or the termination of parental rights regarding a child that he may have fathered, may register with the paternity registry.
- Vital Statistics will furnish information from the registry to certain requestors, as outlined in [Texas Family Code §160.412](#).

Paternity Registry: Recent Legislation

- [HB 4795 \(89R\)](#), established an electronic process for the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) to electronically access and search the Paternity Registry and generate the results of their search.
- This electronic process replaced the workflow of DFPS submitting paper applications.
 - We continue to receive mail applications from mother of the child and legal representatives of the families.

Courts of Continuing Jurisdiction



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Courts of Continuing Jurisdiction

- Texas Family Code Chapters [108](#) and [155](#) establish a Courts of Continuing Jurisdiction (CCJ) Registry in DSHS Vital Statistics.
- Suits affecting parent-child relationships (excluding adoptions) are submitted to the CCJ Registry by the Office of the Attorney General and clerks of the court.
- These suits identify the court with continuing jurisdiction over children affected by each suit.
- Vital Statistics will furnish information from the registry to certain requestors, as outlined in [Texas Family Code §155.101](#).

Courts of Continuing Jurisdiction: Recent Legislation

- [HB 4795 \(89R\)](#), established an electronic process for DFPS to electronically access and search the Paternity and CCJ registries and generate the results of their search.
- This electronic process replaced the workflow of DFPS submitting paper applications.
 - We continue to receive mail applications from a party to the suit and legal representatives of the families.

Central Adoption Registry



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Central Adoption Registry

- [Texas Family Code Chapter 162](#) establishes a central adoption registry in DSHS Vital Statistics.
- It is a voluntary, mutual consent registry that provides a way for adult adoptees, birth parents, and biological siblings, who have registered, to locate one another without having to go through the court system or other sources.
- Matches are made when an adoptee and their biological parent(s) and/or biological siblings submit the [Texas Voluntary Central Adoption Registry Registration \(VS-2271\)](#) application to be added to the registry.

Central Adoption Registry: Steps Prior to Information Release

All parties are required to complete these steps prior to exchanging information to each matched party.



Consent to release of identifying information



One-hour post adoption counseling session



Written biography or history provided

Child-Placing Agencies Closures



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Child-Placing Agencies Closures – DSHS Role

- When a child-placing agency ceases operations, they may designate DSHS Vital Statistics to house their adoption records upon permanent closure.
- An agency may also designate another Texas licensed child-placing agency to preserve its records.
- A list of [closed child-placing agencies](#) who chose to house their records with DSHS Vital Statistics can be found on our website.

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