

# Direct and Tangible Interest to a Certified Copy in Iowa

County Registrars and the State Registrar of Iowa may issue certified copies of vital events that have occurred in the State of Iowa, held in the custody of the county or state registrar, and as authorized by law. Certified copies of a birth, death, or marriage records may be issued to an entitled applicant only.

To apply for a certified copy of a vital event, the applicant must provide:

1. Written application with sufficient information about the record and purpose for the record.
2. Satisfactory proof of entitlement.
3. Current government-issued photo identification.
  - a. Additional proof of identification is required if current government-issued photo identification is not available.
4. Payment of \$15 for each certified copy being requested. Payment is due upon application and prior to the search.

Entitled applicants must specify their relationship to the person named on the record. Applicants may include: (1) the registrant, (2) the registrant's immediate family, (3) a legal representative or (4) an individual with a personal or property right.

## 1. Registrant:

- The person named on the record.
- Must be age 18. *Exception:* The registrant is married or an emancipated minor. Marriage certificate or court order may be required.

## 2. A member of the registrant's immediate family:

- Legal parent(s) (named on the registrant's legal birth certificate).
- Legal siblings, if they are age 18 or older (must prove shared parentage).
- Legal grandparents, if their child (i.e., the legal parent) is named on the legal birth certificate.
- Current legal spouse.
  - Proof of relationship may be required if common law marriage exists.
- Step-parent, step-grandparent(s), or step-children if current legal marital relationship exists between the step-parent and a biological parent.
- Genealogical purposes:
  - If the applicant is not an immediate family member as defined above, the applicant must satisfactorily demonstrate the extended family relationship.
  - Aunts, uncles, and cousins not past twice removed who are related biologically may be entitled to a certified copy marked for "For Genealogical Purposes Only".
  - "Direct lineal blood relationship" is defined as "one person descended in a direct lineal blood relationship to another".
- The following are not entitled to a certified copy without an appropriate court order:
  - In-laws, or extended family members not related by blood.
  - Biological parents after an adoption has occurred.
  - Children who have been adopted and wish to seek their biological families' records.

## 3. A legal representative must:

1. Prove that they are acting on behalf and for the benefit of the registrant or the registrant's immediate family.
2. Prove that whomever they are representing is entitled to the certified copy.
3. Prove that their representation is current (not past six months to one year from the event).
4. May make application on their business letterhead to help prove entitlement.

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Such persons or entities may include:

- Legal guardian – Must provide current court-appointed guardianship papers. Guardianship is generally renewed annually.
- Attorney at Law – Able to provide proof of a current client-attorney relationship, such as an Attorney Addendum form, court-appointment representation, executor of estate, or a release of information form appointing legal representation. Client must be otherwise entitled to the record for a legal representative to be entitled.
- Funeral Director (*death certificates*) – For one year from date of event. Must be the funeral home listed on the death record.
- Legal Agent – Must provide a notarized copy of the Power of Attorney signed by the person named on the record, if the registrant is age 18 or entitled and if the power of attorney extends to cover all areas and specifies the ability to obtain legal documents; or court-appointment papers; or Executor of Estate papers.

#### 4. Personal and property rights/benefits:

Special circumstances may involve the determination or protection of a personal or property interest. Applicants must provide supporting documentation that proves their linkage to the registrant and their need to resolve the personal and property rights.

Typical examples are:

- Joint ownership of personal property (e.g., stocks, bonds, bank accounts, boat, car) or real estate (e.g., home, land, business real estate) by two or more persons who otherwise have no legal relationship to the registrant. One of the owners is deceased, leaving the surviving owner(s) to remove the deceased's name from any title to the property.
- An individual(s) is listed as a beneficiary, such as on a life insurance policy. Supporting documents are required if the beneficiary is not an immediate family member.
- Parents or legal guardians of children under the age of 18 may be entitled to receive a certified copy of a vital record if there is a requirement that the child provide the record in order to receive benefits or assistance.
- Veteran's Administration purposes: notification from the Veteran's Administration requiring the certified copies must be provided. Fee waiver request forms are not acceptable.