

**Adoption Records Access Amendments**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Raymond P. Ward**

Senate Sponsor:

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**LONG TITLE****General Description:**

This bill addresses access to adoption records.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- clarifies that a provision allowing access to adoption records applies to all adoptions; and
- allows a pre-existing parent to petition to seal an adoption record after a child adoptee is 18 years old.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**81-13-103**, as last amended by Coordination Clause, Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 133

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*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

Section 1. Section **81-13-103** is amended to read:

**81-13-103 . Court hearings -- Adoption documents -- Motion to intervene.**

(1)(a) Notwithstanding Section 80-4-106, the court may close to the public any court hearing regarding an adoption upon the request of a party to the petition for adoption.

(b) In a closed hearing, the court may only admit the following individuals:

- (i) a party to the proceeding;
- (ii) the adoptee;
- (iii) a representative of an agency having custody of the adoptee;
- (iv) in a hearing to relinquish parental rights, the individual whose rights are to be relinquished and invitees of that individual to provide emotional support;
- (v) in a hearing on the termination of parental rights, the individual whose rights may

- 31 be terminated;
- 32 (vi) in a hearing on a petition to intervene, the proposed intervenor;
- 33 (vii) in a hearing to finalize an adoption, invitees of the petitioner; and
- 34 (viii) other individuals for good cause, upon order of the court.
- 35 (2) Except as provided in Subsections (3) through (7), an adoption document and any other
- 36 documents filed in connection with a petition for adoption are sealed.
- 37 (3) A person may only inspect and copy the documents described in Subsection (2):
- 38 (a) if the adoption proceeding is pending and the person is a party to the adoption
- 39 proceeding;
- 40 (b) within 180 days after the day on which the final decree of adoption is entered if the
- 41 person is a party to the adoption proceeding;
- 42 (c) if the court enters an order expressly permitting the inspection or copying the
- 43 documents after the person filed a motion to intervene and the motion to intervene
- 44 was granted on appeal;
- 45 (d) if the court enters an order expressly permitting the inspection or copying of the
- 46 documents after good cause is shown;
- 47 (e) if the office is permitted to release the documents to the person as described in
- 48 Section 81-13-504;
- 49 (f) when the documents become public 100 years after the day on which the final decree
- 50 of adoption was entered;
- 51 (g) when the birth certificate becomes public 100 years after the day on which the
- 52 adoptee was born; or
- 53 (h) if the person is permitted access to the documents under Subsection (6) or (7).
- 54 (4) A person who files a motion to intervene in an adoption proceeding:
- 55 (a) is not a party to the adoption proceeding, unless the motion to intervene is granted;
- 56 and
- 57 (b) subject to Subsection (5), may not be granted access to the documents described in
- 58 Subsection (2), unless the motion to intervene is granted.
- 59 (5) If the court enters an order under Subsection (3)(c) or a potential birth father is made a
- 60 party to the adoption proceeding upon a motion to intervene, the court shall:
- 61 (a) prohibit the person described in Subsection (3)(c) or the potential birth father from
- 62 inspecting a document described in Subsection (2) that contains identifying
- 63 information of an adoptive or prospective adoptive parent; and
- 64 (b) permit the person described in Subsection (3)(c) or the potential birth father to

review a copy of the document described in Subsection (5)(a) after the identifying information of the adoptive or prospective adoptive parent is redacted from the document.

(6)(a) Unless there is a court order sealing the documents, a child adoptee may inspect and copy the following documents associated with the child adoptee's adoption, without a court order, regardless of the date of the adoption, if the child adoptee is 18 years old or older:

- (i) the report of adoption;
- (ii) the original birth certificate;
- (iii) the findings of fact for the adoption; and
- (iv) the final decree of adoption.

(b) The physical addresses of a pre-existing parent shall be redacted before the child adoptee may inspect and copy the documents described in Subsection (6)(a).

~~[(b)] (c)~~ A pre-existing parent of a child adoptee may bring a petition in the court that entered the final decree of adoption to keep the documents described in Subsection (6)(a) sealed for 10 years~~[ after the day on which the child adoptee reaches 18 years old]~~.

~~[(e)] (d)~~ The pre-existing parent shall~~[:]~~

~~[(i) file a petition described in Subsection (6)(b) before the child adoptee reaches 18 years old; and]~~

~~[(ii)]~~ include in the petition sufficient information for the court to reliably determine the adoption documents at issue in the petition.

~~[(d)] (e)~~ The court may only grant the petition described in Subsection ~~[(6)(b)]~~ (6)(c) if the pre-existing parent establishes by sworn affidavit that the child adoptee's access to the documents described in Subsection (6)(a) would place the pre-existing parent in reasonable fear of harm from an individual.

~~[(e)] (f)~~ If the court grants a pre-existing parent's petition, the documents described in Subsection (6)(a) shall remain sealed for 10 years from the entry of the order, unless the court permits access to the documents under Subsection (3)(d).

~~[(f)] (g)~~ The pre-existing parent may bring a new petition every 10 years for an order extending the sealing of the documents described in Subsection (6)(a) for an additional 10 years.

~~[(g)] (h)~~ The pre-existing parent shall file a petition described in Subsection ~~[(6)(f)]~~ (6)(g) before the expiration of the previous order.

99           ~~[(h)]~~ (i) A petition to extend the sealing of the documents described in Subsection (6)(a)  
100           shall satisfy all of the requirements described in Subsections ~~[(6)(b)]~~ (6)(c) through [  
101           ~~(d)]~~ (e) for the original petition.

102       (7) An adult adoptee, or the adoptive parent of the adult adoptee, may inspect an adoption  
103       document associated with the adult adoptee's adoption without a court order, unless the  
104       final decree of adoption is entered by the juvenile court.

105       (8) A pre-existing parent may not access the documents described in Subsection (2).

106           Section 2. **Effective Date.**

107       This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.