

**COWLITZ COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE**  
**ADOPTION SERVICES – STEPPARENT**  
(Consenting Birth Father or Birth Mother)  
**Procedural Checklist**

Prepared by the Cowlitz County Clerk's Office

This checklist is **not** a substitute for legal advice. Before starting any legal action, it is always wise to consult an attorney regarding your rights and responsibilities. Many attorneys offer low-cost consultations. Only an attorney can give legal advice.

**You may purchase forms for this action from the office of the Cowlitz County Clerk. These forms are not state mandated and have been created by the Cowlitz County Clerk's Office and approved by the Superior Court Bench. Our fees must be paid by cash, money order or cashier's check. We do not accept personal checks.**

This packet contains the forms for a Stepparent (Consenting Birth Parent) Adoption. These forms are generic, and you may find it useful to make changes to the language so it more appropriately reflects your situation. Helpful information about stepparent adoptions can be found at [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov).

Fill out the following forms and file with the Clerk's Office with a \$310.00 (cash) filing fee:

Form Number	Form Name	Last Revised
N/A	Petition for Adoption by Stepparent – Consenting	3/2025
N/A	Consent of Father/Mother	3/2025
N/A	Consent of Adoptee (14 years or older)	3/2025

You will need to find an independent investigator/Guardian ad Litem to manage your case. Information about local investigators is available at [www.consideringadoption.com](http://www.consideringadoption.com). After you have chosen one, submit the following form for an ex parte signature:

Form Number	Form Name	Last Revised
N/A	Order Appointing Investigator on Behalf of Minor	3/2025

This order directs the investigator to complete a Post Placement Report. After the order is signed by the judge and filed with the Clerk's Office, you will need to purchase a copy of the order and provide it to your investigator authorizing him/her to commence their work.

Contact the investigator and make an appointment for an interview. There may be a fee for their services. Please be aware that the investigator will have forms and/or background checks for you to complete. The investigator will confirm any consents filed or relinquishing parties, as required by law. After their investigation, the investigator will prepare and file a Post Placement Report which is a comprehensive analysis of the parents, child, living situation, etc. The report will also include any recommendations to the Court that the investigator may have.

---

You are ready to finalize the adoption after the original Post Placement Report has been filed at the Clerk's Office. You will need to set the matter for a hearing by filing a docket notice with the Clerk's Office. You will fill out the notice in its entirety and will select your own court date, at least 14 court days after the date that you filed the docket notice.

At the time you file your Notice of Hearing, you will also need the below vital statistics forms mandated by the Department of Health. Your final hearing will not be scheduled until these forms are submitted. File the following:

Form Number	Form Name	Last Revised
DOH 422-040	Application for Adoption Registration	2/2022
DCYF 10-114	Adoption Data Card	12/2020
DOH 422-182	Birth Certificate Mail Order Form (optional)	7/2021

There is a mandatory \$15.00 fee imposed by the Department of Health to process the Application for Adoption Registration. Acceptable payment methods include personal check, cashier's check or money order which can be made payable to Department of Health. If you choose to include the Birth Certificate Mail Order form, there is also a mandatory \$25.00 fee per birth certificate. These payments may be combined into one check.

The Clerk's Office will process this paperwork and provide it to the Department of Health on your behalf, according to statute. This paperwork must be provided on or before your hearing date and could result in the delay of your final orders if they are not provided timely.

When you arrive for your court date, you will need to have the following forms with you:

Form Number	Form Name	Last Revised
N/A	Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law (Stepparent)	3/2025
N/A	Decree of Adoption (Stepparent)	3/2025

The Adoption Docket is held in person on Tuesday at 1:00pm at the Cowlitz County Youth Services Center located at 1725 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Longview, WA 98632. If you need to appear remotely, you will need to contact Superior Court Administration for judicial approval.

After the hearing, you must go to the Clerk's Office to obtain at least one certified copy of the Decree of Adoption. Please note that copies MUST be obtained the same day as your hearing. You may request additional copies for your own use at this time as well. Certified copies cost \$5.00 for the first page, and \$1.00 for each additional page. Regular (non-certified) copies cost \$0.50 per page.

#### IMPORTANT

**Once the final Decree of Adoption is entered, the case becomes sealed and cannot be reopened without a court order. This means that the Clerk's Office cannot acknowledge the case, cannot provide copies, or confirm any information regarding the case. To have the case or any documents unsealed, you will need to provide a motion and order to unseal them. A list of Confidential Intermediaries who can assist with this process is available from the Clerk's Office.**

***DISCLAIMER:** If you need assistance with the materials in this packet or have questions relating to your adoption, please consult an attorney. If you are not currently represented by an attorney, it is recommended that you find an attorney to work with your family in all adoption matters. Our office will not be able to provide you with specific legal guidance. No employee of the court shall provide legal advice or assist parties in the completion of legal forms.*

**File all documents with: COWLITZ COUNTY CLERKS OFFICE  
312 SW FIRST AVE, ROOM 233  
KELSO, WA 98626**