

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)
Legal Services Initiative (LSI)

Diligent Search Packet



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PREFACE

The first *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet* was released in 2005. Although the purpose of diligent search has remained the same over the years, the focus of searching has shifted due to changes in federal and state legislation and the implementation of state initiatives. In response to the Fostering Connections and Increasing Success to Adoptions Act of 2008, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), issued a special transmittal requiring children and youth agencies to use due diligence in attempting to identify, locate and notify all adult relatives of a child within 30 days of the child's removal from their home. The *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet* has aided and will continue to aid agencies in complying with this mandate.

1.0 WHAT IS A DILIGENT SEARCH?

The term “diligent search” was incorporated into practice by the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Legal Services Initiative (LSI) program in 2003. **LSI defines diligent search as a search conducted to locate parents, relatives or other potential permanency resources or connections for a child who is receiving services from or who is in the custody of a child welfare agency.**

Although the LSI diligent search process is sometimes referred to as “family finding,” the term “Family Finding®” is a copyrighted process developed by Kevin Campbell. The LSI program does not use the term “Family Finding®.” LSI diligent search is a much more extensive process, as it provides vital resources that include instructions and forms that aid in identifying and locating relatives and non-relative “kin.” These resources support agencies’ efforts with practices such as family group decision-making (FGDM), Fostering Connections and child-specific recruitment (CSR).

2.0 WHAT IS AN ADOPTION SEARCH?

An adoption search is a process by which a birth family member who has been separated by adoption seeks to discover information about their birth family. The search may be for information or to establish contact with a birth family member.

The question of why an adopted person searches is not easily answered, as there are as many reasons as there are individual searchers. For adoptees, finding their biological roots is important both for medical and personal reasons.

Many birth parents are also increasingly interested in meeting or having some contact with the child separated from them by adoption. Not knowing what happened to their child is one of the most agonizing consequences of being a birth parent. The desire to know is extremely widespread and does not disappear over the years.

The process of making these connections is commonly referred to as **search and reunion**. A search can also be for information only. Not all adoption searches result in direct contact with birth family members.

For more information about Act 101 of 2010 as it relates to adoption searches, please refer to the SWAN Pennsylvania Adoption Search Guidelines at <http://www.diakon-swan.org>. Click on “Families” and then “Adoption Search.” For questions about adoption search, please contact the LSI Warmline at lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org or 888-793-2512, ext. 5376.

3.0 WHY DO A DILIGENT SEARCH?

A diligent search might be needed for many reasons, including:

- To satisfy court and agency requirements.
- To comply with Pennsylvania's many statutory requirements, including those originally enacted via Act 25 of 2003, Act 80 of 2012, and Act 55 of 2013. Each of these Acts were later repealed, but the provisions themselves remain law, and can currently be found in Pennsylvania's Public Welfare Code.
- To give first consideration to relatives and kin when placing a child (67 Pa.C.S. §7507)
- To comply with the Federal Fostering Connections and Increasing Success to Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351) which requires that except in situations of family or domestic violence, notice be given to all grandparents and other adult relatives to the fifth degree of consanguinity or affinity to the parent or step-parent of a dependent child within 30 days of placing a child. (67 Pa.C.S. §7507)
- To comply with the Act 101 of 2010 amendment to the Adoption Act (23 Pa.C.S. Domestic Relations Chapters 21-29) and *Office of Children, Youth and Families Bulletin #3350-11-01, Implementation of Act 101 of 2010*, to support an adoption search request.
- To comply with 67 Pa.C.S §7503 (Formerly known as Act 55 of 2013) and *Office of Children, Youth and Families Bulletin #00-03-03, Kinship Care Policy*, to assist county children and youth agencies to search for and identify extended relatives and kin who may be willing to support children and families involved with the child welfare system.
- To serve notice of petitions or hearings.
- To find or recruit an adult who will provide a permanent connection for an older youth.
- To assist with Family Search and Engagement piece of Concurrent Planning.
- To identify and locate all potential people who will participate in Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) meetings.
- To assist with SWAN's CSR unit of service.
- To assist with the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)¹

4.0 HOW TO REQUEST A DILIGENT SEARCH TRAINING

The LSI diligent search training was developed to assist workers with conducting a thorough diligent search. The training clearly defines diligent search and why diligent searches are performed. Presenters discuss the many resources available to help with conducting a thorough diligent search as described in the *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet*. Presenters explore international searches in depth and provide updated information on searches that comply with the regulations of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Various diligent search strategies are examined to help with family finding activities, including participation in a live search demonstration using some of the tools outlined in the

¹ SWAN LSI paralegals support the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) by providing diligent searches to locate youth (ages 19 & 21) who have been identified as follow-up survey participants. All available resources should be utilized to locate contact information. Search results are forwarded to Public Consulting Group (PCG) and/or county staff to administer follow-up surveys.

For more information about requesting diligent search training for your agency, please contact the SWAN LSI coordinator assigned to your county. If you are unsure of your LSI coordinator, contact the SWAN LSI administrative assistant at 717-901-4342.

5.0 HOW TO SET UP A DILIGENT SEARCH PROCESS

Each county has its own search policy and procedures. This packet was designed to help you create your own search process. Please be aware of the requirements of your county agency and court when developing your own diligent search process.

- **Identify the reason a diligent search is needed.** The reason will determine the type of search, the extent of the search, as well as when and where to begin the search.
- **Review sample forms included in this packet.** These forms will help support searches in your county or agency and are included as a starting point to fit your own county or agency's needs. Forms that every county or agency should use are:
 - LSI Diligent Search Request Form ([Attachment A](#))
 - LSI Diligent Search Checklist ([Attachment B](#))

6.0 WHAT TO DO BEFORE STARTING A SEARCH

Steps to be taken BEFORE you begin a search:

- **Review Case File Thoroughly**
Key Places to Begin:
 - People identified in file, including child and siblings²
 - Birth certificate
 - Family Demographic Sheet
 - Family Search Activity Record
 - Medical records/psychological evaluations
 - Child and family profiles
 - Fiscal Sheet
 - Case notes/dictation
 - Paternity Tracking System (PTS) results
 - Family Finding Reports received from affiliate should list to whom a search referral was sent.
- **Complete the LSI Diligent Search Request Form ([Attachment A](#)).**
- **Know your co-workers.** Know who in your agency has experience with different areas. For example, a colleague may have extensive experience with criminal background checks.
- When calling agencies, **be sure to get the name of the person to whom you speak.** Build a rapport with that person, as you may need their assistance in future searches.

² AOPC Judicial Benchbook, Edition 4. Review "Locating fathers and Establishing Paternity" Benchcard.

- **Know your time frame** before you begin your search, as it will dictate which sources to contact first. (For example, federal offices do not respond as quickly as state offices.)
- Finally, **document everything you do**. List every place you have contacted and the results of that communication, including the name of the person with whom you spoke. The LSI Diligent Search Checklist will assist you with documentation ([Attachment B](#)).

7.0 WHERE TO BEGIN A SEARCH

LSI paralegals routinely use the sources in this section to complete a diligent search. The sources are listed in the order the paralegals have found to be most useful. Each county or court may have its own search policy and procedures. Please be aware of your own county's requirements before beginning any diligent search.

7.1 Internal Database Resources

Helpful Information

Contact the county intake supervisor and request a search of the intake database. These databases can assist you with searching for family members and other connections. Some databases may also be able to cross-reference names with other cases and reveal additional information, such as potential resources for the child. In addition to your current county database system, such as the Child Accounting and Profile System (CAPS) or Joinder Clinical Information System (JCIS), your county may also have access to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), Court of Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS).



In CPCMS, under the Person/org tab, death notices can be viewed. You can search every six months. It will show the name of the individual, the county of death, the SS number and the last address or where the individual died.

7.2 Online Database Resources (Account and Fee May Be Required)

7.2.1 Accurint®

Accurint is an online locator and research tool available to government agencies through LexisNexis®. Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services (DHS) contracts with LexisNexis to provide all county children and youth agencies (CCYA) with access to this database. Among other things, an Accurint search can assist with locating parents, relatives and connections. In 2017, Accurint added the Virtual Identity Search and Report Search (VIR) function, enabling users to check multiple social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) by name or email. Accurint is one of several valuable tools identified in this packet to assist with your search and should be used in conjunction with other identified search resources.



Search by name, social security number, telephone number, date of birth (DOB), address or Lex ID.



Comprehensive Report produces results based on options chosen (e.g., possible relatives, address history, criminal records, bankruptcy filings, assets).



Search multiple social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) by name or email through the Virtual Identity Search and Report.



Training Tip: Do not limit your search to the address you were given. Think outside the box. Use the information you gather as a starting point to further explore and cross-reference this information.

7.2.2 Westlaw®

PeopleMap & CLEAR, products of Thomson Reuters, are online location and research tools available to government agencies.

7.2.3 PeopleMap

PeopleMap is a fee-based premier public records search tool for discovering data. This system includes access to billions of public records from trusted sources including numerous live gateways. It includes templates for criminal records, court records, assets, and much more.

7.2.4 CLEAR

CLEAR is an online locator provided by Thomson Reuters. The system can be used by child and family services, in addition to law enforcement agencies, to locate parents, relatives, complete social security numbers, phone numbers, social media accounts, and criminal information. It includes a customizable dashboard that brings together public records to locate information quickly.

7.3 Department of Human Services (DHS)

Helpful Information

Ask the designated CCYA staff or caseworker to check DHS's records. If someone receives public assistance benefits, these records will include their current or last known address. DHS clients are required to update their information within 10 days of any change. DHS can also tell you if the person is receiving Supplemental Security Income, known as SSI. County fiscal departments should have access to this database and can search for addresses, telephone numbers and other individuals who are connected to the account. If no county contact exists, request that DHS identify a contact person within the agency. See *Benchmark Question #8* 

Website – <http://www.dhs.pa.gov>



Some counties may identify the DHS search as Client Information System (CIS).



Check all adults listed on the record.



Be sure to check the comments section on DHS website.

7.4 Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) and Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System, Paternity Tracking System (PACES-PTS)

7.4.1 [Bureau of Child Support Enforcement](#) (BCSE)

Helpful Information

To verify the paternity of a child, fax or mail a letter to the paternity supervisor. This letter must be on county letterhead. The letter must identify who is requesting the information and how it will be used. Additionally, the letter must include a full disclosure of what information is already known, excluding information protected by confidentiality. See *Benchcard Question #9* 

Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) The FPLS is an assembly of systems operated by the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), to help state child welfare agencies locate and notify parents and other relatives of a child placed in foster care. This will assist with the establishment of paternity, determining child support obligations, as well as the enforcement and modification of orders for child support, custody and visitation. FPLS can also assist with National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD) searches. See *Benchcard Question #4* 

For more information, go to: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/map/state-and-tribal-child-support-agency-contacts>



Only authorized persons may request information from FPLS.

- **Sample Paternity Letter Request for Acknowledgment** ([Attachment C](#))

7.4.2 Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System, Paternity Tracking System, PACSES-PTS

NOTE: For Pennsylvania counties only, effective August 2010 PACSES-PTS launched an online secure database to search for existing Acknowledgments of Paternity (AOP). This database is available to every Pennsylvania CCYA. The searcher can enter any number of search variables, including social security numbers of parents, mother's name, child's name, father's name and child's date of birth. If an AOP exists in that case, the result is displayed. The searcher can **print a certified copy of the acknowledgment. AOP records are confidential.** Federal and state laws and BCSE policy and procedures restrict the access, use and release of these records.

If you are unable to access the PTS through a CCYA, follow instructions for BCSE as outlined in section 7.4.1

Phone

800-932-0211

717-787-0297 (Fax)

Address

Bureau of Child Support Enforcement

Attention: Paternity Coordinator

P.O. Box 8018

Harrisburg, PA 17105

Websites

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/map/state-and-tribal-child-support-agency-contacts>

<https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/csww/>



Expected response time: 3–4 Days for BCSE

7.5 Domestic Relations and Social Security Death Index

7.5.1 Domestic Relations

Helpful Information

Check the Pennsylvania Child Support website. Registration is free. You can search the docket by name and county (or statewide) to see if a support case exists. The search results will not allow you to view the case but will provide you with a docket number. Next, contact the county domestic relations office. The contact information for domestic relations offices statewide is available on the Pennsylvania Child Support Program website.

Website - <https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/csww>



Each county domestic relations office maintains statewide information.

7.5.2 Social Security Death Index, (SSDI)

Helpful Information

When searching to see whether a person is deceased, you can search the social security death index. The following website provides you with a listing of websites—both free and paid. SSDI records may also be available through the Accurint search.

Website - <http://www.deathindexes.com>



You may want to contact the Department of Vital Records to obtain a copy of the death certificate. However, due to limitations of immediate family access, you may need a court order to obtain copy of the death certificate.

7.6 Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

You may contact the Department of Motor Vehicles to obtain a copy of a driver's record. See *Benchmark Question #10*

Helpful Information

- Go to the DMV website: <http://www.dmv.pa.gov>
- Follow this link to obtain the most recent version of DL-503 Form: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dmv/faqs/driver-licensing-faqs/driver-history-faqs>
- Driver's License Request Form - DL-503 ([Attachment D](#) for your reference).
- Complete the form. There is no fee for state-related agencies.
- Submit a standard letter introducing yourself and your agency and explaining why you need this information. A Sample Driver's License Request Letter ([Attachment E](#)) is included in this packet.
- This letter should be tailored to your agency and accompanied by a copy of the completed DL-503 form.
- Check the instructions on the most current version of the form to confirm the address and fax number.

- When contacting the DMV, be sure to request all surrendered licenses and identification cards. Do not limit your search to driver's licenses.

Address

Regular Mail

Bureau of Driver Licensing
Driver Record Services
P.O. Box 68695
Harrisburg, PA 17106-8695

Overnight and Special Mail

Bureau of Driver Licensing
Driver Record Services
1101 South Front Street, 3rd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17104-2516

Phone

800-932-4600
717-705-2401(Fax)

Websites

www.dmv.state.pa.us
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dmv/faqs/driver-licensing-faqs/driver-history-faqs>



Driver's license history is also available through Pennsylvania's Justice Network (JNET) if your county has access.

7.7 Public Records

7.7.1 Marriage and Divorce Records

Helpful Information

Some counties have their marriage and divorce records online. Check the county clerk's office for this information.

7.7.2 Wills and Estates

Helpful Information

Some counties have probate records online. Check your local Register of Wills or Orphans' court records office for this information. Search for decedent, beneficiary or executor.

7.7.3 Deeds and Land Records

Helpful Information

Some counties have websites that list the names of property owners. Check with your county's assessment office.

Other county information: In a search engine, search "[name of county] assessment office PA." Call the assessment office number provided to obtain real property information on the person or address in question.



Landlords may be very willing to help you, as they may be looking for the same person.

7.7.4 Genealogical Records

Some of the following websites require fees for searching.

Websites

www.ancestry.com

www.familysearch.com

www.familytreenow.com



These websites are very helpful for adoption searches.

7.7.5 Professional Licenses

Helpful Information

To search for professional licenses (e.g., hair stylists, contractors, plumbers, mechanics, etc.), in your preferred search engine type “professional license” and the state. This will lead you to that public office.



Not all states have their licensing records available online.

7.8 Online Search Engines

Websites

The following websites are general resources to aid in your search. For example, these search engines can be used to locate websites and contact information for government agencies you may need to contact or to see if the person’s name is posted anywhere on the internet.

www.google.com

This is the largest and most effective search engine.

www.bing.com

www.yahoo.com

www.fastpeoplesearch.com

www.dogpile.com

This includes “best results” from leading search engines including Google, Bing and Yahoo, but does not seem to sort by the closest or most likely match.

www.zabasearch.com

www.anywho.com

www.peoplefinder.com

www.intelius.com

Intelius powers many other websites’ search engines and also has its own home website with a comprehensive list of search types ranging from basic people search and list management to comprehensive background checks. Searches yield limited results, and most identifying information is only available for a fee.



Be aware that www.intelilius.com often bundles special offers (such as monthly memberships) with its basic reports. Read each page carefully. If you blindly click “continue” or “yes,” you are likely to end up paying for services you do not want.

7.8.1 Social networking sites

www.facebook.com

This is a social media service that allows users to share photos, videos and text.

www.instagram.com

This is a photo-based social media service.

www.x.com

This is a micro-blogging platform and social media service.

www.tiktok.com

This is a short-form video-sharing application.

www.snapchat.com

This is a photo-messaging application.

www.tumblr.com

This is a micro-blogging platform and social media service.

www.Linkedin.com

This is a professional networking site.

www.threads.com

This is a micro-blogging platform and social media service associated with Instagram.

www.pinterest.com

This is an image-sharing social media service.



These sites are sometimes blocked at workplaces, so you may need to get special permission to access these pages. Additionally, some sites may require membership to view a profile.

7.9 Address and Telephone Search

Helpful Information

Check your local telephone directory and online directories. The following websites can perform business searches and basic people searches by name or by reverse look-up.

- A reverse look-up usually allows the worker to obtain the name of the person from a telephone number, but some sites, such as www.whitepages.com, also offer a reverse look-up by address.

Many search websites are owned or powered by the same company and, therefore, gather information from the same database. The most commonly used websites include:

Websites

Free

www.usphonebook.com Free reverse phone number lookup.

www.whitepages.com Business search powered by superpages.com.

www.anywho.com Business search powered by Intelius. People search draws from local telephone directory assistance records.

Paid

www.ussearch.com This website will show very general results but requires a fee and subscription for all identifying information.

International

www.wayp.com This is a good source for links to many international White and Yellow Page search sites for countries around the world.

7.10 United States Postal Service (USPS)

Helpful Information

To verify a person's last known address, send the USPS an [address information request form](#). You can use either the "Change of Address or Boxholder Request Format — Process Servers" form or the "Address Information Request Format – Government Agencies" form, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, to the postmaster of the person's last known address.

- Request letters must be completed on Agency letterhead
- **Sample Address Information Request Format – Government Agencies** ([Attachment F](#))

Contact the local post office of the person's last known address and request forwarding address information. To find the delivery post office, go online to www.usps.com or call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777), say "post office information," then "delivery office" and then enter the five-digit zip code.

If you are not sure of the person's street address, send the request to:

- Postmaster
City, state, zip code

Phone

Customer Service of USPS

- 800-ASK-USPS (800-275-8777)

Website - www.usps.com Provides phone, address and name listings across the country.



Expected response time: 1–2 weeks



Contact the delivery post office to ask about faxing capabilities. Faxing may expedite the process.

7.11 Inmate Locator Search

7.11.1 Pennsylvania County Prisons

Helpful Information

If the person was or may currently be incarcerated, start by reviewing the [SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual](#). This extensive manual compiles county prison policies and procedures into a single, comprehensive document. The manual contains entries for each Pennsylvania county prison, appendices with more detailed information and links to county prison websites.



Google "[County name] inmate locator".

See *Benchcard Question #7*

7.11.2 Pennsylvania State Prisons

Helpful Information

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has inmate information available online.

Website - <http://www.cor.pa.gov/Inmates/Pages/Inmate-Locator.aspx>

7.11.3 Other State Prison Information



Google “[State name] inmate locator”.



Best practice encourages the caseworker to directly engage the incarcerated individual in order to obtain family tree information.

7.11.4 Federal Prisons

Helpful Information

Online services at this site include all inmates from 1982 to present.

Website - www.bop.gov

7.11.5 Probation and Parole

Helpful Information

Contact the probation or parole department in the last known city or state for the person of your search. The contact information for these offices will be on the county's or state's official government website, which can be located through a Google search. The information about whether the person is on probation or parole can be delivered over the telephone.

You can also contact the officer assigned to the person. If the person is complying with their court-ordered services, the officer likely will have the person's current address and telephone information. This information often will be released over the telephone or in response to a written request on your agency's letterhead.

If the person on probation or parole is missing and noncompliant, you may still be able to get the last known address in their files.

Also, you may be able to expedite your search by cross-referencing your search efforts with those of the officer. Sometimes the local department prohibits releasing identifying information, but the officer may be willing to contact the person on your behalf or to forward mail to their address.

Online services also provide search tools for parole absconders in Pennsylvania. You can view these listings in text-only format or with pictures. Here, you will find links to the Pennsylvania list, as well as to other fugitive sites.

Website - <http://www.pbpp.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx#.VQxa9k10z-c>



If recently released, request a verifiable address that is on file.

7.12 Criminal History Record Check

Helpful Information

Some counties have a clerk in the CCYA who submits criminal history record checks.

County checks may include local criminal checks and national checks through the National Crime Investigation Center (NCIC) or Pennsylvania's Justice Network (JNET).

Other counties have agreements with local, non-emergency 911 units that will run a criminal history check, including a driver's license check at the county's request.

Check your local county probation office. The person may be on probation and required to report immediately to a probation officer any changes in his or her personal information.

Megan's Law – All sexual offenders are required to register with their local police department.

National Sex Offender Public Registry – This website allows you to search for sex offender registries for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and Indian Country.

JNET – Pennsylvania's Justice Network is the Commonwealth's primary public safety and criminal justice information broker. Some county departments have identified a designated person who is certified to complete JNET searches. Driver's license history, outstanding warrants, vehicle registrations and photos may also be obtained from this portal.

7.12.1 Pennsylvania Unified Judicial System (UJS)

This website allows public access to view and print case docket sheets from Pennsylvania's three appellate courts and criminal cases from Pennsylvania's Court of Common Pleas. You may perform a search using many queries, such as the docket number, the name of the defendant or plaintiff, or the type of case.

This website also has a secure access section. Many counties provide usernames and passwords to their employees to access these records. After logging in with secure access, you can view secure web docket sheets rather than the public sheets. These secure dockets provide identifying information, such as social security numbers and detailed address information that is not available on the public dockets. Also, within the secure access section, you can view and print county-specific juvenile court dockets and statewide warrants. The warrants should list the arresting agency, such as a magistrate or a sheriff's office. This agency may have information on the warrant's status and the missing person. If the warrant is still open, you can contact the designated officer or deputy who is searching for the missing person by calling the agency that holds the warrant. This officer will probably be very willing to share the status of his search, as you both share the goal of locating the same missing person.

Websites

<https://www.nsopw.gov>

www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us

<https://ujportal.pacourts.us/>



Check CPCMS for criminal records.



Other states have UJS portal sites.



Some of these sites may require an account and/or fee.



When searching the UJS portal, be sure to search thoroughly, not just by participant name.



For Megan's law searches, use the National Sex Offender Public Website listed above.

7.13 Voter Registration

Helpful Information

Call your county's bureau of elections or voter registration office. The information currently available includes:

- Name
- Birth date
- Most current address provided
- Voting history and party affiliation
- Former Pennsylvania addresses

Section 1404(a) of Act 3 of 2002, at 25 Pa. C.S. § 1404(a) requires that certain information be publicly available for political activities or law enforcement. No fee is charged for this information; however, not all counties are willing to release any or all of the information. You will be more successful at obtaining available information if you identify yourself as someone who is conducting a search on behalf of your county and is in need of the requested information to serve legal papers.

Contact the county's voter registration office to obtain the necessary form. A completed form may be required to review voter registration information.

Websites

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote/voter-registration/check-my-registration-status>



Note searching for a voter registration requires a date of birth and zip code.

7.14 Military

Helpful Information

If the person is or may be in the military:

- Go to the National Archives and Records Administration website to download a military record request form (SF-180 Form). Complete this form and send it to the appropriate military branch.
- **Sample Request Pertaining to Military Records**

Websites

<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>

7.15 Newspapers

Helpful Information

Check local and area newspapers to find out when or if a death announcement ran in the newspaper. The person may be listed in either the criminal report or local news section. Check newspapers and their websites for obituary archives. See below for a listing of Pennsylvania newspapers whose obituary sections are available online.

Websites

www.newspapers.com

Links to national newspapers.

www.onlinenewspapers.com

Links to international newspapers, radio and television stations.

www.legacy.com

Online obituaries. This website will provide you with an obituary and/or dates but it sends you to ancestry.com for further information.



Funeral homes often have websites and electronic guest books that are available to sign or view the persons who paid their respects. This is a good place to find additional family members.



Newspapers may charge for archives.

7.16 Additional Sources

7.16.1 Shelters

Helpful Information

Check in your area for local shelters. Speak with the coordinator in charge. They may not be able to tell you whether the particular individual is there but may be willing to leave messages for the person.

7.16.2 Public Libraries

Check public libraries for archived newspaper articles, obituaries, and wedding announcements.



Letters may also be mailed to shelters.



Local soup kitchens may also have mailboxes for the homeless.

7.16.3 Bridal and/or Baby Registries

Helpful Information

Check popular store online registries (e.g., Target, Walmart, Macy's) for registrant information.

8.0 INTERNATIONAL SEARCH

International searches can seem difficult or intimidating when you first begin. This section was created to help you search outside of the United States. When contacting each of the listed agencies, be sure to record the information you receive, including the name of the person with whom you spoke. Again, this will help you with future searches.

Time Frame: Because you will be corresponding with large governmental bodies and foreign agencies, an average international search can take **many months**. Because these take so long, be sure to find out as close to intake as possible if an international search will be needed.

8.1 Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement

The branch of the Department of Homeland Security that handles the detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants is the Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). When undocumented immigrants are detained, they are held in an ICE facility, if bail is denied, until their immigration case is resolved. To locate the detention facility of an individual in ICE detention or an individual who was released in the past 60 days, utilize the ICE online detainee locator at the website below. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Pennsylvania Field Office or the local Enforcement and Removal Office (ERO).

Philadelphia Field Office
114 North 8th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 656-7164
Area of Responsibility: Delaware, Pennsylvania, West Virginia
Email: Philadelphia.Outreach@ice.dhs.gov

Websites:

<https://www.ice.gov/contact/field-offices?office=16>

<https://locator.ice.gov/odls/homePage.do> - To search this, you must have: First name, Last name and country of birth or an "A-number."

8.2 Foreign Consular Offices in the United States

Helpful Information

This website lists all foreign consular offices in the United States. Due to their familiarity with the specific country, they may be better able to provide you with local information and cultural differences relevant to your search request.

Due to the many consular locations each country has in the U.S., these offices may have fewer general requests than the foreign embassies. Therefore, they may be more readily available to assist you in your search.

Website - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/consularnotification/ConsularNotificationandAccess.html>

8.3 International Social Networking

Some websites are more popular or specific to other countries than those familiar in the U.S., so do not assume a favored U.S. site will be useful in a different country. Also, some countries have banned certain sites that are popular in the U.S. and their citizens use alternatives. For example, in place of Facebook, Russia uses VK, and China uses WeChat.

Ultimately, search Google with name of country social networking.



These sites are sometimes blocked at work places, so you may need to get special permission to access these pages.

8.4 Foreign Embassies

Helpful Information

This website lists all foreign embassies that have offices in Washington, D.C. Due to their familiarity with the specific country, they may be better able to provide you with local information and cultural differences relevant to your search request.

Some underdeveloped countries or countries experiencing civil unrest may rely more heavily on radio outlets for sources of information. The foreign embassies may be able to assist you in locating a local radio station or newspaper in a particular country to post a public service announcement at no cost.



When using this website please cross-reference with the contact information from the Department of State website provided in sections 8.2 & 8.5. This will give you the best chance of having the most accurate and up-to-date contact information.

Website - www.usembassy.gov - This link provides contact information for Foreign Embassies and Consulates located around the world.

8.5 United States Embassy & Consulate

Helpful Information

This site lists every U.S. embassy, consulate and diplomatic mission in the world.

- You can send an email to the general email address for the American Citizens Services unit (ACS) of any U.S. embassy on foreign soil, and you can expect a response within as few as three or four days. Officials in the embassy can search their internal database and provide you with any relevant information pertaining to the person.
- You can also email the consulate general who can refer you to local services in the identified country to help locate a parent or family member.
Each federal agency may require a completed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) form to process your request.

Website - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/consularnotification/ConsularNotificationandAccess.html> - This link provides contact information for Foreign Embassies and Consulates located in the United States.

8.6 United States Department of State

This website provides links to federal laws such as the Child Citizenship Act of 2000, which “allows certain foreign-born, biological and adopted children of American citizens to acquire American citizenship automatically.”

Helpful Information

Go to the Department of State's, Bureau of Consular Affairs' website. This site can assist you with:

- Locating families overseas;
- Obtaining clearances from other countries to help finalize an adoption;
- Placing ads in area newspapers to assist in locating families;
- Providing pictures to the Office of Children's Issues upon approval of juvenile court judge;
- Obtaining information and assistance about the adoption process in over 60 countries; and
- Assigning a caseworker in the Office of Children's Issues who will act as a liaison on behalf of your county with another country's consulate and/or foreign government to help with international cases.

Website - <http://travel.state.gov/>

8.7 Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Most international searches will require some correspondence with DHS or the forms distributed by DHS. Some of DHS's responsibilities include immigration, deportation and citizenship. The office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) falls under the umbrella of DHS. The National Record Center (NRC), which is a part of USCIS, has a Freedom of Information Act, FOIA/Privacy Act (PA) Division that handles all FOIA and PA requests. Together, these acts dictate what government records are accessible to the public.

If the person's file is located at a district or field office of DHS, the FOIA/PA Division will locate it for you and gather any information they can release. The office is limited in what it can release to the public unless the person has signed a release form for the file's contents. If a release is not on file, but the person is cooperative and accessible, the person can sign a release in front of a notary and submit it to the FOIA/PA divisional office. They will compare the signature to signatures on file to verify the integrity of the document, and if cleared, they will release more of the file's contents.

Helpful Information

- First, you must complete and submit a FOIA Form. There are two options:
 - Online (preferred method) or
 - US Mail
- Take time to read and familiarize yourself with FOIA regulations and requirements.
- The request form is free (first 100 pages) unless otherwise noted by USCIS (voluminous documents).

Steps for Online Process:



Prior to beginning the online process, we recommend reviewing the [Department of Justice Freedom of Information Act Reference Guide](#). This Guide will provide you with an overview to streamline the online process.

- Identify name, date of birth and last known country or country of origin of the person.
- USCIS also has an online methodology to submit FOIA request. To utilize this methodology, follow this link: <https://www.uscis.gov/records/request-records-through-the-freedom-of-information-act-or-privacy-act>
- You must create an online account.
- Once the account is created, follow the online instructions to complete and submit the **G-639, Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Request form**.

Steps for Mail-In Process:

- Identify name, date of birth and last known country or country of origin of the person.
- For additional information on how to Download a copy of the FOIA form and submit via US Mail, please visit: at: <https://www.justice.gov/oip/make-foia-request-doj>
- Submit letter (**Attachment G**) along with [FOIA form](#) to the address listed below for the National Record Center's FOIA/PA Division to obtain a copy of the person's application to enter the United States, deportation records or any information they will release.
- Be sure to note if you know the specific form that you need in order to expedite response time.
- Attach some form of documentation to verify the parental or other relationship between the person and the child, such as a birth certificate.
- Attach a copy of the court order granting custody of the child to the CCYA to the request form.
- The request form is free (first 100 pages) unless otherwise noted by USCIS (voluminous documents).

After mailing your request, you will receive an initial response with a control number (e.g., NRC12345678910) within about two weeks. Subsequent letters from DHS may take up to one month to arrive, particularly if they need to solicit information from another office. The FOIA/PA Division may respond with a request for more information, which can significantly prolong a search. They suggest providing a name, country of birth and date of birth as a minimum for a FOIA/PA request, although they will not reject a request with less information. You can check the status of your request by calling the FOIA/PA Division's main number or by visiting the USCIS website at:

- <http://www.uscis.gov/about-us/freedom-information-and-privacy-act-foia/foia-request-status-check-average-processing-times/check-status-request>
- Enter your control number to see the status of your request.

Address

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
National Records Center, FOIA/PA Office
P.O. Box 648010
Lee's Summit, MO 64064-5570

Phone

816-350-5570

816-350-5785 (Fax)

Websites

<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>



USCIS does not accept outdated forms. You will need to check the form to ensure that you are using the most current version. The date on the G-639 Form is typically located in the upper right corner. The form linked in this packet is numbered OMB NO. 1615-0102, expiring 12/31/27.

8.8 International Child Welfare Agencies

Helpful Information

Make an effort to locate and contact nonprofit and government agencies that exist to protect the welfare of children in the foreign country where you are searching. These agencies are likely to sympathize with your goal, and they may be willing to aid in your search.

Embassies and consulates of the country you are searching may be able to provide you with contact information for agencies like CONANI, the Consejo Nacional Para la Niñez y la Adolescencia or the National Council for Childhood and Adolescence in the Dominican Republic.

International Social Services, U.S.A. - Can assist in conducting international social work including home studies in other countries. Website: <http://www.iss-usa.org>

Websites

UNICEF field offices

<https://www.unicef.org/where-we-work>

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/countries/en/>

Interpol

<https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Notices/Yellow-Notices> - A Yellow Notice is a global police alert for a missing person. It is published for victims of parental abductions, criminal abductions (kidnappings) or unexplained disappearances.

<https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Notices/Red-Notices> - A Red Notice is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition.

8.9 The International Committee of the Red Cross

The aim of the International Committee of the Red Cross Family Links website is to help those separated by conflict or disaster to find information about their loved ones in order to restore contact. This website is a good tool for missing persons in areas of international conflict.

Helpful Information

- Go to: <https://familylinks.icrc.org/online-tracing>, and select “Start Your Search.”

9.0 INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT (ICWA)

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 is Federal law that governs the removal and out-of-home placement of American Indian children. The law was enacted after recognition by the Federal Government that American Indian children were being removed from their homes and communities at a much higher rate than non-Native children. ICWA established standards for the placement of Indian children in foster and adoptive homes and enabled Tribes and families to be involved in child welfare cases.

ICWA, when applicable to child welfare proceedings, has many critical components that must be followed to protect the rights of Indian Children and Tribal governments. To learn more about how to properly handle a situation where an Indian Child and/or Indian Tribe may be involved in your case and to ensure proper compliance with the requirements, guidelines and regulations of ICWA, please consult the [ICWA Search Guide found in the SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#). The guide was last updated in 2025.

10.0 SEARCH RESULTS

10.1 What to Do With the Information from the Search

10.1.1 Address or phone number located:

Helpful Information

Once an address or addresses are located for the person, a caseworker can send a letter or call to see if the address is correct. If the search is for possible relatives to comply with Fostering Connections, check your county's policy about Fostering Connections. Also send certified U.S. mail – restricted delivery; 10-day notice.

Sample John Doe Letter (Parent) ([Attachment H](#))

Sample Resource Parent Letter ([Attachment I](#))

Sample Fostering Connection Letters ([Attachment J](#))

10.1.2 If a claim of paternity is required, please see Section 4.7 for more comprehensive information

10.1.3 Ending a Search

Once a person is located or all avenues are exhausted, the paralegal or worker should complete a form to report on the findings of the search ([Attachment B](#)). This form should be included in the child's file.



Please be aware that your county and court may have different requirements. Please check with your county and court to make sure you comply with their specific requirements.

10.1.4 Unsuccessful search

If a search is unsuccessful, an agency may then conduct service by publication. Check with your local court to comply with their individual service requirements. Included with the petition should

be an affidavit of investigation. The name and content of the affidavit will vary by county. This affidavit must list all efforts the agency made to locate the parent. The court may then grant permission to publish.

Sample of Affidavit of Diligent Search Summary ([Attachment K](#))

10.1.5 Conclusion

The completed Diligent Search Checklist should be filed in the CCYA case file and may be used in court as evidence outlining the diligent search efforts of the agency. Searchers should be prepared to use it and answer questions about their diligent search efforts.

<https://ocfcpacourts.us/judges-legal-professionals/4th-edition-pennsylvania-dependency-benchbook/>

Resources

Sample Questions Related to the 4th Edition of the Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook ([Attachment L](#))



This may help the paralegal and/or caseworker prepare for a hearing.

4th Edition of the Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook: Key Questions for Legal AND Relational Permanence ([Attachment M](#)) - This document will provide a basis for sample questions that the Judge or Hearing Officer may ask of Children & Youth agency workers, as well as youth and parents during a hearing.

ATTACHMENTS SECTION

Disclaimer: Please note that the documents included in the attachment section are to serve as samples only. Certain forms and letters may vary by county and agency, so please check with your agency supervisor or solicitor before using any attachment verbatim to assure compliance with county and court rules.

ATTACHMENT A — LSI DILIGENT SEARCH REQUEST FORM

(Referenced in [Section 5.0](#) and [Section 6.0](#))

LSI DILIGENT SEARCH REQUEST FORM

_____ County Children & Youth Services

*To be completed by caseworkers before requesting diligent search assistance from the paralegal.
Please remember to thoroughly interview the family first!*

Court Date:	Hearing Type:
-------------	---------------

Date of Family Interview:	☐ Interview Notes in File
---------------------------	--

Priority: ☐ Immediate ☐ 48 Hours ☐ 72 Hours ☐ Other: _____

Purpose of Search:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Act 55 Family Finding | ☐ Paternity Check | ☐ Criminal History Check |
| ☐ Fostering Connections | ☐ Missing Parent/Relative | ☐ Connections for Older Youth |
| ☐ Accurant Comprehensive Report | ☐ Address Only | ☐ Other: _____ |

Date of Request		Case #		Caseworker	
Child's Name			DOB		SS#
Birth Certificate? ☐ Yes ☐ No	ICWA (Native American)? ☐ Yes ☐ No		If yes, list Tribal Affiliation		
Subject of Search					
Name					
Known Aliases					
DOB		SS #		Date of Last Contact	
Last Known Address					
Last Known Place of Employment					
Ever Been in Jail? ☐ Yes ☐ No		If Yes, List Dates and Locations			
Married ☐ Yes ☐ No		If Yes, List Dates of Marriage		Spouse Name	

Child's Mother					
Mother's Full Legal and Maiden Name					
Known Aliases					
DOB		SS #		Date of Last Contact	
Last Known Address					
Last Known Place of Employment					
Ever Been in Jail? ☐ Yes ☐ No		If Yes, List Dates and Locations			

Married ☐ Yes ☐ No	If Yes, List Dates of Marriage		Spouse Name	
Names of Mother's Other Children (Siblings and Half Siblings)				

Child's Father				
Father's Full Legal Name				
Known Aliases				
DOB		SS#		Date of Last Contact
Last Known Address				
Last Known Place of Employment				
Ever Been in Jail? ☐ Yes ☐ No		If Yes, List Dates and Locations		
Married ☐ Yes ☐ No		If Yes, List Dates of Marriage		Spouse Name
Names of Father's Other Children (Siblings and Half Siblings)				

Family and Friends Contacted to Locate Subject (Please list all so LSI does not duplicate your results)		
Name/Relationship	Date Contacted	Results

PLEASE COMPLETE A LIST OF RELATIVES WITHIN THE FIFTH DEGREE OF CONSANGUINITY TO BE SEARCHED.
 These relatives include grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, great aunts and uncles, great-grandparents, step parents, step grandparents, older siblings, etc. You may also use the back of this page. Please include any identifying information you have (DOB's, SS#s, recent addresses, etc.).

Name/ Relationship	Identifying Information/ Other Comments
1	
2	
3	
4	

Other Comments or Suggestions:

ATTACHMENT B — LSI DILIGENT SEARCH CHECKLIST

(Referenced in [Section 5.0](#), [Section 6.0](#) and [Section 10.1](#))

This checklist was created to correspond with the order of the categories in the Diligent Search Packet Section 6.0-10.0. The form will help ensure your search is “diligent” and that all topics were investigated.

NAME _____ DOB _____

Section	Source Checked	Date	Result
6.0	Case file; co-workers		
7.1	Internal Database Resources (i.e., CAPS, CPCMS)		
7.2	Online Databases – Fee Based; (i.e., Accurint.com; Westlaw- People Finder Report)		
7.3	Dept. of Human Services		
7.4	Bureau of Child Support Enforcement / Paternity Tracking System		
7.5.1	Domestic Relations		
7.5.2	Social Security Death Index		
7.6	Dept. of Motor Vehicles Driver Information		
7.7	Public Records		
7.8	Online Search Engines		
7.9	Address & Telephone Search: Local Telephone Directory & Online Directories:		
7.10	Post office – address request		
7.11.1	County Prison Inmate Search		
7.11.2 7.11.3	State Prison Inmate Locator		
7.11.4	Federal Prison Inmate Locator		
7.11.5	Probation and Parole		

ATTACHMENT B (Cont.)

Section	Source Checked	Date	Result
7.12	Criminal History Record Check (i.e., JNET, Megan's Law, PA UJS Portal)		
7.13	Voter Registration		
7.14	Military Records		
7.15	Newspaper (obituary, archives)		
7.16	Shelters; Libraries; Bridal & Baby Registries		
8.1	Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement		
8.2	Foreign Consular Offices in the U.S.		
8.3	International Social Networking		
8.4	Foreign Embassies		
8.5	U.S. Embassy		
8.6	United States Department of State		
8.7	Department of Homeland Security		
8.8	International Child Welfare Agencies		
8.9	The International Committee of the Red Cross		
9.0	Indian Child Welfare Act		
10.0	Search Results – Send letters		
ADDITIONAL SOURCES / WEBSITES:			
Specify:			

Completed: _____ by: _____
(Date) (Name / Title)

ATTACHMENT C — PATERNITY LETTER REQUEST FOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

(Referenced in [Section 7.4](#))

[ON AGENCY LETTERHEAD]

[Date]

Paternity Supervisor
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Child Support Enforcement
P.O. Box 8018, 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17105

VIA FAX: 717-787-0297

Dear Sir or Madam:

Please check your records for acknowledgement or claim of paternity for the following child(ren).

	<u>FULL NAME</u>	<u>DATE OF BIRTH</u>	<u>SOCIAL SECURITY #</u>
1.	Little Marie Doe	01/01/1999	

The child(ren)'s alleged father is:

<u>FULL NAME</u>	<u>DATE OF BIRTH</u>	<u>SOCIAL SECURITY #</u>
John James Doe	01/01/1950	

The child(ren)'s mother is:

<u>FULL NAME</u>	<u>DATE OF BIRTH</u>	<u>SOCIAL SECURITY #</u>
Jane Ann Doe	01/01/1952	

Please send the results of your search to the name and address listed below. As a representative of [] County Children and Youth, a state-supported agency, I understand there is no fee for this request. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Please contact me immediately at the following telephone number if there is any problem with this request.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title], _____ County

Phone number:

Fax number:

Address:

ATTACHMENT D — DL-503, SAMPLE REQUEST FOR DRIVER INFORMATION

(Referenced in [Section 7.6](#))

DL-503 (9-25)



**Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation**

REQUEST FOR DRIVER INFORMATION

DO NOT SEND CASH • SEE REVERSE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

Bureau of Driver Licensing • P.O. Box 68695 • Harrisburg, PA 17106-8695

CHECK (✓) ONE ONLY:

- ☐ BASIC INFORMATION: **\$15.00 FEE** (Driver history is not included)
- ☐ 3 YEAR DRIVER RECORD: **\$15.00 FEE**
- ☐ 10 YEAR DRIVER RECORD: **\$15.00 FEE** (Employment Purposes Only)

- ☐ FULL HISTORY: **\$15.00 FEE**
- ☐ CERTIFIED DRIVER RECORD: **\$47.00 FEE**
- ☐ COPY OF DOCUMENT FROM FILE (MICROFILM): **\$15.00 FEE**
- ☐ CERTIFIED COPY OF DOCUMENT FROM FILE: **\$47.00 FEE**

You may obtain a copy of your own 3 year or 10 year Driving Record on PennDOT'S website at www.pa.gov/dmv

A REQUESTER INFORMATION NAME/COMPANY _____ ADDRESS (P.O. Box number may be used in addition to the actual address, but cannot be used as the only address.) _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER (REQUIRED) _____ RELATIONSHIP TO DRIVER (REQUIRED) _____ SIGNATURE <u>X</u> _____ NOTARIZATION <u>NOT</u> REQUIRED WHEN REQUESTING YOUR OWN RECORD	B END USER OF INFORMATION BEING REQUESTED NAME/COMPANY _____ ADDRESS (P.O. Box not acceptable), need to provide physical location of business/residence _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER (REQUIRED) _____ RELATIONSHIP TO DRIVER (REQUIRED) _____
C DRIVER INFORMATION NAME: LAST _____ FIRST _____ INITIAL _____ ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ PHONE NUMBER _____ DATE OF BIRTH: MONTH _____ DAY _____ YEAR _____ DRIVER NUMBER _____	D AFFIDAVIT OF INTENDED USE Intended Use of the Information Requested: CHECK ONLY ONE ☐ R = Driver Release (Driver must complete Section E.) ☐ C = Credit Business (Legitimate Business need in connection with a business transaction initiated by the driver.) ☐ C = Credit Potential Investor, Server or Current Insurer (In connection with an assessment of the credit/payment risks associated with an existing credit obligation.) ☒ E = Employment (To support the hiring or the continuation of employment. Driver must complete Section E.) ☐ R = Insurance Company requesting record of person it intends to insure, now insures, or has rejected for insurance. ☐ K = Court Order must be attached. (A subpoena issued in compliance with Pa. R.C.P. 4009.21 will be accepted in lieu of a court order --NOTE: Filed copy of certificate prerequisite MUST accompany subpoena.) ☐ L = Attorney representing driver identified in Section C (Driver must complete Section E.) I hereby Certify that _____ PRINTED NAME OF REQUESTER will use the driver record abstract(s) required pursuant to Section 6114 of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, for the purpose checked above only and no other reason. This affidavit is filed in compliance with Section 607 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act. I/We have read and signed this form after its completion, and I/We swear or affirm that the statements made herein are true and correct, and that any statement made on or pursuant to this form is subject to the penalties 18 Pa.C.S. Section 4904(b) (relating to unsworn falsifications), which shall include punishment of a fine not exceeding \$2,500, or to a term of imprisonment of not more than one year, or both. <u>X</u> _____ SIGNATURE OF REQUESTER Title _____ SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME: MONTH _____ DAY _____ YEAR _____ <u>X</u> _____ SIGNATURE OF PERSON ADMINISTERING OATH SIGN IN PRESENCE OF NOTARY
E DRIVER RELEASE I, _____ NAME OF DRIVER hereby request the Department of Transportation to furnish a copy of my PA Driver's Record to _____ NAME OF PERSON/COMPANY <u>X</u> _____ SIGNATURE OF DRIVER DATE _____	F MICROFILM TYPE OF DOCUMENT _____ DATE OF VIOLATION _____ (see list of available documents below) Documents Available: • Citations • Ignition Interlock Removal Letter • Court Certifications • Suspension/Revocation Letters • Applications • Restoration Letters • License Renewals • Rescind Letters • Judgments • Department Hearing or Exam Notice • Suspension Credit Affidavits
NOTARIZATION NOTARIZATION	

MESSANGER NO.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **To request your own record**, complete Sections A & C only. Notarization is NOT required.
2. **To request a record other than your own**, complete Sections A, C, and D. Section E must contain the driver's signature if block B, E or L is checked in Section D. If the Requester is obtaining the information on behalf of someone else, Section B must also be completed.
3. **PRINT OR TYPE** all requested information on the front of the form. Submitting ONLY a name and address does not provide enough information for a proper search of the driver files.
4. A non-refundable fee is required for each request. If the Bureau has no record for the information requested or the data supplied is insufficient, the fee will be applied to the cost of the search.
5. **If requesting a microfilm copy of a document**, also complete Section F. You must be specific in providing the type and date of the document. If there are several citations on the record, the cost is \$15.00 per citation. You need to provide the date of the violation/action to clearly identify the citation(s) requested.
6. Check the type of record requested at the top of the form and make check or money order payable to "PennDOT."
DO NOT SEND CASH. Attach your check or money order and send to:

For overnight and other special mail:

BUREAU OF DRIVER LICENSING
DRIVER RECORD SERVICES
P.O. BOX 68695
HARRISBURG, PA 17106-8695

BUREAU OF DRIVER LICENSING
DRIVER RECORD SERVICES
1101 SOUTH FRONT STREET 3RD FLOOR
HARRISBURG PA 17104-2516

DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE

BASIC INFORMATION Includes name, address, driver number, date of birth and class of license.

3 YEAR RECORD* Includes name, address, driver number, date of birth, class, license status, Departmental actions and violations for the past 3 years from the date request is processed.

10 YEAR RECORD* Includes name, address, driver number, date of birth, class, license status, Departmental actions and violations for the past 10 years from the date request is processed. A 10-year record is for employment purposes only.

FULL HISTORY Includes name, address, driver number, date of birth, class, license status, Departmental actions and violations for the **complete** history of the driver on file in Pennsylvania.

CERTIFIED RECORD Includes name, address, driver number, date of birth, class, license status, Departmental actions and violations for the **complete** history of the driver on file in Pennsylvania certified by the Department.

MICROFILM

DOCUMENT Copies of documents retained by the Department are available for purchase from the microfilm file. You must be specific as to the type of document and the date of the violation/action.

CERTIFIED COPY

OF DOCUMENT Copies of documents from the microfilm file that have been certified by the Department.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING THE USE OF DRIVER INFORMATION

- Driver record information is confidential and restricted information and the Requestor/End User is responsible for establishing procedures to protect the confidentiality of these records.
- Driver record information can only be used for the purpose stated in Section D.
- Driver record information cannot be sold, assigned, or otherwise transferred to any party, other than the End User.
- PennDOT retains exclusive ownership of all driver record information and the Requestor/End User shall not combine and/or link in with any other data on any database except as may be required by law.
- The driver record information cannot be used for direct mail advertising or any other type or types of mail or mailings.
- The driver record information cannot be disseminated or published on the Internet without the express written permission of PennDOT.
- PennDOT reserves the right to audit each request for driver record information. If the Requestor/End User is found to have requested driver record information for an unauthorized purpose, access to Pennsylvania driver record information will be terminated.

Visit us at www.pa.gov/dmv or call us at: 717-412-5300 ♦ TDD: 711

* Businesses who obtain driver records for the purpose of employment or insurance are now able to obtain and print these records, in real time, through our enhanced Online Services.

If you are an employer or insurance company/agent and are interested in becoming an authorized Online business user, please visit our website at www.pa.gov/dmv and click on "Online Business Services" for more information.

ATTACHMENT E — SAMPLE DRIVER'S LICENSE REQUEST LETTER

(Referenced in [Section 7.6](#))

[ON AGENCY LETTERHEAD]

[Date]

VIA FAX: 717-705-2401

BUREAU OF DRIVER LICENSING
DRIVER RECORD SERVICES
P.O. BOX 68695
HARRISBURG, PA 17106-8695

Dear Records Supervisor:

Attached please find a Request for Driver Information, Form DL-503. Please send the results of the search to the name and address listed below. As a representative of [County] Department of Human Services, Office of Children and Youth Services, a state-supported agency, I understand there is no fee for this request.

Please contact me immediately if there are any questions or problems with this request. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Name], [Title]
Legal Services Department
[Address]
[City], PA [Zip Code]
[Phone number, Fax number]

ATTACHMENT F — ADDRESS INFORMATION REQUEST – GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

(Referenced in [Section 7.10](#))

(AGENCY LETTERHEAD)

To: Postmaster

Agency Control Number: _____

Date: _____

ADDRESS INFORMATION REQUEST

Please furnish this agency with the new address, if available, for the following individual or verify whether the address given below is one at which mail for this individual is currently being delivered. If the following address is a Post Office box, please furnish the street address as recorded on the boxholder's application form.

Name: _____

Last Known Address: _____

I certify that the address information for this individual is required for the performance of this agency's official duties.

(Signature of Agency Official)

(Title)

FOR POST OFFICE USE ONLY

☐ MAIL IS DELIVERED TO ADDRESS GIVEN NEW ADDRESS

☐ NOT KNOWN AT ADDRESS GIVEN _____

☐ MOVED, LEFT NO FORWARDING ADDRESS _____

☐ NO SUCH ADDRESS

☐ OTHER (SPECIFY): BOXHOLDER STREET ADDRESS

Agency return address Postmark/Date Stamp

ATTACHMENT G — G639, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACT REQUEST

(Referenced in [Section 8.7](#))

[ON AGENCY LETTERHEAD]

Sent via facsimile to (816) 350-5785 and via regular mail and email: uscis.foia@uscis.dhs.gov

[DATE]

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
National Records Center, FOIA/PA Office
P.O. Box 648010
Lee's Summit, MO 64064-5570

Re: [NAME OF PERSON]

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please find enclosed a request for any and all available information pertaining to the above-named person. We currently have [NAME], a minor, in our care and custody. [NAME] has been named as the [father] of this child. A hearing is scheduled regarding the child and, by law, we are required to serve notice of the hearing to the [father]. Our agency has the following information on the [father]:

Name:
Country of birth:
Date of birth:
Last known address:

Please provide our agency with any available information on this person. Enclosed are a G-639, Freedom of Information/Privacy Act Request, a copy of the birth certificate of the child and a copy of a court order signed by the Honorable [NAME], giving [AGENCY NAME] legal and physical custody of [NAME], a minor, and identifying the subject of this search as the father of the child.

If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at [PHONE NUMBER], by facsimile at [FAX NUMBER], by electronic mail at [E-MAIL ADDRESS], or by regular mail at [ADDRESS].

Sincerely,

[NAME]
[POSITION]
[AGENCY NAME]

ATTACHMENT H — SAMPLE JOHN DOE LETTER (Parent)

(Referenced in [Section 10.1](#))

[ON AGENCY LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

[Recipient's Name]

[Address]

Dear [Recipient's Name]

I am writing on behalf of [] County Children and Youth Social Services Agency. We have received information that you may be the biological father of a child who was born on [Date] with whom the agency has had contact.

If you are the father, you have certain legal rights. In the event that paternity testing is necessary, such procedure can be done in a location convenient to you.

It is very important that you contact me at [Phone Number] as soon as possible.

Confidentiality prevents disclosure of the name of the child in this letter, but when you call to discuss the matter, such information will be provided.

Again, in the best interest of this child, we encourage you to contact our office immediately in order to discuss this matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Caseworker

ATTACHMENT I — SAMPLE RESOURCE PARENT LETTER

(Referenced in [Section 10.1](#))

[ON AGENCY LETTERHEAD]

[Date]

[Name]

[Street Address]

[City, State, Zip Code]

Dear [Name]:

We currently have a child in our care with the initials of [CHILD'S INITIALS] and whose parents are identified as [FATHER'S NAME] and [MOTHER'S NAME]. The child was born on [DATE].

We recognize that you may not be a member of this child's family or have any knowledge of the child in our care. We apologize if this letter causes any embarrassment for you or your family; however, this search is necessary to comply with legal statutes.

If you acknowledge that you are a family member or other potential resource for this child, please contact me by [INSERT DATE 15 DAYS AFTER DATE OF LETTER]. This letter serves as notice of your opportunity to express interest in becoming an approved caregiver or other resource for this child. If being a full-time caregiver is not an option for you, we would still appreciate a response, especially if you are willing to support the family in other ways (i.e. providing weekend respite care or transportation), or you can provide the names and contact information of other family members or kin who may be able to care for this child. Please note that failure to respond to this letter in a timely manner may result in the child being placed without your input.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will be happy to answer any further questions you have when you respond. I can be reached at the address above, or at [PHONE NUMBER].

Sincerely,

[NAME]

Caseworker

(Referenced in [Section 10.1](#))

Notification for Kinship Caregiver Opportunity

You have been identified as a kinship relation to _____, a child who cannot remain in the care of [his/her] parent(s). This letter will serve as notice of your opportunity to express interest in being considered as a placement resource for _____. Please take the time to read over the following information so that you may decide whether or not you wish to pursue becoming an approved caregiver for this child. Other options also exist, such as relative visitation and providing support to the family. If you do not pursue your relationship with the child now, and adoption becomes his/her permanency plan, it is possible that you may not be considered by the agency as a placement option at a later date. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the information provided, but you will need to respond to us by [INSERT DATE] in order to be considered.

Kinship care is the full-time nurturing and protection of a child who is separated from his/her parents and placed in the home of a caregiver who has an existing relationship with the child and/or the child's family. In most cases, a kinship caregiver is a relative of the child by blood or marriage, but kin may also include members of a Tribe or clan, a godparent through a recognized church or someone who has a significant relationship with the child or the family.

When the county agency has legal custody of a child and places the child with a kinship caregiver who is approved as a resource parent to provide foster care for the child, the arrangement is termed "formal kinship care." ("Informal kinship care" occurs when families agree to private arrangements for kin to provide care for a child, and the county agency does **not** take legal custody of the child.)

When the county agency plans to place a child in its custody with a kinship caregiver, the caregiver must meet all of the foster care approval requirements of the foster family care agency, as well as those set forth in Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3700 (relating to Family Foster Care Agency).

Unless you are already an approved resource parent, if you choose to become an approved caregiver for the child, the county agency or a private foster family care agency will complete an assessment of you and your home. If the child who is in the custody of the county agency was placed with you on an emergency basis, in order for the child to remain in your care, resource parent approval must occur **within 60 days**. The county agency or private foster family care agency will assist and guide you through this process. If you are approved as a resource parent, you can receive foster care maintenance payments for the care of the child.

You must meet the following **minimum** foster care requirements set forth in Chapter 3700 in order to become an approved resource parent:

- Be at least 21 years of age;
- Have a medical appraisal performed by a licensed physician to establish that you are physically able to care for the child and are free from communicable disease;
- Complete a criminal background record, including an FBI check and child abuse clearance, to determine the existence of certain criminal offenses and/or history of child abuse;
- Undergo at least two interviews with a caseworker. The purpose of these interviews is to enable the agency to assess the following:
 - your ability to provide care, nurturing, and supervision to the child, and to protect the child from abuse or neglect;
 - your mental and emotional stability;
 - your supportive ties within the community;

- your own relationships;
- your ability to work in partnership with the agency, the child and his/her family; and
- your ability to discipline the child without using physical or corporal means.
- Consent to agency inspection of your house to make sure it meets all of the requirements for foster family residences, including:
 - safety caps on electrical outlets;
 - poisonous materials marked and not accessible to children;
 - an operable portable fire extinguisher;
 - heating devices which have been properly installed and maintained;
 - emergency telephone numbers posted adjacent to the telephones;
 - operable smoke detectors;
 - separate and adequate bedroom space for the child;
 - drinkable well water (if you have a well, it must be tested);
 - an operable heating system; and
 - an operable telephone.
- Supply several references (these may include your family physician, family members, neighbors and other unrelated persons);
- Complete an orientation program for new resource parents;
- Participate in six hours of agency-approved training annually; and
- Cooperate with an annual re-evaluation.

To be an approved resource parent you must meet all of the above requirements. However, in any case in which a non-safety-related requirement cannot be met, making home approval difficult (a health problem, for instance), our office may request a waiver. A waiver request is possible for any regulatory requirement that would not affect the health, safety, or rights of the child. The agency will then submit the request to the Department of Human Services for approval.

In some situations, we may conduct an initial home visit and assessment and recommend that the child be placed with you while we complete a full home assessment. If such a placement occurs, you must obtain criminal, FBI and child abuse clearances from the appropriate offices **immediately** upon placement of the child. Our agency will provide you with the necessary forms and directions. *You are eligible for payment of the child's care during this period.*

If these clearances are not returned to you within **60 days** of the initial placement of the child, your home cannot be approved. During this 60 day period, the rest of the home assessment must also be completed. Again, if any portion of the assessment, including training requirements, are not completed by the 60th day of placement, *your home cannot be approved.*

These timetables are important to remember.

Not all applicants are approved. If you or your home do not meet regulatory requirements at the time of the home assessment, we will notify you that we cannot approve you as a resource parent. If you are not approved as a resource parent, you have the right to appeal the decision to the Department of Human Services. Should this situation arise, we would provide you with notice of your right to appeal. If you are not approved as a resource parent, the child may not be able to remain in your care while in the legal custody of the county agency unless ordered by the court.

If you are not approved and still want to provide care to the child, an option would be to transfer custody of the child to you giving you legal guardianship. Should this occur, financial support and medical coverage may be available either directly from the parents or through the county assistance office, CAO. This would include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, and benefits. The phone number for the local CAO is _____. The CAO worker will assist you in determining what benefits are available. Our agency will remain available to assist you in this process.

If you are approved as a resource parent, you can expect the following to occur:

- You are eligible to receive the same foster care maintenance payment as a non-relative/non-kin resource parent for the care of the child. In addition, a Pennsylvania Medical Assistance Card or HMO membership card may be available to the child to cover medical costs.
- You may work with more than one caseworker. One caseworker may be a coordinator who will meet with you periodically after your home assessment is completed to assist you in understanding your role as a resource parent with our agency and providing you with support services. Another caseworker may work with you, the child and the child's parents, towards the short and long-term goals of placement and permanency for the child. You will see one of these workers at least monthly.
- You will be expected to be the primary caregiver to the child and to work with the agency and the child's family around visitation and planning for the child. This expectation includes participation in service plans, ongoing team meetings, and court hearings if requested. You will need to keep the agency aware of all contact between the child and his/her parents. You will care for the child as a parent would, working at all times to nurture and meet his or her developmental needs.

Formal kinship care, as is true for all types of substitute care, is intended to be *temporary*. Out-of-home placement allows the family a reasonable period of time to correct the circumstances that resulted in the placement of the child. The agency has a duty to work toward the most permanent home possible for the child in the most timely manner possible. As a result, the agency conducts **concurrent planning**, a practice that plans for family reunification while at the same time plans for an alternate permanency option. The agency develops a permanency plan as soon as a child is placed in foster care.

Permanency plan options include the following:

- return home;
- adoption;
- placement with a permanent legal custodian;
- placement with a fit and willing relative; and
- another planned placement that is intended to be permanent.

The information provided to you is intended to assist you in making decisions regarding your willingness and ability to provide kinship care or permanency to the child(ren). Should you have further questions, you may contact the caseworker or supervisor listed below.

Kinship Caretaker: _____

Caseworker: _____

Casework Supervisor: _____

Agency Phone #: _____

Date: _____

ATTACHMENT K — AFFIDAVIT OF DILIGENT SEARCH SUMMARY

(Referenced in [Section 10.1](#))

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF [_____] COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

NO ____ OF ____

ADOPTION of **[Child Name]**

I, [Name], being duly sworn according to law, do hereby depose and say that:

I am a SWAN Legal Services Initiative paralegal assigned to Children and Youth Services of [_____] County in the above-referenced case. I am responsible for making diligent efforts to locate the natural parent(s) of the minor in the above-referenced case for the purpose of [notifying them of the petition to terminate their parental rights].

I found the last known address of [Subject's Name] to be **[Street Address. City, State Zip Code]**. I conducted the above described search during the months of **[Month, Year]** through **[Month, Year]**. Attached hereto as Exhibit A is the Diligent Search Checklist which details my search efforts and the results thereof.

[Name], SWAN LSI Paralegal

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
_____ day of _____, 2017

(Notary Public)

My commission expires:

(Referenced in [Section 10.1](#))

From the Locating Fathers and Establishing Paternity Benchcard:

This may help the paralegal and/or caseworker prepare for a hearing.

Judges and hearing officers should ask whether the county agency caseworker has:

1. Utilized family finding to locate father and paternal relatives. What specifically was done?
2. Complied with the requirement of the Fostering Connections Act? If so, how?
3. Asked the mother, child or relatives about the father's whereabouts?
4. Utilized the federal, state or other parent locator systems?
5. Sent letters to the last known address of the father?
6. Visited the last known address of the father, talked to neighbors and family members in the community where father previously resided?
7. Checked local jails, prisons, correctional facilities, probation and parole agencies and immigration authorities?
8. Checked public benefits information (e.g., social security or public assistance)?
9. Checked with the child support enforcement agency?
10. Checked driving and vehicle registration records?
11. Used technology and social media to locate the father?

Judges and hearing officers should also:

1. Ask the mother and other relatives about the father's identity and location at the first and all subsequent hearings, until the issue is resolved.
2. Obtain information under oath or via an affidavit establishing parentage.
3. Ask the child about the father's identity, location and names of paternal kin (if appropriate).
4. Require the agency to promptly obtain information through any action noted above.
5. Order the agency to follow up on information gained from court hearings.
6. At every hearing, require information about progress in identifying and locating the father.
7. Impose deadlines for searches or for filing affidavits detailing search efforts.
8. Ensure court orders and records reflect effort to identify and locate fathers.

9. Consider a finding of “No Reasonable Efforts” if the agency has not made attempts to locate father.

CHILD PROFILE AND CHILD PREPARATION

- Was a referral made to SWAN for a Child Profile for this child?
- Was a referral made to SWAN for Child Preparation for this child?

FAMILY GROUP DECISION-MAKING (FGDM)

- Was an FGDM meeting discussed with the family?
- Was an FGDM meeting scheduled and held?
- Who from the family and agency attended this meeting?
- Was the family engaged during the FGDM?
- Was a plan developed? If so, how is it documented and when will it be reviewed for progress?

(Referenced in [Section 10.1](#))



Family Finding

Key Questions for Legal AND Relational Permanence



For the Children and Youth Agency

1. **What** specific things have you done to identify family and kin?
2. Who is connected to this child?
3. **How** have you included the identified family and kin into case planning and service delivery?
4. **Permanency Hearings:** Family finding is ongoing. What have you done to **continue** identifying and including family and kin?
5. **How** have you exhausted family and kin as a placement resource option?
6. What resources are being provided to extended family to support connections or placement?

FAMILY FINDING IS NOT AN ACCURANT SEARCH OR A PLACEMENT

Legal Requirements of

Family Finding

1. **Identify and build family and kin relationships**
2. **Include the identified family and kin in the planning and service delivery**
3. **Create a network of ongoing support**

FAMILY FINDING IS ENSURING MEANINGFUL, HEALTHY CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN & PARENTS

For the Youth and Parents

1. Has your Caseworker or lawyer talked to you about the people in your life whom you love?
2. With whom in your life do you enjoy talking or spending time?
3. Tell me what your week looks like. What activities do you do throughout the week/month? **(You can ask the child or parent to keep a monthly list/calendar of activities)**
4. If you had to go out of town for the weekend, with whom would your child stay? **When directed to a youth:** If your parent had to go out of town for the weekend, with whom would you want to stay?