



Section 9- Concurrent and Long Term Planning

Tool 9.1.1

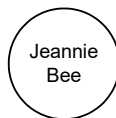
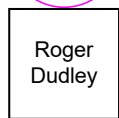
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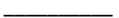
Male Applicant – should be indicated by a double square and is placed on the left



Female Applicant – should be indicated by a double circle and is placed on the right



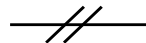
Other males and females should be indicated by a single square or circle – males are placed to the left and females to the right. Siblings are placed in order of birth.



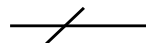
Solid line connects individuals and also represents marriage – date of marriage is placed above the line



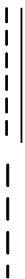
Dotted line connecting individuals horizontally is indicative of a common law relationship - date of the relationship started can be placed above the line



Solid line with two slashes through it represents a divorce – date of divorce is placed above the line

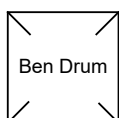


Solid line with one slash through it represents a separation – date of separation is placed above the line



Dotted line with solid line vertically indicates an adoption – date of adoption is placed beside the lines

Vertical single dotted line indicates a foster child



Either box is acceptable to indicate a death – the date of death should be placed above the box



A triangle is used to represent a miscarriage

Adoption Information for Birth Parents

1. **Commonly Asked Questions:**

Who can I talk to?

It is important that you make the best plan for your child whether you decide to keep your child or have the child adopted. If you are unsure whether adoption is the right choice for you, a social worker in your community may be able to help you. The decision remains yours as to whether you keep your baby or choose Adoption. There is a lot to think about, and the social worker can help. Talk to the social worker about services available to support your which ever decision you make. Services may include:

1. temporary foster care while you consider other alternatives;
2. counselling;
3. parenting programs;
4. housing;
5. alcohol or drug treatment;
6. emotional support; and
7. referrals to other agencies.

Where can I find a social worker?

To discuss the options available to you, call your local health and social services office, or the regional office at the following addresses and phone numbers:

Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority (YHSSA)

Jan Stirling Building
4702 Franklin Avenue, JS-2
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N5
Phone: (867) 873-7276

Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority (BDHSSA)

Bag Service 2
Inuvik, NT X0E 0T0
Phone: (867) 777-8101

Tlcho Community Services Agency (TCSA)

Bag Service 5
Behchoko, NT X0E 0Y0
Phone: (867) 392-3005

Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority (FSHSSA)

41 Breynat St
Box 1080
Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0
Phone: (867) 872-6300

Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority (SHSSA)

Box 340
Norman Wells, NT X0E 0V0
Phone: (867) 587-3653

Deh Cho Health and Social Services Authority (DHSSA)

Box 240
Fort Simpson, NT X0E 0N0
Phone: (867) 695-3815

**Hay River Community Health and
Social Services Authority
(HRHSSA)**

#3 Gaetz Drive

Hay River, NT XOE OR8

Phone: (867) 874-7215

What does adoption mean?

Adoption is as legal process which establishes new parent-child relationships.

Adoptions in the NWT occur under the *NWT Adoption Act*. The *NWT Adoptions Act* ensures that birth parents receive information needed to help make a decision that is right for them and their child. The intent of the legislation is to balance the rights of each party involved in the adoption, and to protect the well-being of the child.

Although the act of adoption happens at one time in a person's life, the impacts are life-long. The impacts of adoption are seen in varying ways at different states in the lives of the people involved.

How can an adoption be arranged?

There are two ways you can arrange an adoption:

i. *Departmental Adoption:*

Consent of birth parents to place their child in the care of the Director of Child and Family Services for the purposes of adoption; and

ii. *Private Adoption:*

The birth parents choose the adoptive family. The family must be approved to adopt in the NWT. The lawyer for the chosen adoptive family must give written notice of the proposed adoption placement to the Director of Child and Family Services, and arrange for the birth parent(s) consent to the adoption.

What needs to be done before a plan of adoption can proceed?

Before an adoption placement can take place there are three requirements:

- i. Birth parents must receive counselling from a social worker;
- ii. Family and medical history on the birth family must be gathered; and
- iii. An assessment of the prospective adoptive family must be completed.

Why do I need to provide a family medical and social history?

Your medical and social history will help the adoptive parents understand the child's needs and provide the best care possible for the child. Medical and social history information you provide will be preserved for the child in his/her Record of Adoption. The child may have access to this information when he/she reaches 19 years of age.

Who gives consents to an adoption?

Generally, for the adoption of a child, consents are taken from:

- i. the birth mother;
- ii. the birth father; and
- iii. the child, if he or she is 12 years old or over.

As a birth mother, when do I give my consent for an adoption?

Consent for the adoption is not taken until at least ten (10) days after the birth of your child.

Can I give consent if I am less than 19 years old?

As long as you are the birth parent of the child, no matter what your age, you can consent to the adoption.

What happens if I change my mind after I have given consent?

If you change your mind about placing your child for adoption, contact your social worker right away.

What about the adoption of Aboriginal children?

The *NWT Adoption Act* stresses the importance of a child's emotional well-being and cultural background in relation to adoption. In keeping with this commitment, there is particular recognition given to preserving the unique heritage and cultural ties of Aboriginal children.

You may want to discuss planning for your child with a representative of a band, or Aboriginal organization. The choice is yours to involve the band in the adoption planning process, or not.

Can I just give my baby to a family I know and like?

No. It is an offence under the *NWT Adoption Act*. All Adoptive homes must be approved in accordance with the *NWT Adoption Act*. . It is also against the law for you to receive any payment or reward for the placement of your child.

Can my child be placed for adoption outside of the Northwest Territories?

Yes, however permission is required from the Director of Adoptions to place a child outside of the Northwest Territories.

Who registers the baby's birth?

The birth parent(s) does. There are forms for this at the hospital. By law, the parent must register the baby's birth within 30 days. Most parents give their baby a full name, even if they have adoption in mind.

Will I know when my baby's adoption is completed?

If you ask your social worker to notify you, they will let you know.

To avoid delays in adoption placement, it is best to act early in your pregnancy, to find out if adoption is what you want for your child. No matter what you plan, getting advice and care early will help both you and your baby.

What is the Adoption Registry?

When an adoption is finalized, the Adoption Record is placed with the Adoption Registry. The Adoption Record is closed until the child reaches the age of majority. The Adoption Registry is managed by the Registrar of the Adoption Registry of the Department of Health and Social Services.

Under the *NWT Adoption Act* an adopted person, the natural parents, siblings and grandparents can have access to registry information when the adopted person is 19 years of age. To obtain information from the Adoption Registry an applicant must complete an Adoption Registry Application for Information form.

For adoptions completed prior to November 1, 1998, information from the Adoption Record can only be disclosed by the Registrar of Adoption if written consent is obtained from the parties involved in the adoption (the adopted person, and birth parents). Persons wishing to obtain registry information must complete an Adoption Registry Application for Information form.

What is Aboriginal Custom Adoption?

Aboriginal Custom Adoption is an adoption between two (2) Aboriginal families. Separate adoption legislation, called the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*, governs custom adoptions.

What types of adoption are available in the NWT?

- i. Departmental Adoption
Adoptions of children who are in the permanent custody of the Director of Child and Family Services.
- ii. Private Adoption
Adoptions of children who are not in care of the Director. This is a private arrangement between the birth parents and adopting parents, although there are requirements to be met under the *NWT Adoption Act*.
- iii. Step-Parent Adoption
This occurs when a non-biological parent wishes to adopt the child of his/her spouse.
- iv. Interprovincial/Territorial Adoption
This refers to the adoption of children in government care in another province/territory.
- v. Inter-country Adoption
This occurs when the child being adopted resides outside of Canada.
- vi. Aboriginal Custom Adoption
An adoption in accordance with Aboriginal customary law. The *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act* governs this type of adoption.

**For further information:
Contact your local Health and Social Services Authority or
visit; www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca
NWT Department of Health and Social Services
(See the Programs and Services Section)**

2. Offences

For adoptions completed in the NWT and governed by the *NWT Adoption Act*, birth parents must take note of the following summaries of offences under the *NWT Adoption Act*:

- i. No person shall receive a child for the purpose of a private adoption unless the person is entitled to petition to adopt under the *NWT Adoption Act* and the person has obtained the Director's written approval of the proposed placement. To do so is an offence and liable on a summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or imprisonment up to one (1) year (Section 6).
- ii. No person shall place outside the NWT, a child who is ordinarily resident in the Territories, unless the person had obtained the Director's written approval. To do so is an offence and liable upon summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or imprisonment up to one (1) year (Section 42).
- iii. No person shall publish in any way an advertisement searching for a child for adoption or to find adoptive parents for children. Any person who does, with exception of the Director of Adoptions, is guilty of an offence and liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six (6) months, or both (Section 74).
- iv. Any person, other than the Director, who gives or receives any payment or reward, either directly or indirectly, to obtain or assist in obtaining a child for the purpose of adoption is guilty of an offence and liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one (1) year or both. This does not apply to the payment of costs and charges for services under the *NWT Adoption Act* or *Regulations*, such as fees and expenses to a lawyer for proper legal services or fees and expenses to a medical professional for the required medical examination and report (Section 75).

Child Assessment for Adoption Placement Completion Guide

Events Leading to Permanent Custody

The description should provide the reader with a concise, informative summary.

Birth Parent's History

Summarize each parent's educational level, employment history, health issues, and special interests (including hobbies, athletic or artistic activities), or achievements. Provide a complete physical description.

Child's History

Describe the child's life experiences, e.g., relationships, types of discipline, traumatic experiences, etc. that would aid in selecting an appropriate adoptive family.

Placement History

Provide a concise summary of the number and types of placements. Indicate reasons for placement, if known.

Best Interest Criteria

1. Physical, Mental and Emotional Needs

Write a narrative description of the child including the following factors that apply:

- A complete physical description including height, weight, hair and eye colour, birthmarks, glasses, etc.
- Any hobbies, talents, special interests, and participation in school activities
- The child's sense of self, family, and community
- The child's racial, ethnic, and cultural identity
- The child's significant social or emotional attachments with his or her birth family, foster family, community, etc.
- Any relevant information/observations about behaviour and personal characteristics

- The current physical, emotional, behavioural, medical, social, developmental, and educational needs and projected future needs and any treatment required to appropriately have those needs met.
- The basis for an adoption subsidy rate, if applicable.
- Other details about the child's unique character.

2. The Importance of the Child's Development and Security as a Member of a Family

Siblings shall be placed together wherever possible. If placement with siblings is not possible, or considered not in the child's best interest, document the reasons. Address the need for continued sibling contact following adoption. Address the following:

- Frequency of contact/visitation among siblings.
- Describe the relationship between siblings, if none, why?
- Describe any skills, talents, and temperament of siblings.
- Are the siblings available for adoption? What is their permanency plan?
- Explain why siblings are separated and plans to reunite, if appropriate.

If you are uncertain of the existence of other siblings, or their location,

- Search Child and Family Information System (CFIS).
- Review the child or youth's file.
- Gather information from the birth family members or caregivers (for siblings' name, gender, birth date).
- Request assistance from the Department of Health and Social Services' Adoptions Practice Specialist/Registrar to locate any siblings previously placed for adoption.

3. Placement with Family or Extended Family

Describe the following:

- Child's relationships with extended family, foster parents, birth parents, and other significant individuals.
- Child's perceptions of these relationships.
- Caregiver's interest in adoption.
- The importance of maintaining these relationships following adoption.
- Any issues related to access provided in the Permanent Custody Order.

When to initiate contact with the birth family:

- There may be occasions when it is in the best interest of the child to initiate contact with the birth family, when a child is in the Permanent Custody of the Director under the *NWT Child and Family Services Act*.

This may be required if there has been birth family access or visits, or you need to obtain the family's medical and social history.

- Before initiating contact, discuss with your Supervisor whether this would be in the child's best interest, and if it would pose any legal risk to the adoption plan.
- If contact is made with the birth family, explain that it is your decision whether their involvement in the adoption process is in the child's best interest.

4. Maintaining the Child's Cultural, Linguistic and Spiritual Ties

Describe the following:

- Any cultural, linguistic or spiritual ties for the child.
- What expectations do you have for the adoptive family to respect and maintain the traditions and heritage of the child?
- Any consultation (as appropriate) with the child's Aboriginal organization.

Determining the child's Aboriginal status (*Child Protection Worker's responsibility to complete*):

- Aboriginal children are children who:
 - Are registered, or eligible to be registered under the *Indian Act* (Canada), or who have a biological parent who is registered under the *Indian Act*.
 - Are registered, or have a biological parent registered under the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement.
 - Are enrolled, or are eligible to be enrolled under a Land Claim Agreement (Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu or Tlicho Land Claims).
- You may also establish/verify the child's Aboriginal status by consulting:
 - The child and/or youth files;
 - The child or child's parents;
 - Someone who knows the child;
 - Aboriginal organization that may have knowledge of the child (refer to lists of organizations, available through Aboriginal Affairs & Intergovernmental Relations at www.daair.gov.nt.ca or
 - Contact the Regional office of Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada in Yellowknife at: (867) 669-2619.
 - Send a request to the Office of the Indian Registrar at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) in Ottawa, to determine if a birth parent or child, who is in the continuing custody of the Director is eligible for status under the *Indian Act*.
- A written request to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is to include:

- the full name and any other name the child or birth parent is known by
- a copy of the Permanent Custody Order
- Registration of Live Birth (to provide parental information)
- band affiliation (if available)

For further information see AANDC's website at <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032472/1100100032473>

5. Child's Views and Preferences Regarding Adoption Characteristics of the Potential Adoptive Family

Describe the child's views and preferences about being adopted. If a family has been identified, describe the child's feelings about the specific adoptive placement.

Describe:

- The child's readiness and preparation for adoption.
- The child's consent to the adoption has been obtained (12 years of age or older).
- Factors that must be in place to assist the child in developing the capacity to trust new parent(s).
- Factors that will need to be addressed to achieve a successful placement.
- The child's feelings/attachment about a potential adoptive family.
- The child's feelings about an adoptive placement if no family is identified.
- The child's capacity to transition to a new family, community, school, etc. if necessary.

6. Parent's Views and Preferences

If the birth parents or extended family members have maintained an ongoing relationship with the child after parental rights were terminated, describe their views and preferences with respect to the characteristics of the adoptive family.

If birth parent's access exists in the Permanent Custody Order, assess whether this should change:

- Review any access provisions made in the Permanent Custody Order and determine whether it is in the child's best interest to continue, vary, or terminate the access:
 - If it has been determined to be in the child's best interest to vary or terminate access, apply to vary or terminate the order as a *Child and Family Services Act* proceeding. If joined with an application for adoption the application is heard in the Supreme Court, and any future applications to vary access will be costly for the adoptive family.

- Consult with the Director of Child and Family Services about applying to the Territorial Court to terminate the access.
 - If access in the Permanent Custody Order is to continue after adoption, describe the nature and frequency of contact fully in the Adoption Plan. This will assist the Adoptions Practice Specialist/Registrar in preparing the order for access following the Adoption Order.
- Review any informal access (review the file for case notes indicating that access has been allowed):
 - If access is to terminate, advise the person with access in writing that access is being terminated because the child is being placed for adoption.
 - If access or contact is to continue, describe the nature and frequency of contact fully in the Adoption Plan to assist the Adoptions Practice Specialist/Registrar in preparing the order for access following the adoption order.

7. Progress toward Adoption

This section should identify the specific actions or steps that need to be addressed in order to place the child in an adoptive home. The Child Protection Worker/Adoption Worker should include a description of activities to be completed during the next four (4) months.

1. Progress Toward Adoption
2. Barriers to Adoption
3. Action/Steps to Overcome Barriers

8. Recommendation Regarding Adoptive Placement

Describe your recommendation based on the information you have gathered; (the kind of family you feel will best meet the overall needs of the child; whether the child needs to be the youngest family member; requires stimulation, structured routines, etc.).

Adoption may not be in the child's best interest when:

- The overall goal identified is a long-term foster placement with an extended family member;
- Repeated attempts to secure a suitable adoptive home for the child or youth have been unsuccessful, and it has been determined, through a comprehensive review of the Permanency Plan that continued attempts would have a negative impact on the child or youth; or
- After considering the child or youth's views, it has been determined that adoption is not an appropriate goal for the child or youth at this time.

9. Attachments

As required by section 41(1) of the *Adoption Act Regulations*, attach the following to your assessment report:

- ☐ Certified copy of Permanent Custody Order
- ☐ Certified copies of the Registration of Live Birth (2)
- ☐ Child's Birth Family Medical and Social History
- ☐ Medical information, assessments or psychological reports
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Notice to an Aboriginal organization on intention to place a child for adoption (if applicable)
- ☐ Documents pertaining to the child's Aboriginal status (if applicable)
- ☐ Rationale for Subsidy Based on Child's Needs
- ☐ Copy of Health Care Card
- ☐ Genogram

Child's Birth Family Medical and Social History Guide

You are being asked to give personal and medical information about yourself and your family. This information is important for several reasons:

1. To give your child information about you and your family. People who have been adopted have emphasized the importance of this information to their sense of who they are and where they came from.
2. To meet your child's medical needs. This information may be critical to your child's health in terms of early diagnosis and treatment of health problems. A complete family medical history gives your child the information needed to receive the best possible health care now and in the future.
3. To help select an adoptive family for your child.

As you give the information, please keep in mind what you would like your child to know about you and about how you came to decide on adoption as a plan for your child. Your own thoughts and words will mean a great deal to your child. Some common questions adopted persons ask about their background:

- What were the circumstances that led to my adoption?
- Who do I look like?
- What talents, interests or personality traits do I have in common with my birth parents (music, sports, and hobbies)?

A child wants to know about **both** parents. Where possible, have both parents provide their family history. If this is not possible, try to obtain and provide as much information as you can, or explain why it is not available.

Do not feel you have to limit yourself to the space given for each answer. Write on the back of the pages and add pages if you wish. You may want to have other family members help you in completing your family history. Feel free to ask your Child Protection Worker/Adoption Worker to help you.

The information you provide (Part 1 - identifying information will be retained within the Adoptions Registry at the Department of Health and Social Services and not shared in any manner) will be given to the adoptive parents to pass on to your child as he or she grows up. A copy of the information will also be kept on the child or youth's file with the Adoptions Registry at the Department of Health and Social Services to ensure that it will always be available to your child.

Permanent Custody Applications Guidelines

A Permanent Custody application is appropriate when:

- It is believed that a child is in need of protection and that the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the child are unlikely and/or unwilling to be able to ensure the child's protection, health and safety in the future.
- The child has been receiving services through a Plan of Care Agreement or under Temporary Custody for the past 24 months continuously (uninterrupted), but the original or new child protection concerns continue to place the child in need of protection.
- The child has no parent(s) and/or guardian(s) for an extended period (due to abandonment, death or incarceration) and extended family member(s) are unable or unwilling to care for the child.
- The parent(s) and/or guardian(s) wish to place the child for adoption (See Permanent Custody for the Purposes of Adoption section).

Making an application for Permanent Custody:

A. Initial custody applications:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| • Originating Notice | • Consent |
| • Affidavit | • Revocation of Consent |
| • Case Plan Report | • Affidavit of Execution |

B. Subsequent applications and/or Extensions of an Order:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| • Notice of Motion | • Consent |
| • Affidavit | • Revocation of Consent |
| • Case Plan Report | • Affidavit of Execution |

A judge can find a child in need of protection and grant a Permanent Custody Order.

Terms and conditions that can be ordered (*NWT Child and Family Services Act* Section 28(1)(d)):

- Access for the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and child may include:
 - When and where the child and the person granted access to the child may visit each other; or
 - The right, if any, of the person granted access to the child to receive information about the child's well-being while in care.
- Any terms and conditions that the court considers necessary and proper (placement of a child may not be ordered by a court).

Notice must be served to the necessary people.

Responsibilities of a Child Protection Worker for children in Permanent Custody:

- Where and with whom the child will live (preferably a permanent home);
- Consent for medical care and treatment for the child (unless surgery or anaesthetics are needed, which require the Director's consent);
- The child's education; and
- The child's social and recreational activities.

Note: If a person who had lawful custody immediately prior to the child being placed in Permanent Custody requests the following information, they are entitled to receive it, unless the Child Protection Worker in consultation with the Supervisor determines that it is not in the child's best interest to release some or all the information as per Section 48. (1.1) of the *NWT Child and Family Services Act*.

Information that the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) may be entitled to:

- Whether the child is in a group home, foster home or adoptive home;
- Whether the child is in the NWT or elsewhere;
- Health status; or
- Educational status.

After the court issues a Permanent Custody Order, the Child Protection Worker must:

- Consider the following when determining a suitable placement for the child:
 - Input from the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) on the permanent home of his or her child.
 - It is preferable to keep siblings together in same home.
 - Placement with extended family and friends is to be considered first.
 - Placement in foster families with the same cultural and religious background is preferable.
 - It is preferable for the child to continue attending the same school as before.
 - It is preferable to keep the child close to friends and social activities.
- Ensure any changes to the existing Case Plan Report do not contradict the terms of the Permanent Order.
- Discuss and explain the terms of the order to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s), child and foster family, where applicable.
- Monitor the child's progress regularly as per Minimum Contact Guidelines or as required by the Permanent Custody Order.
- Engage in on-going permanency and transitional planning to ensure the child will have sufficient supports once they are no longer in the custody of the Director of Child and Family services (e.g. upon his or her 16th or 19th birthday). This will include assessing the skills, strengths and needs of the child and ensuring that the necessary services and support networks are developed and established.
- Discuss options to extend the period of the Permanent Custody Order past the child's 16th birthday with the Supervisor, the child and the foster family/caregivers.

The responsibilities of a Child Protection Worker for a child in permanent custody end when:

- The period of custody set out in the Order expires.
- A court discharges the order placing the child in the permanent custody of the Director.
- The child reaches the age of 16 years (unless an extension of the Permanent Custody Order is granted - this can be in effect until the day the child turns 19 years of age).
- The child is adopted under the *NWT Adoption Act*.

Termination of a Permanent Custody Order (court discharges the Order) would occur when (*NWT Child and Family Services Act Section 49(all)*):

- It is determined that it is in the best interest of the child.

- The parent is able to care appropriately for the child.

Who can request the termination of the Permanent Custody Order (through an application to the court)?

- The Child Protection Worker;
- The child (if aged 12 years or older); and
- The child's parent(s)/guardian(s).

Who can order the termination of the Permanent Custody Order?

- A judge

Extension of a Permanent Custody Order for a child over 16 years of age:

- Court may order a Permanent Custody Order to go beyond the child's 16th birthday, but not beyond the day the child turns 19 years old.
- The child must be in agreement with the extension, unless the court finds that the child is unable to decide due to physical, emotional or mental reasons or an extension is in the best interests of the child.
- The Permanent Custody Order can be terminated at any time through the process described in the previous section.

The following people can make an application to extend an order past a child's 16th birthday:

- The child;
- The Child Protection Worker, if it is believed to be in the child's best interests; and
- An interested person.

Post Adoption Services

Introduction

Post-Adoption services refers to all programs or services available to any of the parties involved in the adoption (adopted person, adoptive parent, or birth parents) after an Adoption Order is granted.

An adoptive family may be eligible for financial or other assistance through the Department's Subsidized Adoption Assistance Program. Adopted adults, adoptive parents and birth parents may be entitled to receive information from the Post-Adoption registry.

The Department of Health and Social Services may also assist the adoptive family directly, or by referral to the appropriate agency for:

- assistance in obtaining a birth certificate;
- registration for Indian/Inuit Status; or
- tax credits.

What is the Post Adoption Registry?

The Post Adoption Registry refers to the disclosure of information following a legal adoption. Post adoption services may include providing non-identifying background information, copies of legal documents and search and contact services. The Registrar of Adoption within the Department of HSS manages the Post Adoption Registry.

Who may obtain information from the Registry?

For Adoptions finalized after November 1, 1998, information may only be disclosed when the adopted person has reached 19 years of age.

Information may be disclosed to:

- Adults adopted as children;
- Birth parents; and
- Adoptive parents.

Other persons who may be entitled to registry information include:

- Natural grandparents and natural adult siblings 19 years of age; and
- Former adoptive parents and former adoptive grandparents or adult siblings of Former adoptive parents, who are 19 years of age.

All adoptions must have been finalized in the Northwest Territories.

What about search and contact?

Birthparents, adoptive parents and adults who were adopted as children, may request search and contact services to find out if an adopted adult or birth parent is agreeable to contact. Identifying information is released only upon consent of both parties.

If you are an adult who was adopted as a child, the Post-Adoption Registry may provide:

Non-identifying background information - non-identifying background information about your birth family includes ethnic origin, physical descriptions, occupational skills and interests. This information does not include names, addresses or other data that would identify your birth family.

Search and contact - a search for your birth parent after receiving your application form, and verifying your entitlement to registry information. Each request is placed on a waiting list. Through discreet enquiries, staff will determine if the birth parent would agree to contact with you. Identifying information is released only upon consent of both parties. You will be advised in the event that your birth parent declines the opportunity for contact.

Specific documents - a copy of your Adoption Order.

If you are a birth parent (your birth son or daughter is adopted) the Post-Adoption Registry may provide:

Non-identifying background information - a non-identifying background summary about the adoptive family. This information would have been current at the time the adoption was finalized.

Search and contact - a search for an adult whom you had placed for adoption as a child. These requests are placed on a waiting list. Through discreet enquiries, program staff will determine if your natural child would agree to contact. Identifying information is released only upon consent of both parties. You will be advised if he or she declines the opportunity for contact.

Specific documents - copies of legal documents (your consent) to the adoption of the child.

If you are an adoptive parent (you adopted your son or daughter) the Post-Adoption Registry may provide:

Non-identifying background information - non-identifying background information about your adopted child's birth family. In most cases the information provided was obtained at the time of your child's placement in your home. It normally describes the birth family's ethnic origins, physical descriptions, occupational skills, and their interests. The information does not contain names, addresses or other data that would identify the Birth family.

Specific documents - a copy of your Adoption Order.

If you are a birth family member (a member of your family has a birth child who is Adopted) the Post-Adoption Registry may provide:

Non-identifying background summary - birth family members need the consent of the birth mother to obtain a non-identifying background summary about adoptive parents.

Can information about the adoption be released before the adopted person is 19 years of age?

Yes. The Registrar of Adoption has discretion to release information from the Adoption record to:

1. protect the health, welfare or safety of the adopted person (ie: such as for the diagnosis or treatment of a serious medical condition) or, to establish the Aboriginal status of the adopted person.

*****A note about changes effective November 1, 1998.**

For Adoptions finalized after November 1, 1998, adoptive parents and birth parents will be informed at the time of the adoption that when the child is 19 years of age, he or she and/or the birth parent may request information from the Adoption Registry.

What is the procedure for obtaining registry information?

The procedure for obtaining Registry information is to make the request in writing on the Adoption Registry Application for Information form. The person requesting the information must provide proof of their identity to the Registrar, so the Registrar can verify that this person is entitled to receive information under the *NWT Adoption Act*.

The applicant completes the form and attaches two pieces of identification (i.e. photocopy of a birth certificate or drivers' licence).

The form is sent to:

Registrar, Adoptions
Department of Health and Social Services
Government of the NWT
Box 1320, CST 6
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

When the request is received, the Registrar will acknowledge receipt. If you are requesting non-identifying information and are entitled to receive the information, the Registrar will disclose the information to you within sixty (60) days.

If you are requesting a search or contact, your name will be placed on a waiting list. The Registrar or designate, will make discreet enquiries to obtain the consent of the party to contact. The Registrar conducts an active search for the party for up to one year. The Registrar has discretion to disclose information to the applicant if the party (whose consent is being sought) cannot be found within a period of one year.

Fees

If you are requesting a certified copy of an Adoption Order, there is a fee of \$21 charged by the Supreme Court.

As an adoptee, how can I learn about Treaty Status I may be entitled to?

Aboriginal persons adopted under the *NWT Adoption Act*, predecessor Acts, or adopted before September 30, 1995, in accordance with Aboriginal customary law, who want to learn more about their right to Indian status may be assisted by the Post Adoption Registry to make inquiries with the appropriate federal authorities. To determine whether you are entitled to Registered Indian status, you must make an official enquiry to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Send a copy of the Adoption Order along with a written request to the following address:

Indian Registration and Band Lists
Registration, Revenue and Band
Governance Branch
Department of Indian & Northern Affairs Canada
Ottawa ON K1A 0H4
ATTN: Adoption Unit

- For more information on Treaty status, visit the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada website at: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ywtk/index_e.html.

Where can I find more information on First Nations programs and services?

Non-Status Indians and Métis who would like information about programs and services available to them should contact the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples at (613) 747-6022, and/or the Métis National Council at 1-800-928-6330. Inuit should contact Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami at (613) 238-8181. For more information about these organizations, visit the following websites:

- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples <http://www.abo-peoples.org/>
- Métis National Council <http://www.metisnation.ca/>
- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami <http://www.tacirisat.ca/>

For further information:

Contact your local Health and Social Services Authority or visit the Department's website <http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca/> under the Programs and Services Section.

