

## **The Putative Father Registry, Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who is a putative father?**

A putative father is a male who may be a child's father, but who:

- Is not married to the child's mother on or before the date that the child is born; or
- Has not established paternity of the child in a court or administrative agency proceeding in this or another state before the date the child is to be adopted; or
- Has not completed an acknowledgment of paternity affidavit before the filing of an adoption petition for the child.

If a child's mother wants to place the child for adoption, the putative father must take steps to show that he is the legal father of that child in order to have the right to be notified of the adoption proceedings.

### **What is the Ohio Putative Father Registry?**

The Ohio Putative Father Registry (OPFR) is a computerized database maintained by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The OPFR allows a male to register if he believes he may have fathered a child and wants to be notified if the child is placed for adoption.

The OPFR is routinely searched as part of the process to determine whether the child is able to be legally adopted. If a child is placed for adoption and a putative father is listed in the registry, the putative father will be notified and can seek legal counsel regarding his rights. The OPFR also helps interested parties identify a putative father by submitting a request for a search to be conducted on the registry.

### **Who should register with the Ohio Putative Father Registry?**

Any male who he may be the father of an unborn child or a child born within the last 30 days should register with the OPFR. This includes an adult or a minor who is less than 18 years old.

### **Why should someone register with the Ohio Putative Father Registry?**

If the putative father does not register with the OPFR before or within 30 days of the child's birth, the child could be legally adopted without the putative father's knowledge or consent.

## **How does someone register with the Ohio Putative Father Registry?**

Registrations may be submitted online or in writing. To register online, the individual must go to <https://pfrpub.odjfs.state.oh.us/pfrweb/webforms/home.aspx> and follow the on-screen prompts.

Written registrations must be submitted on the JFS 01694 "Putative Father Registry Registration Form." The form may be obtained online at [www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp](http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp) or by calling the OPFR toll-free at (888) 313-3100 and requesting a copy.

The online registration must be completed or the written registration must be received by the OPFR no later than 30 days after the child's birth.

## **Where should written registration forms be mailed?**

A written registration form must be mailed to the following address:

The Ohio Putative Father Registry  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
P.O. Box 182709  
Columbus, Ohio 43218-2709

## **COMMON QUESTIONS.....**

### **Is there a fee to register with the Ohio Putative Father Registry?**

There is no fee to register.

### **How does someone establish paternity?**

If an individual would like to begin the process of establishing paternity, he should obtain legal representation or contact the county child support enforcement agency. The child support enforcement agency will provide the individual with information regarding the process for establishing paternity. More information about establishing paternity can be obtained through the Office of Child Support's website at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocs>.

### **How can a putative father obtain legal representation?**

A putative father may contact an attorney referral service or search for an attorney using the Ohio Legal Services website at [www.ohiolegalservices.org](http://www.ohiolegalservices.org).

### **What happens if a registered putative father moves? How can he update his information?**

It is the responsibility of the putative father to provide his new address if he moves to an address other than the one provided at the time of registration. If the putative father moves, he should mail a letter with his complete name, previous address and new address to the OPFR. The putative father's information will be updated in the OPFR database to reflect the new address.

### **How often should a man register with the Ohio Putative Father Registry?**

Individuals may register more than once. A putative father should register his name for each child he believes he has fathered.

### **What if my question wasn't answered here?**

For additional questions regarding the Ohio Putative Father Registry, please contact the OPFR toll-free at 1-888-313-3100 or via email at [OhioPFR@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:OhioPFR@jfs.ohio.gov)

