

DID YOU KNOW?

The Rhode Island Uniform Parentage Act has provided additional routes for securing the parentage of a child.

- Pre UPA - LGBTQ parents used to confirm their parentage through adoption to obtain a court decree of parentage.
- Post UPA - parents can still complete adoptions but also have other choices.
- LGBTQ parents can sign a Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage which is equivalent to a court adjudication. Genetic, presumed or intended parents through AR can execute a VAP as well.
- LGBTQ parents can also seek a Court order of parentage either before or after birth.

GET HELP

To learn more on the Rhode Island Uniform Parentage Act or for assistance understanding how the new law may affect you or your situation, please contact any of the following state agencies:

CONTACT:

RI Department of Human Services
OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
77 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401)-458-4400

RI Department of Health
CENTER FOR VITAL RECORDS
3 Capitol Hill
Room 101
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 222-2813

RI Department of Children, Youth & Families
101 Friendship Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 528-3500



ESTABLISHING PARENTAGE

PETITION FOR
ADOPTION

O R A

VOLUNTARY
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF PARENTAGE



ESTABLISHING PARENTAGE

The Rhode Island Uniform Parentage Act became effective on January 1, 2021.

The passage of the Act has brought about many significant changes in the parentage process.

Most notably the expansion of those eligible to execute a Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage.

Consequently, the Act may also reduce the number of Adoption Petitions that were previously required to be filed.

This pamphlet is provided to explain when the VAP process may be more appropriate to establish parentage as opposed to the traditional adoption process.

The method you choose will depend upon the circumstances of your child's conception or birth and your relationship to the child.

ESTABLISHING PARENTAGE – though Voluntary Acknowledgment

If you are unmarried parents - same gender or not - when your child is born, and you want both your names to be listed as the child's parents:

- Complete the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage (VAP) form with hospital staff.
- Sign it in front of a witness who is at least 18 years old. Usually this will be completed in the presence of the hospital staff.
- Hospital Staff will file it with the Center for Vital Records.

If you are married parents - same gender or not and you want to ensure you have a document that is equivalent to a court decree of parentage, you can also sign a VAP.

If you complete it at birth:

Hospital staff will add both names to your child's birth certificate and send your VAP to the Center for Vital Records.

If you wish to complete it later:

You can make an appointment with the Center for Vital records to complete a VAP. In this case, CVR staff will witness the signatures. Both parents' names will be listed on the child's birth certificate. Please note: If the VAP is completed after the birth, you will not be able to change the child's name without a court order.

What makes a VAP valid?

- It's signed and dated by both parents who are eligible to sign. AND
- It's signed/dated by a witness who is at least 18.
- It's filed with the Center for Vital Records, at:
Rhode Island Department of Health
Center for Vital Records
3 Capitol Hill, Room 101
Providence, Rhode Island, 02908
Phone: 401-222-2813

ESTABLISHING PARENTAGE – though Adoption

Prior to the enactment of the RI Uniform Parentage Act many LGBTQ parents - married and unmarried typically filed a Petition for Adoption in Rhode Island Family Court to secure a court order of parentage to secure their parentage in all jurisdictions.

Some LGBTQ parents might continue to seek an adoption to secure their child's parentage, but the RI Uniform Parentage Act provides additional routes to secure their parentage.

Now, LGBTQ parents who are married or unmarried parents may execute the VAP at the birthing hospital, or after the birth of the child at the Center for Vital Records. They simply need to make an appointment to do so. A VAP is the equivalent of a court decree of parentage. In RI, a VAP may be signed by people who are genetic parents, people who are presumed parents, and people who are intended parents through assisted reproduction.

The VAP once completed is equivalent to a court adjudication. No further or additional court order is required.

In some cases, a Petition for Adoption is the appropriate and required procedure for establishing parentage. Examples include: Foster Parents planning to adopt a foster child.