

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILING A STEPPARENT ADOPTION CAN BE
USED ONLY WHEN PARENTAL RIGHTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN
TERMINATED OR THE BIRTHFATHER IS DECEASED**

This packet should be used when a stepparent is adopting his or her spouse's child. Both the stepparent and his or her spouse must sign the petition. A **certified** copy of the court judgment terminating the parental rights of the other parent or a **certified** copy of the other parent's certificate of death must be attached. Both the stepparent and his or her spouse must sign the **joint petition**. A filing fee of \$401.00 is payable to the Brevard County Clerk of Courts by cash, check, cashier's check, money order, debit card, American Express, Discover, Master Card or Visa.

Immediately upon filing a case, per Administrative Order 09-26-B, petitioners in an adoption action must notify the Program Administrator at: Florida Department of Children and Families, 375 Commerce Parkway, Suite 101, Rockledge, FL 32955 by sending a copy of the **Joint Petition for Adoption by Stepparent** [Florida Supreme Court form 12.981(b)(1)]. Petitioner shall also provide the name of the Judge assigned to the Petitioner's adoption case to the Program Administrator. It is suggested that all parties filing for a stepparent adoption read Administrative Order 09-26-B.

Procedure:

1. Complete the Joint Petition for Stepparent Adoption, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.981(b)(1)] (this form is to be signed by you and the stepparent), and attach a certified copy of the minor child's birth certificate, the Stepparent Adoption Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act Affidavit, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.902(d)], the Affidavit Regarding Juvenile Dependency, [form Law 1100], the Indian Welfare Act Affidavit, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.981(a)(5)], Notice of Related Cases [Florida Supreme Court form 12.900(h)], the Civil Cover Sheet, [form Law 181], and if the minor child being adopted is 12 years of age or older, also use the Stepparent Adoption: Consent of Adoptee, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.981(a)(2)]. *Do not leave anything on these forms blank.* If a line does not apply put N/A.
2. Once the above forms are completed and notarized, make 1 copy of each form and retain the copies for your records.
3. Complete the Final Judgment of Stepparent Adoption, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.981(b)(2)] and the Certified Statement of Final Decree of Adoption, [form HRS 527]. Also make an extra copy of the Final Judgment.
4. File ALL originals and one set of copies with the Clerk of Court along with your filing fee. You may submit the paperwork either by U.S. mail to P.O. Box 219, Titusville, FL 32781-0219 or by visiting one of the Clerk of Courts locations.

NORTH BREVARD SERVICE COMPLEX
400 South Street, 2nd Floor
Titusville, Florida

MELBOURNE COURTHOUSE
51 S. Nieman Avenue
Melbourne, Florida

**MOORE JUSTICE CENTER
Viera Complex**
2825 Judge Fran Jamieson Way
Viera, Florida

MERRITT ISLAND OFFICE
2575 North Courtenay Parkway
Room 129
Merritt Island, FL

PALM BAY OFFICE
450 Cogan Drive S. E.
Palm Bay, FL

5. The Judge assigned to your case will be reflected on your filing fee receipt or you may contact the Clerk of Courts to determine this information.
6. If the birth mother and the birth father were never married and paternity has never been established, you will need to complete the Motion for Search of the Putative Father Registry, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.981(a)(6)], and the Order Granting Motion for Search of the Putative Father Registry, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.981(a)(7)]. Make 2 copies of the completed forms and keep one set of copies for your records. Prepare a self-addressed stamped envelope.
7. Submit the original completed Motion for Search of the Putative Father Registry to the Clerk of Courts. Send one **copy** of the completed Motion and Order, and the stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Clerk of Courts to send to your assigned judge for signature. When the judge signs the order, you will be sent a copy in the self-addressed envelope you have provided. If the copy received is not certified you may purchase a certified copy of this order from the Clerk of Courts.
8. Complete the Florida Putative Father Registry, [Department of Health form DH1963. You may enter this form number into Google and pull up the form directly]. Retain a copy of the form for your records. Send the Registry the original letter, the **certified copy** of the order signed by the judge instructing the Registry to conduct the search, a money order for \$9.00 made payable to the Registry and a self-addressed stamped envelope. **Note:** this step is **mandatory** and a certificate is **required** even if you know who the birthfather is.
9. Upon receipt of the Certificate from the Putative Father Registry, make yourself a copy and submit the original Certificate to the Clerk of Court to file. Ensure your case number is on the certificate.
10. Contact the assigned judge's office and schedule a hearing for a stepparent adoption.
11. Complete the Notice of Hearing, [Florida Supreme Court form 12.923]. Make a copy of the completed form for your records and file the original completed form with the Clerk of Court.
12. Attend the hearing.

If you would like to have someone notarize or look over the completed forms before you file them, contact the Family Pro Se Coordinator at 321-617-7254 or email prosecoordinator@brevardclerk.us to set an appointment.