

2026 -- S 2048 SUBSTITUTE A

LC003692/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- VITAL RECORDS

Introduced By: Senators Kallman, Ciccone, Acosta, Mack, Quezada, Vargas, Euer, Sosnowski, Urso, and Thompson

Date Introduced: January 09, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 23-3 of the General Laws entitled "Vital Records" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following section:

3 **23-3-30. Vital records procurement for children and youth involved with the**
4 **department of children, youth and families.**

5 (a) For the purposes of this section, "currently involved with the department" means and
6 refers to a child or youth who is actively engaged with one or more of the following department of
7 children, youth and families (DCYF) divisions: family services unit (FSU), child protective
8 services (CPS), Rhode Island training school (RITS), juvenile probation/parole, children's
9 behavioral health services (CBH), or the voluntary extension of care (VEC) program. For the
10 purposes of this section, the term applies to children or youth who are involved with these divisions
11 but are not in the legal custody of DCYF.

12 (b) Purpose and establishment.

13 There is hereby established a coordinated process, administered by DCYF, through its
14 federal benefits unit, in collaboration with the Rhode Island department of health, to facilitate the
15 timely request, submission, and receipt of birth, death, and marriage certificates for children, youth,
16 and young adults involved with DCYF.

17 (c) Scope of services. The federal benefits unit shall:

18 (1) Process requests submitted by DCYF staff for vital records issued within the State of
19 Rhode Island;

1 (2) Assist in obtaining vital records from other states or foreign jurisdictions, including
2 identifying and communicating with the appropriate issuing authority; and

3 (3) Provide administrative support to ensure that such requests are completed efficiently
4 and without unnecessary delay.

5 (d) Responsibilities of requesting staff. Any DCYF staff member initiating a request
6 pursuant to this section shall:

7 (1) Determine when a vital record is required;

8 (2) Ensure that all records obtained are handled, maintained, and disclosed in accordance
9 with applicable confidentiality laws and departmental policies; and

10 (3) Submit requests in accordance with procedures established by DCYF.

11 The role of the federal benefits unit shall be limited to the processing and facilitation of
12 such requests.

13 (e) Birth certificates for children in custody or care.

14 (1) The primary service worker shall ensure that a birth certificate is obtained and
15 maintained in the file of every child or youth in the custody of DCYF.

16 (2) DCYF shall process requests for Rhode Island-issued birth certificates for any child,
17 youth, or young adult involved with DCYF.

18 (3) For individuals born outside the state or outside the United States, DCYF shall process
19 requests for birth certificates only for those individuals who are in the custody of DCYF.

20 (f) Amendments and name changes — Rhode Island records.

21 (1) When an amendment or name change to a Rhode Island-issued birth certificate is
22 required for a child, youth, or young adult involved with DCYF, the primary service worker shall:

23 (i) Consult with supervisory personnel and legal counsel; and

24 (ii) Obtain an appropriate order from the Rhode Island family court.

25 (2) Upon issuance of such order, the amendment shall be submitted to the department of
26 health for processing.

27 (3) No request for an amended certificate shall be processed by the federal benefits unit
28 until such amendment has been completed.

29 (g) Amendments for out-of-state or foreign records.

30 When a birth certificate issued by another state or country requires amendment or
31 correction, the federal benefits unit shall assist in identifying the appropriate authority and
32 facilitating communication with that jurisdiction to support the amendment process.

33 (h) Certificate request process. To assist staff with processing of vital records pursuant to
34 this section including, but not limited to, any birth, death and marriage certificate, DCYF, in

1 collaboration with the federal benefits unit, shall assist and/or process a request for a birth, death,
2 or marriage certificate for children and youth currently involved with DCYF.

3 (1) DCYF staff person initiating the request for a birth, death, or marriage certificate
4 relating to a child involved with DCYF is responsible for the following:

5 (i) Consulting with the supervisor to determine when it is necessary to request a death or
6 marriage certificate. Every child/youth in DCYF's custody must have a birth certificate;

7 (ii) Determining if the certificate is an in-state, out-of-state or out-of-country (Department
8 of State - Passport Correspondence Office) request.

9 (i) In-state requests. The following applies to any in-state request under this section:

10 (1) In-state requests do not require a copy of the decree awarding custody to DCYF.

11 (2) The primary service worker shall complete the appropriate form located in "new office
12 documents" under the "case record" tab referenced as follows:

13 (i) Birth certificate - Form #194;

14 (ii) Death certificate - Form #195;

15 (iii) Marriage certificate - Form #196.

16 (3) The primary service worker shall attach the completed form to an email and forward it
17 to the unit of DCYF that handles federal benefits.

18 (4) The federal benefits unit shall review the form for completeness and inform the primary
19 service worker if further information is required.

20 (5) The federal benefits unit shall forward completed requests to the division of vital
21 records in the department of health (DOH).

22 (6) The federal benefits unit, upon receipt of the certificate from DOH, shall forward it to
23 the requesting worker.

24 (7) The primary service worker shall be responsible for determining who should receive a
25 copy of the document and that the document is appropriately handled and maintained in accordance
26 with applicable confidentiality provisions.

27 (8) For children and youth under age eighteen (18) not in the custody of DCYF, and youth
28 at the Rhode Island training school (RITS) the primary service worker shall obtain an agency
29 application request for a birth certificate form signed by the parent or legal guardian of the
30 child/youth giving DCYF permission to obtain the birth certificate on their behalf. The primary
31 service worker shall forward a copy of the signed agency application request for a birth certificate
32 form to the federal benefits unit.

33 (9) For young adults involved with DCYF age eighteen (18) and over the primary service
34 worker shall obtain a copy of the youth's ID along with an agency application request for a birth

1 certificate form signed by the youth giving DCYF permission to obtain the birth certificate on their
2 behalf. The primary service worker shall forward a copy of the signed agency application request
3 for a birth certificate form to the federal benefits unit.

4 (j) Out-of-state requests. The following applies to out-of-state requests:

5 (1) The primary service worker shall verify that the child has a valid legal status recorded
6 in DCYF's electronic case record.

7 (2) The primary service worker shall complete the appropriate form located under the
8 "forms" tab in PowerDMS, and the primary service worker shall include as much identifying
9 information as possible to ensure that the information required by that state is sufficient to obtain
10 the record, using the following references:

11 (i) Birth certificate - Form #194;

12 (ii) Death certificate - Form #195;

13 (iii) Marriage certificate - Form #196.

14 (3) The primary service worker shall forward the hard copy request and decree awarding
15 custody to DCYF to the federal benefits unit.

16 (4) The federal benefits unit shall review request the packet for completeness and inform
17 the primary service worker if further information is required.

18 (5) The federal benefits unit shall contact the appropriate authority for out-of-state requests
19 before sending it to ensure appropriate documents, information, and fees are included with the
20 request.

21 (6) The federal benefits unit, if necessary, shall transfer information to the local authority's
22 format. If additional information is needed, federal benefits staff shall request it directly from the
23 initiating worker.

24 (7) The federal benefits unit shall process the request to the appropriate out-of-state
25 authority.

26 (8) The federal benefits unit, upon receipt of the certificate, shall forward it to the
27 requesting worker.

28 (k) Out-of-country requests. The following applies to out-of-country requests:

29 (1) The primary service worker shall verify that the child has a valid legal status recorded
30 in DCYF's electronic case record.

31 (2) An out-of-country request is processed through the Department of State. The
32 Department of State cannot provide an out-of-country certificate for an individual that has not
33 registered with the Department of State.

34 (3) The primary service worker shall complete the appropriate form located in "new office

1 documents" under the "case record" tab. The primary service worker shall include as much
2 identifying information as possible to ensure that DCYF provides the information required by that
3 country to obtain the record using the following references:

4 (i) Birth certificate - Form #194;

5 (ii) Death certificate - Form #195;

6 (iii) Marriage certificate - Form #196.

7 (4) The primary service worker shall forward the hard copy request and decree awarding
8 custody to the federal benefits unit.

9 (5) The federal benefits unit shall review the request packet for completeness and inform
10 the primary service worker if further information is required.

11 (6) The federal benefits unit shall transfer information to the Department of State form. If
12 additional information is needed, federal benefits staff shall request it directly from the initiating
13 worker.

14 (7) The federal benefits unit shall process requests to the Department of State.

15 (8) The federal benefits unit shall, upon receipt of the certificate, forward it to the
16 requesting worker.

17 (l) Amending or changing the name on a birth certificate.

18 (1) The primary service worker or other DCYF staff involved with the case shall identify
19 the need for an amendment or name change to a birth certificate on file at the DOH division of vital
20 records.

21 (2) The primary service worker shall consult with DCYF's legal office to initiate the
22 process of amending the child's birth certificate.

23 (3) If necessary, a motion is filed by the legal office to request a change to the child's birth
24 certificate and a hearing is scheduled in the family court.

25 (4) If the court grants DCYF's request to amend the birth certificate, the legal office shall
26 prepare a decree.

27 (5) The legal office shall provide the completed decree to the primary service worker.

28 (6) The primary service worker shall secure the signature of a family court judge with the
29 assistance of DCYF's legal counsel.

30 (7) The primary service worker shall file the signed decree with the clerk's office in family
31 court and request that the clerk's office provide a certified copy of the decree. The worker shall
32 deliver the certified copy to the federal benefits unit along with completed birth certificate form
33 #194, and the federal benefits unit shall forward the request and decree to the department of health.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

=====
LC003692/SUB A
=====

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- VITAL RECORDS

- 1 This act would codify the DCYF operating procedure for the submission and fulfillment of
- 2 requests for persons involved with the department who request birth, death or marriage certificates.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

=====
LC003692/SUB A
=====