

**Report to the Utah State Legislature
Health and Human Services Interim Committee**

**2016 Annual Report
on the Effectiveness of the Utah Mutual
Consent, Voluntary Adoption Registry**

**Prepared by the Utah Department of Health
Office of Vital Records and Statistics**

October 31, 2016



INTRODUCTION

The Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics (OVRs) is pleased to submit this annual report on the effectiveness of the Utah Mutual Consent, Voluntary Adoption Registry as required under Utah Code 78B-6-144 (5). This report highlights the registry's background, effectiveness, and future plans.

REGISTRY BACKGROUND

The Mutual Consent, Voluntary Adoption Registry exists to help adult adoptees, birth parents, and biological siblings locate one another without using the court system or spending excessive amounts of time and money. Participation in the registry is not mandatory and an adult adoptee and/or birth relative may refuse participation in the registry. A registry match occurs when an adult adoptee born in Utah and his or her birth parent or an adoptee's biological sibling voluntarily register their name with the registry. Since its inception in 1987, the registry has helped over 400 individuals reunite with members of their birth family.

REGISTRY EFFECTIVENESS

OVRs uses two performance measures to show the effectiveness of the Adoption Registry: number of names added to the registry and number of registry names matched with a birth family member. The table below reports performance between 2012 and 2015 in regard to both measures.

	Names Added to Registry	Registry Names Matched
2012	100	14
2013	100	20
2014	111	34
2015	99	26

These statistics show that Utah's Adoption Registry continues to be used by adult adoptees and their birth families to reunite when the parties consent to be identified to one another.

FY 2016 ACHIEVEMENTS

During the 2015 Legislative Session, Utah lawmakers passed Senate Bill 77 which appropriated funding to automate and improve Utah's Mutual-Consent Voluntary Adoption Registry. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, the funding was used to complete the following projects:

1. Conversion of registry information from 2,271 paper applications into an electronic format that was imported into a searchable registry database;
2. Development of an electronic registry database that allows use of broad search terms and methods to find matches of birth family members within the registry; and
3. Enhancement of the OVRS website to enable individuals to start the adoption registry application process online.

These projects have helped automate and improve the adoption registry program. Staff now spend less time doing data entry and conducting manual searches of paper records and more time helping customers.

FUTURE PLANS

In FY 2017, OVRS plans to implement an adoption registry public education plan to include education materials and social media. Implementation of this plan is expected to increase the number of new names added to the adoption registry which will likely cause an increase in the number of matches between adult adoptees and members of their birth families.

For more information about Utah's Mutual Consent, Voluntary Adoption Registry, please contact Richard J. Oborn, MPA, State Registrar and Bureau Director at the Utah Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics, at (801) 538-6262 or roborn@utah.gov.
