

15.4, Putative Father Registry

Application: Department of Children's Services Employees, Tennessee Licensed, or Chartered Child-Placing Agencies

Authority: TCA 37-5-105 (3); TCA 37-5-106(a)(11); TCA 36-1-113(d)(3)(A)(i); TCA 36-1-116(b)(13)(A); TCA 36-2-318; RDA S10115

Standards: CFS 6.02

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7/1/2000 (16.16); 12/1/2000 (16.17)
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Supersedes: 9/14/2022 (15.4)
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Glossary:

- ◆ Putative Father or Alleged Father
 - A man who does not have an established legal relationship with a child but claims to be the child's biological father.

Policy Statement:

The Department of Children's Services shall maintain a Putative Father Registry, which contains names and pertinent information on persons who have filed a notice of intent to claim parentage of a child.

Purpose:

The Department of Children's Services maintains a Putative Father Registry that provides opportunity for individuals to register their intent to claim paternity of a child. The Registry also provides access to such information for all parties, including the Department, who are required to ascertain whether there exists any claim to the paternity of a child who is the subject of a termination or adoption petition. The Registry must be checked, within specified timeframes, prior to seeking dissolution of parental/guardian rights to the child and prior to adoption finalization.

Procedures:

A. Notice of Intent to Claim Paternity

1. The Registrar of the Putative Father Registry enters and maintains names and pertinent information on persons:

- a) Who have filed form [CS-0439, Notice of Intent to Claim Paternity or Acknowledgement of Paternity of Child](#) prior to or within thirty (30) days of the child's birth; or
 - b) Who are identified in an Order of Parentage or Acknowledgement of Parentage received from the registrar of the Division of Vital Records; or
 - c) Who have filed a certified copy of a court order adjudicating such person to be a father of a child born out of wedlock; or
 - d) Who have filed a copy of a sworn Acknowledgement of Parentage executed pursuant to applicable law.
2. Putative Father Registry listings are maintained in a data base system.
 3. Instructions outlining the registration process can be found at:
<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/foster-care-and-adoption/adoption-records/alleged-putative-fathers.html>.

B. Request for Name and/or Address of Father with Claim of Paternity

1. To request a search of the Putative Father Registry, complete form [CS-0435, Request for Name and/or Address of Father with Claim of Paternity](#) and send it to EI-DCS.Putative-Father-Regist@tn.gov.
2. DCS staff may request a search of the Putative Father Registry upon a child entering custody as part of diligent search efforts to locate family. If the child is less than 30 (thirty) days old, the search should be conducted following the child reaching 30 (thirty) days old.
3. The Registrar for the Putative Father Registry reviews the request and releases information secured through the Putative Father Registry and the Registry of Vital Records for requests that meet the legal requirements.
4. Unless the biological father has been identified through DNA testing conducted by an accredited laboratory, Putative Father Registry searches must be completed prior to or within 10 (ten) business days after filing a petition to terminate parental rights, and within 10 (ten) business days prior to or after filing an adoption petition.

5. If the child was born outside of the state of Tennessee, unless the biological father has been identified through DNA testing conducted by an accredited laboratory, the Putative Father Registry in that state must be searched within ten (10) days prior to filing an adoption petition. Out of state Putative Father Registries do not need to be searched prior to filing a petition to terminate parental rights. If the state the child was born in does not have a Putative Father Registry, no additional search is required.
6. Information obtained from the Putative Father Registry Search may be utilized in any proceeding in which the parentage of a child may be relevant including proceedings such as seeking:
 - a) Payment of child support; or
 - b) Medical payments on behalf of the children; or
 - c) Payment that may involve the payment of damages involved in connection with such parentage; or
 - d) Any other payment that supports the needs of the child.
7. The Registrar releases information electronically or by mail to the person who made the request. Documentation for children/youth in foster care is also uploaded to the Electronic Record System and emailed to the DCS attorney, if known.

Forms:

[CS-0435, Request for Name and/or Address of Father with Claim of Paternity](#)

[CS-0439, Notice of Intent to Claim Paternity or Acknowledgement of Paternity of a Child](#)

Collateral Documents:

[31.5, Organization of Family Case Files](#)