



# If you placed a child for adoption in New Jersey

## You need to know the law has changed

### What does the adoption law change mean for New Jersey birth parents?

**Beginning January 1, 2017**, adoptees and certain relatives will be able to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate without a court order. The birth certificate will include the names of the birth parents who placed children for adoption, even though both the State and the Church promised anonymity to the birth parents at the time of the adoption.

### Can birth parents in New Jersey protect their privacy?

Yes, the New Jersey Department of Health now offers two forms – a **Redaction Request Form** and a **Contact Preference Form** – that allows birth parents of adult adoptees an opportunity to protect their privacy.

### What is the Redaction Request Form?

Birth parents who finalized an adoption before August 1, 2015 can file a request with the State of New Jersey indicating that they want the State Registrar to keep their name off any documents provided to adoptees and certain other individuals.

To do this, birth parents **MUST** complete and submit a Redaction Request Form **no later than December 31, 2016**. Otherwise, their identity will be revealed if the original birth certificate is requested by an adult adoptee or certain relatives.

### What is the Contact Preference Form?

Birth parents who choose not to redact their personal information from the birth certificate can indicate if they wish to have ‘contact’ or ‘no contact’ with the adoptee by completing and submitting a Contact Preference Form.

### Birth parents can select one of three methods of contact:

- No contact with the adoptee or adoptee’s relatives,
- Contact with the adoptee or adoptee’s relative through an intermediary, or
- Direct contact with the adoptee or adoptee’s relative

Birth parents who submit a Contact Preference Form must also complete a medical, social, and cultural history form. Those who opt to submit this form also are required to update the medical, social, and cultural history information once every 10 years until the birth parent reaches the age of 40 and every five years thereafter.

### Where can New Jersey birth parents learn more about the adoption law change, find forms and get assistance?

If you are a birth parent who placed a child for adoption in New Jersey prior to August 1, 2015, please do not delay in visiting the Vital Records section of the State of New Jersey’s website to learn more about the adoption law change and download forms, at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/vital/record.shtml>.

If you desire to protect your privacy, you must submit either the Redaction Request Form or Contact Preference Form with the Family History Information Form **no later than December 31, 2016**.

After a century-long role in adoptions, the church understands its moral obligation to assist birth parents who wish to preserve their privacy. For this reason, the **New Jersey Catholic Conference** offers a resource page on our website as well as a dedicated **HELPLINE** for those who are in need of assistance.

For questions regarding the changes to New Jersey’s Adoption Law, please visit us on the web at [www.njcathconf.com](http://www.njcathconf.com) or call (609) 989-4809.

Please help to spread the word by notifying family members, neighbors, and friends about this change to the New Jersey adoption records law.