

# Aboriginal Custom Adoption

in the  
Northwest Territories

Government of  
Northwest Territories





## What is Aboriginal Custom Adoption?

Aboriginal custom adoption is one of many cultural practices among the Aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories. It is a practice that has been passed on from generation to generation.

Historically, custom adoption occurred between family members to strengthen kinship ties. This practice continues to this day.

Traditionally, custom adoption was a verbal agreement between two families. This caused problems for persons being able to obtain their birth certificate or other Aboriginal status benefits in modern society. Therefore, in 1995, the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act came into effect, recognizing, without changing, Aboriginal customary law.

## How Can I Have My Custom Adoption Recognized?

Under the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act, Adoption Commissioners are nominated by their local Aboriginal organization.

Commissioners are nominated based on their knowledge of Aboriginal customary law and appointed by the Minister of Health and Social Services. A person who has adopted a child according to Aboriginal custom applies to an Adoption Commissioner for a certificate recognizing the adoption.

## Keeping Culture Alive

Aboriginal custom adoption provides a way for families to continue sharing their culture with their children in their own communities where they can learn... love... and grow.



For more information, contact your local social services office in your community, or:

Department of Health and Social Services  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
P.O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2L9  
Canada  
Phone: (867) 767-9061 ext. 49160  
CFS\_Info@gov.nt.ca  
www.hss.gov.nt.ca

*If you would like this information in another official language, contact us at 1-866-846-8601.*

*Si vous voulez ces renseignements dans une autre langue officielle, communiquez avec nous au 1-866-846-8601.*