

## To Request a Search for an Iowa Birth, Death or Marriage Record for the Purpose of Obtaining a Certified Copy

**In Iowa**, official registration of births, deaths, and marriages began July 1, 1880. Original records that were registered are on file with the Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Statistics. Statewide record searches are available from the state registrar. Local vital records registrars are located in county recorders' offices, where records of births and deaths that have occurred in that county are maintained. County registrars may only issue copies of birth and death events that occurred in their county. Marriage records are maintained in the county where the license to marry was obtained. ***County registrars are not authorized by law to have records of single-parent births prior to July 1, 1995; adoptions; delayed registrations; legal changes of name; fetal deaths (stillborns); any record ordered sealed by a court of law; or birth, death, and marriages between the years 1921 to 1941.*** Per Iowa law, information about a specific record is not available over the telephone or by prepared lists. Iowa law provides for public viewing in the county where the record is maintained, or certified copies issued to entitled persons.

**Applications to search for a vital record event for the purpose of obtaining a certified copy** must be in writing, completely identify the record, and establish entitlement to the record being requested. Entitled persons include the person named on the record or that person's spouse, children, legal parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, or legal representative or guardian. Legal guardians and representatives must also provide additional proof of guardianship or representation. Applicants must be 18 or older. Requests must include the applicant's current government-issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license), except if by mail, a clear photocopy of the I.D., and the applicant's signature signed in front of a notary public or in the presence of an Iowa Registrar of Vital Records.

**FEES: As of Jan. 1, 2014, a non-refundable \$20 fee is required to search** for a record and includes one certified copy if the record is located. Each additional copy of the same record is \$20. Fees are payable in U.S. funds by check or money order to the issuing registrar's office. Checks must be written from the applicants' account; money orders must be in the name of the applicant. Fees must be paid at the time of the application (Iowa Constitution, Article VII, Section 1).

---

### STATE CERTIFIED COPIES.

Certified copies of death certificates may be obtained from the state Bureau of Health Statistics by telephone, in-person, or through a postal service. Fees are payable in U.S. funds by check or money order to the Iowa Department of Public Health. In-person requests may also be paid in cash. Genealogy requests take at least 60 days.

**Telephone:** Customers may call **toll-free to 866-809-0290** from 6:00 am CST through 7:00 pm CST, Monday through Friday, except for holidays. A fee of \$20 is charged for the record search and includes one copy if a record is on file in the state office. Each additional copy of the same record is \$20. A VitalChek operator will take the caller's information, screen the credit card, authenticate the caller's identity and complete the order. The fee to screen the credit card and authenticate the caller is an additional \$13.00. Group orders consisting of more than one event type (i.e. birth, death or marriage) within one transaction will be charged an additional \$3.00 fee. Turnaround time is usually 10 to 14 days, depending on seasonal demands and mail service. ***Genealogy requests are not available through the credit card line.***

**In-person:** Applications may be made in-person at the state Bureau of Health Statistics 7:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for state-observed holidays, at the address below, just inside the north lobby entrance and to the right. The Lucas building is the first building east of the state Capitol and south of Grand Avenue. Applicants must provide current government-issued photo identification and sign their request in the presence of registrar staff. Copies may either be picked up the next business day or mailed to an entitled person. Genealogy requests take at least 60 days.

**Postal service:** Written requests and fees are mailed to the address below. Requests must state the relationship to the person named on the record and the purpose for the copy. Turnaround time is 30-45 days, depending on seasonal demands and mail service. Genealogy requests take at least 60 days. ***The request must be signed in front of a notary public and include a clear photocopy of the applicant's current government-issued photo identification.***

Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Statistics  
Lucas State Office Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Flr., 321 E. 12<sup>th</sup> St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075

---