

King County Adoption Services FAQ

PACKETS / APPOINTMENTS / IN PROCESS ADOPTIONS

- 1. I want to adopt my stepchild / grandchild / child previously adopted in another country – where do I start?**

In order to begin the pro se (without an attorney) adoption process, you will first purchase an adoption packet from Family Court Services. Please see our webpage for information regarding adoption packet purchases. If after purchasing the packet you would like to schedule a facilitation appointment with the Adoption Paralegal to review the instructions and forms contained therein, please contact our office.

- 2. Can I purchase an adoption packet from you online?**

No. At this time all adoption packet purchases must be made by phone, email (or in person with an appointment.)

- 3. How much does an adoption cost? How long is the process? Does it include name change?**

Every adoption is unique. Please first purchase an adoption packet. If the answers to these questions are still unclear or you have further questions, please schedule a facilitation appointment with the Adoption Paralegal.

- 4. I've purchased an adoption packet but who is the Petitioner? Is that me? Do I just fill out all the forms and send them back to you?**

Please carefully review the instructions and forms provided in the packet. If you have further questions please call or email to schedule a facilitation appointment with the Adoption Paralegal in order to review the instructions and forms provided in the packet.

- 5. I'm not from King County. Can I still purchase your adoption packets?**

Yes. Please see the information on our web page regarding adoption packet purchases for instructions on how to order a packet. You may feel free to modify our forms for use in another county.

- 6. Which county should I file in?**

Adoption Services does not provide legal advice. Please see [RCW 26.33.030 \(1\)](#). Please contact an attorney if you are still uncertain of filing location.

- 7. I'm not from King County. Can I still meet with the Adoption Paralegal?**

Yes, anyone who has purchased an Adoption Packet can schedule a facilitation appointment. However, please be advised that the Adoption Paralegal has NO knowledge of local court rules or procedure in counties other than King.

- 8. Can I schedule a telephonic appointment with the Adoption Paralegal?**

Yes, we offer phone, Zoom and in-person facilitation appointments.

- 9. Am I required to schedule an appointment with the Adoption Paralegal prior to filing?**

No. The adoption facilitation appointments are a voluntary service.

- 10. What do I need to do prior to the appointment? What should I bring?**

Please be sure that prior to scheduling the appointment you have purchased an adoption packet from Family Court Services and have taken the time to read through all of the instructions and forms. Please complete the forms to the best of your ability and to the extent that you feel comfortable. On the day of the appointment please bring your packet and any additional documentation you think may be relevant (e.g., foreign decree of adoption, death certificate of biological parent, child's birth certificate). Some litigants choose to make a copy of the packet so that they may take notes directly on the forms during the appointment and/or mark certain sections that they would like to direct particular attention toward,

however this is not required. The only supplies and documentation that you are required to bring to the appointment is the adoption packet which you have already purchased.

11. How does adoption impact citizenship status for an adoptee? How will an adoption impact inheritance rights? What exactly does it mean for a parent-child relationship to be terminated? Do I need a Petition for Relinquishment in addition to the forms in the packet?

Adoption Services does not provide legal advice and cannot provide assistance beyond the scope of our adoption packets. Please contact an attorney.

12. I can't find an adoption attorney, can you recommend an attorney for me?

No. Court employees cannot recommend any specific attorney. You may perform an independent internet search for a Seattle area or King County adoption attorney. Please also see the [Free and Reduced-Cost Legal Services webpage](#), the [WSBA's webpage](#) regarding locating legal services, the [KCBA's Lawyer Referral Service](#), and the [American Academy of Adoption Attorneys](#).

13. The birth parent is refusing to sign the consent form. What do I do?

Adoption Services does not assist with contested adoptions. Please contact an adoption attorney.

14. It's difficult for me to physically come down to the courthouse. Can I do any of this online?

Yes. Please see the [Clerk's webpage regarding e-Filing](#). Please be sure to review [GR 30](#). Please contact the Clerk's Office directly should you have further questions regarding, e-Filing, e-Working Copies, or mail-in/online requests for Ex Parte Via the Clerk.

15. Some of the wording in the forms doesn't really describe my situation and/or some sections do not apply to me. What do I do?

The forms included in our adoption packets are generic forms. You may feel free to make modifications to our forms as applicable. If you have specific or further questions, please schedule a facilitation appointment with the Adoption Paralegal.

16. Does my child participate in the adoption process?

Yes, all children participate in the adoption process. Children are included in the pre and/or post placement report process. The adoptive parents and the child (adoptee) are required to be present in court for the final hearing. Extended family and friends are also welcome to be present for the hearing though it will be closed to the public.

RECORDS ACCESS

17. Can I expedite my adoption records request?

No.

18. I had an open adoption / I believe my adoption record was unsealed. Can I just walk into the Clerk's Office to obtain copies of the adoption record?

No. ALL adoption records in Washington State are sealed by statute (see [RCW 26.33.330](#)). You must complete the Petition to Obtain Copies from Sealed Adoption Record every time you wish to obtain copies from an adoption record at King County Superior Court. Please see the Record Access section of our webpage for additional information regarding these requests.

19. Can I email / scan / fax my adoption record request to you?

No. You must hand deliver to the courthouse judge's mailroom (clearly labeled) or mail. Adoption Services must receive the original forms in order to process the request.

20. My relative cannot complete the petition themselves at this time due to life circumstances – can I petition to obtain copies from the adoption record on their behalf?

Anyone may petition the court for copies from an adoption record. You are only required to be a member of the adoption triad (birth parent, adoptive parent, adoptee) in order to request non-identifying information.

21. I'm trying to find the names of my birth parents, how do I do that?

If the identities of all parties to an adoption are not known, there may be confidentiality issues and it may be appropriate to contact a Confidential Intermediary for assistance in obtaining adoption information. Please see the information on our webpage regarding the Confidential Intermediary Program. You may also see the DOH's webpage regarding pre-adoption birth certificates linked on our webpage.

22. What adoption documents should I request for tribal enrollment / passport renewal / social security / etc.?

Please contact the respective office directly to ensure that you are receiving the most accurate and up to date information. Adoption Services is not responsible for delays that result from requests for incorrect documents.

23. I previously completed the Petition to Obtain Copies from Sealed Adoption Record and it was approved but now I need another copy of the Decree – do I need to fill it out again?

Yes. The Petition and Order to Obtain Copies from Sealed Adoption Record must be completed for every request for copies.

24. I've heard adoption laws changed recently and now adoptions are unsealed, is this true?

No. All adoption court records in Washington State are sealed by statute. You may be referring to SHB 1525. This law changed requirement for an adoptee to obtain his or her original (pre-adoption) birth certificate from the Department of Health / Vital Records in Olympia (DOH). As of July 1, 2014, all adoptees 18 and older may have access to their original noncertified (plain copy) birth certificates unless a birth parent files a contact preference form indicating that he or she does not want the information released. Parties can request an original birth certificate by completing the Adoptee's Request for Original Birth Certificate from a Seale File and mailing it to DOH at the address shown on the form. Birth parents may now file Contact Preference Form and Birth Parent Medical History Form with the Center of Health Statistics (DOH). This change is respecting access to the original (pre-adoption) birth certificate from DOH; procedures for requesting access to sealed court records are the same.

MISCELLANEOUS

25. My child was adopted years ago and the adoptive parents won't let me see the child. Can you help me enforce an open contact agreement?

No. Adoption Services does not facilitate enforcement, modification, or creation of open contact agreements. Please see [RCW 26.33.295 \(4\)](#) and contact an attorney should you require further assistance in this matter.

26. Can I get a tax credit for adoption expenses?

Maybe. The Adoption Paralegal does not have additional information regarding this question. Please see the [IRS website](#) or contact an attorney if you require further assistance in this matter.