ADOPTION

If you have any questions about the procedure or paperwork, please call the Probate Court at #440-350-2626.
Legal practice in all courts is restricted by law to attorneys who are licensed by the Supreme Court of Ohio. Deputy clerks are prevented from practicing law and therefore are not permitted to give advice. They are only authorized to give you information from your case file, provide you with court forms, and determine if forms and other legal documents are procedurally appropriate and applicable for filing.

Filing Fees

$394.00 filing fee per case. If more than one child being adopted with the same biological parents, each extra petition is $40.00. If more than one child is being adopted and they have *different biological parents*, separate cases need to be filed. Additional cost for each restricted mail notice, if applicable.

Each petitioner must get a BCI&I background check (paid to Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve)

$600.00**** (approximately) for publication, if needed. The publication fee is paid directly to the News-Herald. This notice is published in the classifieds once a week for three consecutive weeks. Probate Court will prepare the publication, and the attorney or the petitioner(s) is responsible to have it published.

Required Documents for Initial Filing for Adoption

- ☐ Petition for Adoption of Minor (Form 18.0)
- ☐ Financial Statement (LCPC Form 18.05)
- ☐ Certificate of Adoption (HEA Form 2757)
- ☐ Contact Information Form
- ☐ Consent to Adoption (Form 18.3)
- ☐ Certified Copy of Birth Certificate
- ☐ Affidavit of Unknown Residence, if applicable
- ☐ Personal Medical Information (LCPC Form 18.06)
- ☐ 5 Letters of Recommendation
- ☐ Affidavit of Custody of Minors (answer question #1 /circle answers #2 through #4)

All forms can be mailed to:
Lake County Probate Court
P.O. Box 490
Painesville, Ohio 44077

Birth Certificate

Ohio Dept. of Health Vital Statistics Certificate of Adoption Form (HEA 2757), if the adoptee was born in Ohio

If the adoptee was born in a different state, it is the Petitioner's responsibility to contact the state in which the adult adoptee was born, and determine whether Vital Statistics in that state will accept this form. If not, it is the Petitioner's responsibility to obtain the necessary forms and complete them. The correct forms must be filed with the initial filing.

Procedure after Filing for Adoption

Once the above required documents are filed, the petitioner(s) will receive a packet in the mail containing the Hearing Notice, information about the court appointed assessor, and how to obtain the background check. It is required that the child being adopted is present for the hearing. Family and Friends are welcome at the hearing as well!

BCI&I –Bureau of Criminal Identification & Investigation

Each petitioner is required to complete a criminal background check as part of the adoption process. Background checks must be completed through the Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve. There is a fee for this service paid directly to them.

After your adoption petition has been filed, you will receive detailed instructions and the necessary information regarding the background check process by regular mail.

Please do not complete your fingerprints or background check prior to filing the adoption petition.

Court Appointed Assessor

You will receive the Court appointed assessor's name and phone number in the mail. Please contact the assessor as soon as possible to schedule your assessment.

INFORMATION REGARDING ASSESSMENT:

- Ohio law requires you to be placed under oath before the assessment begins
- Each person in the household must be interviewed privately
- the child/children will be asked if they want to be adopted
  - ➢ if you have questions about this, please discuss it with the assessor prior to your appointment

REQUIRED FORMS NEEDED AT ASSESSMENT:

- a photo ID for the Petitioner(s) and spouse, if any
- a certified copy of Petitioner's marriage license, if applicable
- certified copies of any and all divorce papers
- certified copies of support orders for children from previous marriage(s)

5 Letters of Recommendation

Please obtain the required letters of recommendation and ensure that each letter meets the following requirements:

- Each letter must be addressed to Judge Mark J. Bartolotta.
- Each letter must include:
  - The writer's original signature.
  - The writer's complete mailing address.
- Letters may not be dated more than 60 days prior to the filing date.
- Up to two (2) letters may be from relatives, from either side of the family.

Submitting the Letters with The Application
Place each letter in a sealed envelope marked: Judge Mark J. Bartolotta, Personal and Confidential

If the letters are being mailed directly to the Court, please use the following address:
Judge Mark J. Bartolotta, Personal and Confidential
P.O. Box 490
Painesville, Ohio 44077

Please ensure all letters comply with these requirements before they are submitted with your application.

Notice

IF a **last known** address of the natural parent(s) is available, even if it is an old address, the Probate Court must serve them at that address. If no address is known, then an Affidavit of Unknown Residence must be filed with the Court.

When the petitioner uses the Affidavit of Unknown Residence, the petitioner and natural parent are stating **under oath** that the residence of the natural, nonresidential parent is not known and could not be ascertained with "reasonable diligence." Reasonable diligence includes providing the Court with that parent's last known address, even if that address is several years old. It also includes, but is not limited to checking with Child Support Enforcement Agency, if involved, and contacting the nonresidential parent's family. The court must be satisfied that the petitioner exercised reasonable diligence in ascertaining the nonresidential parent's whereabouts and will inquire at the hearing regarding these efforts.

If there is not a biological father listed on the birth certificate and no DNA testing, you must complete the Ohio Putative Father Registry. The Probate Court requires the response from the Registry of the search prior to the filing of the adoption petition. https://pfr-pub.jfs.ohio.gov/WebForms/Search.aspx

If publication is needed, the notice will be sent to you so it can be taken to the News-Herald. The cost will need to be paid by you at the time you take the notice to the newspaper.