

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PROBATE COURT

PROCEDURE BULLETIN 19

RELATIVE TO: Requests for Information Concerning Adoption Files

This procedure bulletin is prepared for informational purposes in processing case files. It is not intended to provide parties with legal advice.

RSA 170-B:23, II states that all papers and records in the court's permanent file related to an adoption are confidential unless, for good cause shown, the court grants written consent for their inspection. An individual requesting information about an adoption other than a request for a certificate of adoption should be told that all adoption files are sealed, and the release of information from an adoption file may be made only upon written request, granted by the court. Thus, **no verbal inquiry concerning information from an adoption file may be answered by the court.** Moreover, RSA 170-B:23 and RSA 170-B:24 define who is entitled to information from an adoption file.

Requests for Certificates of Adoption

1. Telephone Requests or Requests Mailed to the Court – Staff will inform the person requesting a certificate of adoption by telephone or via a letter to the court, that they should complete a request for certificate or copy (Form NHJB-2420-P) and mail it to the court. This requirement is to help assure that the individual's identity has been verified.
2. Requests Made at the Counter – Staff will provide the person with a copy of a request for certificate or copy (Form NHJB-2420-P). Thereafter, staff will verify the person's identity (e.g. that they are either a minor adoptee's adoptive parents or an adoptee who has reached the age of majority). Upon such verification, the completed request for certificate copy (Form NHJB-2420-P) will be placed in the file along with a copy of the identification provided and the certificate of adoption will be provided to the person. NOTE: If the person does not have valid identification and is not otherwise known to the staff person, staff will inform the person that their request will not be processed without a hearing before a judge. In this case, the party will have to also complete a petition/motion form (Form NHJB-2128-P).
3. Payment for Requests for Certificates of Adoption – There are no new filing fees associated with a request for a certificate of adoption. The standard fee for the certificate should be assessed however.

