

Hawaii News | Kokua Line

Recent change in law eases access to adoption records

By [Christine Donnelly](#)

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Question: I need help finding out about my birth parents. I am old now, but that feeling of wanting to know never goes away. I tried to find out many years ago but the records were sealed. I don't expect that they would still be alive but I would at least like to know their names for sure. All I have to go on now is family lore and neighborhood talk and I am not sure how much is true. ... Growing up I heard conflicting information. ... I would like to know more of my life story. I was born in Honolulu and adopted at birth. ... You have written about vital records before so I thought you might have some information.

Answer: Hawaii's adoption-records law was amended this year to make it easier for adoptees who are now adults, adoptive parents and biological parents to inspect relevant records. Act 80, signed into law June 21, allows any member of that triad "unfettered access" to sealed adoption records as long as the person was adopted in Hawaii, is at least 18 years old and the records are held by Family Court.

Records accessible to the eligible parties include the adoptee's original birth certificate, which includes the names of birth parents when known.

You can request your records in person or by mail. You must submit the request to the Family Court in the district where you were adopted. In your case, that would be the

1st Circuit; the courthouse is in Kapolei.

The request form and detailed instructions for filling it out can be found online, at 808ne.ws/2bOKDGi and 808ne.ws/2bHhuiG, respectively.

If you lack online access, you may pick up the form at the courthouse:

Legal Research and Adoptions Unit

Family Court, First Circuit

Ronald T.Y. Moon Kapolei Courthouse, 2nd floor

4675 Kapolei Parkway

Kapolei, HI 96707-3272

If transportation is a problem, call 954-8145 and request that a form be mailed to you.

Once you have completed the form: If you mail it in, it must be notarized first. If you hand-deliver it, you must verify your identity with a picture ID.

There is no fee to request and inspect your records, but you will be charged a copying fee for any pages you choose to duplicate.

You might also like to connect with the Adoption Circle of Hawaii, a nonprofit that advocates for and supports the adoption triad (adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents and their families) and educates the general public about the lifelong impact of the adoption experience.

The group hosts a support group the fourth Sunday of every month from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Komura Lounge at Harris United Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard Blvd. The upcoming meeting (Aug. 28) will include a discussion of Act 80 and further explain how to request the personal records. This may help you through the process.

“We can provide some support to people as they go through the process of getting their information and searching,” said Katalina McGlone, an adoptee and Adoption Circle of Hawaii board member. “Many of us have the experience of searching for lost relatives and finding.”

For more information, call 989-7071 or contact the group through its website, adoptioncirclehawaii.org.

Lastly, you can read the full text of Act 80 and its legislative history as HB2082 HD1 SD1, including public testimony, via links found at 808ne.ws/Act80hi, on Gov. David Ige’s webpage.

Mahalo

I wanted to express my public appreciation for the wonderful team at Queen's Medical Center — great service from admitting all the way to post-op: Ernie, Debbie, Alice (no adhesive tape rash, thank you!), Brandon, Dr. Jeffrey Loh, Dr. Allison Shigezawa and Kai. I'm recovering well thanks to their warm treatment and incredible skill. Thank you!
— A grateful patient

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