

Indiana Legal Services, Inc

Using the law to fight poverty, empower clients, and improve access to justice.

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Putative Father Registry

What is the Putative Father Registry?

This is a way that a man who thinks he might be the father of a child can “tell the world” that he believes he might be the father. Then if the mother is going to give up the child for adoption, the man who thinks he might be the father will get notice of the proposed adoption.

If the man is married to the mother of the child, he does not have to file a notice on this registry. This is only for men who are not married to the mother of the child.

What is the purpose of the Putative Father Registry?

The purpose is to provide notice to a man who might be the father of a child that an adoption has been filed. It also provides finality to adoptions because if a man does not register as a putative father, he might give up his right to notice of the adoption. The father then cannot successfully challenge an adoption.

How do I register on the Putative Father Registry?

You need to get the form for the Putative Father Registry. You need to fill it out, sign it, have it notarized, and return it to the Putative Father Registry. You can get the form at the State Department of Health, the clerk of the circuit court in your county, or at your local health department.

When should I register?

If you want to make sure you are notified if an adoption is filed, you should register with the Putative Father Registry immediately. You must register within 30 days of the child’s birth, or by the date of the filing of an adoption petition (whichever is later). You can even register before the child is born.

I just found out an ex-girlfriend had a baby and gave her up for adoption. I am the father. Can I do anything about the adoption?

Probably not. If the baby is more than 30 days old and the petition for adoption has already been

filed, you are too late for registering with the Putative Father Registry. You should still register, just in case some of the dates are wrong, but you may be too late to say anything about the adoption (even if you did not know about the baby until it was too late to register). This is because one of the purposes of the Putative Father Registry is to promote finality of adoptions.

What if I filed on the registry, but I changed my mind and I don't want to be on the registry?

You can get your name removed from the Putative Father Registry. You need to sign a statement saying you want your name removed. Have the statement notarized and return it to the State Department of Health. Then you will NOT be notified if a child that might be yours is going to be adopted.

Should I do anything else if I think I might be the father of a child born outside of marriage?

You could file to establish paternity. If paternity is established, you will legally be the father of the child. You will then have rights to custody and visitation, and you will have the obligation to support the child. Contact your local county prosecutor's office if you want to file for paternity.

Last revised 8-03
LSC Code 1360199

Printed: July 7, 2020
<http://www.indianalegalservices.org/node/107/putative-father-registry>
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