

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Voluntary Paternity Affidavit

### Q What is a paternity affidavit?

A The paternity affidavit is a form that legally establishes paternity.

### Q What is a legal father?

A The legal father is a man whom the law recognizes as the father of the child.

- The legal father may be able to take legal steps to get visitation or custody rights. Establishing paternity DOES NOT automatically give a father these rights.
- The legal father has a duty to help support the child financially. When the parents do not live together, the paternity affidavit can be used to get an order for child and medical support. No further action of paternity is required.

### Q How much does it cost to complete the paternity affidavit?

A The paternity affidavit is free to complete and file.

### Q What do I need to bring to complete a paternity affidavit?

A **One of the following IDs issued by the U.S. government:**

- driver's license
- state photo ID
- United States passport/visa
- military ID
- permanent residence card
- employment authorization card
- current school photo ID

**OR two to three of the following IDs (names/current addresses must match):**

- income tax return
- court documents
- expired driver's license plus one other document in the same name
- criminal record
- hospital bill
- Medicaid/Medicare card
- rent or mortgage receipt
- car title
- insurance policy
- medical card
- find more here, including international documents: [bit.ly/paternityidlist](http://bit.ly/paternityidlist)

### Q Where can I complete a paternity affidavit?

A Paternity affidavits can be completed at the hospital at the time of birth, the local county recorder office ([bit.ly/iarecorders](http://bit.ly/iarecorders)), or a local Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU) office (<https://secureapp.dhs.state.ia.us/customerweb/offices>). All paternity affidavits submitted require a notary public's signature and a copy of each parent's ID (see above for appropriate IDs).

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### **Q Who can complete a paternity affidavit?**

**A** The biological mother and father both sign the paternity affidavit and agree that the people signing are the biological mother and father, which establishes a legal father.

However, if the mother was married at conception or at the birth or at any time in between conception and birth, the person the mother was married to is considered the legal father. In this situation, a court order needs to be filed to disestablish the legal father.

### **Q When can I complete the paternity affidavit?**

**A** The paternity affidavit can be completed any time after the child is born.

### **Q Why should I complete a paternity affidavit?**

- A**
- Completing a paternity affidavit establishes a legal father for your child, which might lead to child support, health insurance, medical coverage, disability insurance, custody, visitation rights, Social Security, and more.
  - Establishing a legal father for your child may decrease the risk of substandard academic achievement, behavioral problems, and teenage pregnancy.
  - Establishing paternity at the hospital is associated with more father involvement throughout the child's life.
  - Children with fathers who provide for their children and who have positive and regular connections may have better emotional well-being and may have fewer behavioral problems.

### **Q My child's father and I are living together and get along well. Why should I establish paternity?**

**A** Even if a child's parents are together and get along, the child is not eligible for any legal benefits until paternity is established, either through a paternity affidavit or court order.