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# A STARTER GUIDE TO FINDING BIRTH PARENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

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This guide was designed to provide the first basic steps for individuals (such as adoptees) who are looking for one or both of their birth parents. These are the first steps we encourage every person searching to take.

*Note: Our mission is to help as many people as possible in the search for their missing or unknown family members. To support our mission, some links in this guide are affiliate links for which we receive a small commission. If you are in need of these services, we appreciate your support.*

# STEP 1

# Get Your DNA Tested

## WHY:

DNA testing has opened the door for finding biological connections in a way that was never possible before. When you submit a DNA test through a company like Ancestry.com, you will not only learn about your ancestral heritage, but you will be shown others who have completed their DNA tests who are related to you. This may include the person you are looking for, such as a biological parent or sibling, but it will also include more distant relations, such as cousins, aunts and uncles, and others. Even if you only have distant relatives such as second or even third cousins come up in your DNA search, there is still the possibility of finding your family.

## HERE'S WHY:

With every person who shows up as a related match, **you have a common ancestor**. If someone is a first cousin, that means you have a grandparent in common. A second cousin means you have a great-grandparent in common. In many cases, and with the proper approach, you can get connected with family members who can help you on your quest.

### Example:

The very first case successfully completed by [DiscoverFamily.net](https://www.discoverfamily.net) was when an adoptee reached out to her third cousin, asking for help. With the help of a second cousin, one month later we were able to reach out to her biological mother. (Individual results may vary! Be ready to commit to the long haul. It will be worth it.)

## WHAT:

A **DNA** test is completed by:

1. Choosing the company with which you would like to get a test.
2. Placing an order for a DNA testing kit.
3. When you receive the kit, completing the steps to submit a DNA sample. This typically involves collecting saliva or a mouth swab.
4. Mailing the kit back to the company performing the test.
5. Going online and setting up an account with the company and entering the ID number from the kit you submitted.
6. With most companies, you will receive updates as the sample is received and processed.
7. Once your results are posted, log into your account and access the results.
8. Most companies have instructions on how to understand the results, and we are always working to provide up-to-date techniques to help you interpret your results.

## HOW:

We typically recommend using [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) for your initial test as they have a reliable system and the largest database of completed tests. They are also the best at using and connecting family trees. This is especially important to adoptees.

*(Note: Clicking [this](#) link and ordering your test also helps support our efforts!)*

*Check this box  
when complete.*

## STEP 2

# Collect All the Details You Have and Digitally Back Them Up

### WHY:

It's important to organize and be familiar with the information you have and have it available for those helping you in your search. It can be one small detail that breaks open a case.

Example:

During a case, a detail that a maternal grandfather was a County Clerk at the time of the adoptee's birth, was one of the details that allowed us to find and confirm a biological mother's identity.

### WHAT:

Look for official documents like birth certificates, adoption papers, lawyers reports, etc. You may also find valuable information in letters, journals or questionnaires filled out at the time of your birth. Literally, any detail may prove to be valuable including pictures or other documentation.

### HOW:

Talk to your adoptive parents or relatives. Ask for any paperwork they may have. Talk about their personal memories. Don't be discouraged if stories change, or don't fit with other details. It is more important to document anything that is remembered. If a law firm was involved, request any information they have.

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when complete.*

## STEP 3

# Review Your USA State Laws on Birth Certificate Access

### WHY:

Finding your birth parent's names could be very simple depending on the state you live in.

### WHAT:

State laws differ on what information is available to the adoptee. Some states have unlimited access and an adoptee over 18 can receive his/her original birth certificate. Other states have limited access. There are still some states that seal all information. Those states often offer a mutual registry. Usually, the biological mother's name is accurate but often times the biological father's name may be incorrect or unknown.

### HOW:

Go to [this site](#) to see the laws in your state, or Google the word "State Adoption Legislation"

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when complete.*



## Get Help

### WHY:

The path to finding your biological family member(s) can be long and hard, and teamwork is the best approach. Honestly, it also makes it more bearable to share the ups and downs.

### WHAT:

Or more accurately WHO. There are paid professional researchers available online if you have the resources (meaning money to spend). We encourage you to review carefully the credentials and experience of anyone before hiring them.

At DiscoverFamily.net, we have a team willing to assist you at no cost. Using this free service does require you to make your DNA results and other relevant details available to us.

### HOW:

To request assistance in your search visit [www.DiscoverFamily.net/adoptees](http://www.DiscoverFamily.net/adoptees).

To join our mailing list and get the newest updates, visit

[www.DiscoverFamily.net/subscribe-for-updates](http://www.DiscoverFamily.net/subscribe-for-updates).

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