

1. What is the difference between a “certified” and an “uncertified” copy of a birth certificate?

A **certified** copy of a birth certificate issued by the Local Vital Records Office will have a raised seal, will show the signature of the Local Registrar, and will be printed on security paper. A certified copy may be required to obtain a state-issued driver’s license or identification, for travel to foreign countries, to obtain a passport, or for benefit purposes.

State law restricts who may obtain a **certified** copy of a birth certificate. A **certified** copy can only be issued to those people with a “direct and tangible interest” (categories A – E) which means the following people:

- A. The person named on the birth certificate.
- B. An immediate family member, defined as current spouse, current domestic partner (Declaration of Domestic Partnership registered in the Wis. Vital Records System under Chapter 770, Wis. Stats.), child, or parent (whose name is on the birth certificate and whose parental rights have not been terminated), brother/sister, or grandparent of the subject of the record .
 - a. NOTE: Grandchildren, step-parents, and step-children can only obtain certified copies as categories C – E.
- C. The legal custodian or guardian of the person named on the birth certificate. Legal proof, *e.g.*, a court order of custody or guardianship, is required.
- D. A person authorized in writing by one of the above. A written and notarized authorization must accompany the application and the authorization must clearly state the relationship of the authorizing party to the subject of the record.
- E. A person who can demonstrate that the birth certificate is required to determine or to protect a personal or property right. Proof is required.

If you do not meet one of the above criteria, you cannot receive a **certified** copy of a birth certificate. An **uncertified** copy will contain the same information as a certified copy but it is **not** acceptable for legal purposes, such as proof of identity.

2. Limitations on access to certain birth certificates

An **uncertified copy** will contain the same information as a certified copy but it is **not** acceptable for legal purposes, such as proof of identity.

According to Chapter 69, Wis. Stats., **uncertified copies** of the following types of birth certificates may not be obtained by anyone:

- A child born to unmarried parents and paternity has not been established.
- A child born to unmarried parents and paternity was established by court order.

Only persons with a “direct and tangible interest” (categories A – E) may obtain **certified copies**