Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 641—Chapter 95
"Vital Records: General Administration"

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 144
State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code chapter 144

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

December 16, 2025 10 a.m.	Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 264 358 640 097 83 Passcode: V95vw7re

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Department of Health and Human Services no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

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Purpose and Summary

This proposed chapter describes how the Department will install, maintain, and operate the system of vital statistics throughout the State. No system for the registration of births, deaths, fetal deaths, adoptions, marriages, dissolutions, and annulments will be maintained in the State or any of its political subdivisions other than the one provided for in this chapter.

The proposed chapter underwent a Red Tape Review pursuant to Executive Order 10. As a result, the Department referred definitions back to the appropriate Iowa Code section and eliminated redundant language. The Department also increased certain fees and the distribution that goes to support the Office of the State Medical Examiner.

Analysis of Impact

1. **Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:**

- **Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:**

Most people who are involved with a birth, death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment will bear the costs of this proposed rulemaking.

- **Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:**

Any person who is involved with a birth, death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment will benefit from this proposed rulemaking.

2. **Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:**

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

The Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics registers approximately 100,000 events and issues about 85,000 certified copies annually. The Department annually publishes Vital Statistics in Iowa, Vital Statistics of Iowa in Brief, and the Iowa Health Indicator Tracking System at hhs.iowa.gov/data-reports/health-statistics.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

Any person who is involved with a birth, death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment will be affected.

3. **Costs to the State:**

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

The Department incurs personnel and other administrative costs in implementing this proposed chapter.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

The vital records fees collected not only fund the Bureau but also contribute to the State's General Fund. For fiscal year 2025 (through August 11, 2025), the Department collected over $3.7 million and contributed over $1.8 million to the General Fund. This includes fees collected for all vital records, not just births. Although the Department is increasing some fees, those fees will be directed to the Office of the State Medical Examiner. There is no impact on the portion of fees directed to the State General Fund.

4. **Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:**

Rulemaking is required by Iowa Code chapter 144.

5. **Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

6. **Alternative methods considered by the agency:**

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

Not applicable.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Rulemaking is required by Iowa Code chapter 144.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.
- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.
- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.
- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

This proposed rulemaking has no impact on small business.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Rescind 641—Chapter 95 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 95
VITAL RECORDS: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

641—95.1(144) Definitions. For the purpose of 641—Chapters 95 through 100, the following definitions apply:

"Administrative costs" means costs for the registration, collection, preservation, modification and certification of records, including but not limited to costs related to copying, regular mailing, searching, staffing, and maintenance of systems.

"Advanced registered nurse practitioner" or *"ARNP"* means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 152.1.

"Age of majority" means the chronological moment when a child legally assumes majority control over the child's own person and actions and decisions, thereby terminating the legal control and legal responsibilities of the child's parents over and for the child. The period of minority extends to the age of 18 years, but every minor attains majority by marriage.

"Amendment" means a change made by the state registrar upon request from an entitled person as described in rule 641—95.8(144) to an obvious error, omission, or transposition of letters in a word of common knowledge one year or more after the event.

"Birth center" means a facility or institution, that is not an ambulatory surgical center or a hospital or in a hospital, in which births are planned to occur following a normal, uncomplicated, low-risk pregnancy.

"Birthing institution" means a private or public hospital licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B that has a licensed obstetric unit or is licensed to provide obstetric services.

"Burial-transit permit" means the same as described in Iowa Code section 144.32.

"Certificate" or *"record"* means the written or electronic legal document containing the facts of an event.

"Certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth" means the same as described in Iowa Code section 144.31A.

"Certificate of nonviable birth" means a document issued based upon a nonviable birth.

"Certified copy" means an official copy of a registered vital record that is authenticated by the state registrar or county registrar. A certified copy contains a statement certifying the facts are true and accurate as recorded, is printed on security paper, and has authentication seals and signatures. A certified copy excludes all entries indicated as confidential or for statistical information.

"Commemorative certificate" means the same as described in Iowa Code section 144.45A.

"Competent and disinterested person" means an individual of legal age who is acquainted with both applicants who plan to marry.

"Confidential information" means data or information that is on a vital record, is not considered public information, and is restricted as to its release pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 144 or other provision of federal or state law.

"Correction" means a change made by the state registrar upon observation, upon query, or upon request from an entitled person as described in rule 641—95.8(144) to an obvious error, omission, or transposition of letters in a word of common knowledge within one year and prior to the first anniversary of the event.

"County registrar" means the same as described in Iowa Code section 331.601(4). If the office of the county recorder has been abolished, "county registrar" means the office to which the duties are assigned by the county board of supervisors.

"County resident copy" means a properly filed, clearly marked working copy of a decedent's death certificate that is sent to and recorded by the county registrar of the county of the decedent's residence in the event the death occurred outside the county of the decedent's residence.

"Court of competent jurisdiction" means the appropriate court for the type of action. When used to refer to inspection of an original certificate of birth based upon an adoption, "court of competent jurisdiction" means the court in which the adoption was ordered.

"Cremated remains" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Cremation" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Custody" means guardianship or control of vital records, including both physical possession, referred to as physical custody, and legal responsibility, referred to as legal custody, unless one or the other is specified. The state registrar will not transfer legal custody of vital records to another agency for purposes of granting public access until all the records have been purged of all confidential information.

"Day" means calendar day.

"Dead body" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Death" means the condition as defined in Iowa Code section 702.8.

"Declaration of paternity registry" means a registry for a putative father to declare paternity pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.12A. The declaration does not constitute an affidavit of paternity filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 252A.3A.

"Delayed birth record" means the registration of a live birth event occurring in Iowa one or more years after the date of birth that is clearly marked as delayed and shall show on its face the date of the delayed registration.

"Delayed death record" means the registration of a death event occurring in Iowa one or more years after the date of death that is clearly marked as delayed and shall show on its face the date of the delayed registration.

"Delayed marriage record" means the registration of a marriage event occurring in Iowa one or more years after the event that is clearly marked as delayed and shall show on its face the date of the delayed registration.

"Disinterment permit" means a permit that allows the removal of a dead human body or fetus from its original place of burial, entombment, or interment for the purpose of autopsy or reburial.

"Electronic access" means authority given by the state registrar to a county registrar to access electronic vital records through the electronic statewide vital records system for purposes of retrieving information. The state registrar will provide guidelines for electronic access and the retrieval of information from the electronic statewide vital records system.

"Electronic statewide vital records system" means the combined vital records system for registration of birth records, registration of death records, issuance of certified copies of vital records by the state registrar and county registrar, and fee accounting.

"Emancipated minor" means a person younger than 18 years of age who has obtained the age of majority by court order.

"Fetal death" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Filing" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Final disposition" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Foundling" means a living infant of unknown parentage whose place of birth is where the infant is found and whose date of birth shall be determined by approximation.

"Funeral director" means a person licensed in Iowa to practice mortuary science pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 156.

"Gestational surrogate arrangement" or *"surrogate mother arrangement"* means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 710.11.

"Health care provider" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.29A.

"Hospital" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 135B.1.

"Induced termination of pregnancy" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.29A.

"Institution" means a facility as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1(9), including "hospital" as defined in Iowa Code section 135B.1(3) but not including "birth center" as defined in Iowa Code section 10A.711(3).

"Institutional health facility" means a hospital as defined in Iowa Code section 135B.1, including a facility providing medical or health services that is open 24 hours per day, seven days per week and that is a hospital emergency room or a health care facility as defined in Iowa Code section 135C.1.

"Jurisdiction" means the state or county to which legal authority for the system of vital statistics has been granted by statute.

"Last name" means surname.

"Lineal consanguinity" means the existence of a line of descent in which one person is descended in a direct lineal relationship to another: as between the registrant and the registrant's parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, and so upward, in the direct ascending line; or between the registrant and the registrant's child, grandchild, great-grandchild and so downward in the direct descending line; or any siblings of the registrant.

"Live birth" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Marriage license valid date" means the day on which the marriage license becomes valid and on or after which the parties are authorized to marry. When the marriage license valid date is computed, the date of application shall be excluded. The marriage license shall become valid after the expiration of three calendar days after the date of application unless earlier validated by a court of competent jurisdiction.

"Medical certification" means a statement that attests that the medical information reported on the certificate of death or fetal death is accurate to the best of the medical certifier's knowledge.

"Medical certifier" means an Iowa-licensed physician, physician assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or medical examiner who attests that the death event has taken place and who determines the cause and manner of death.

"Medical examiner" means the medical legal officer who makes the determination of the cause of death in nonroutine deaths such as nonnatural, sudden, or unattended deaths or other deaths that affect the public interest.

"Modification" means any change made to a record that has been accepted and registered, such as a correction, an amendment, a change after adoption or paternity determination, or any other change.

"Mutual consent voluntary adoption registry" means a registry that authorizes adult adopted children, adult siblings, and the biological parents of adult adoptees to register to obtain identifying birth information.

"Natural cause of death" means a death due to a disease or the aging process and not due to external causes.

"Newborn safe haven registration" means the registration of the birth of a living infant of unknown parentage who has been abandoned or left at some unknown time after birth in a location other than the place of delivery.

"Non-birthing institution" means a private or public hospital licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B that does not have a licensed obstetric unit or is not licensed to provide obstetric services but may provide obstetric services on an emergency basis.

"Non-institution birth" means a live birth that occurs outside of an institution and not en route to an institution.

"Nonnatural cause of death" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.28(1).

"Nonviable birth" means an unintentional, spontaneous fetal demise occurring after demonstration of a doppler-detected heartbeat and prior to the twentieth week of gestation during a pregnancy that has been verified by a health care provider.

"Notification of record search" means the document issued to the applicant when the record requested cannot be located through a search of registered records. The document contains a certification statement, is printed on security paper, and has authentication seals and signatures.

"Officiant" means:

1. A judge of the Iowa supreme court, court of appeals, or district court, including a district associate judge, an associate juvenile judge, or a judicial magistrate, and including a senior judge as defined in Iowa Code section 602.9202(3), or

2. A person ordained or designated as a leader of the person's religious faith.

"Physician" means an individual licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 148.

"Physician assistant" means an individual licensed pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 148C.

"Presumptive death" means a death event presumed to have occurred in Iowa where no human body is found and a court of competent jurisdiction has determined the death has occurred.

"Putative father" means a man who is alleged to be or who claims to be the biological father of a child born to a woman to whom the man is not married at the time of the conception or birth of the child or at any time during the period between the conception and birth of the child.

"Record of death" means the compilation of those entries of a death, whether electronic or paper, that are contained in indexed systems that record the death event occurring in Iowa. "Record of death" includes the certificate of death.

"Record of fetal death" means the compilation of those entries of a fetal death, whether electronic or paper, that are contained in indexed systems that record a fetal death event occurring in Iowa. "Record of fetal death" includes the certificate of fetal death.

"Record of foreign-born adoption" means the compilation of those entries of a live birth event for a child born in a foreign country and adopted by an Iowa resident. "Record of foreign born adoption" includes the certificate of foreign birth and shall not constitute U.S. citizenship.

"Record of live birth" means the compilation of those entries of a live birth event, whether electronic or paper, that are contained in indexed systems that record a live birth event occurring in Iowa. "Record of live birth" includes the certificate of live birth.

"Record of marriage" means the compilation of those entries of a marriage event, whether electronic or paper, that are contained in indexed systems that record a marriage event occurring in Iowa. "Record of marriage" includes the certificate of marriage.

"Registrant" means the person named on the certificate as the person who was born, died, or was married.

"Registration" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Report of dissolution or annulment" means the statistical report of dissolution or annulment, whether electronic or paper, excluding all entries indicated as confidential or for statistical information only.

"Report of termination of pregnancy" means the aggregated compilation of the information received by the department on terminations of pregnancies for each information item listed, with the exception of the report tracking number, the health care provider code, and any set of information for which the number is so small that the confidentiality of any person to whom the information relates may be compromised.

"Research" means the systematic investigation designed primarily to develop or contribute to scientific, medical, public health or psychosocial disciplines and generalized knowledge and not for private gain.

"Sealed" means the removal from inspection of any copy of an original certificate in the custody of the county registrar and the state registrar.

"Security paper" means standardized paper for issuing certified copies of vital record events that meets, at a minimum, national requirements for security features embedded within the paper to deter tampering, counterfeiting, photocopying, or imaging in order to help prevent fraudulent use of the certified copy and prevent identity theft.

"Single parent birth" means any record of live birth for which there is a reference or statement on the certificate or entry that directly indicates "no" regarding "born in wedlock" or "married"; or any record of live birth for which there is reference or statement on the certificate or entry that either parent is "unknown" or "anonymous"; or any certificate or entry that reflects the omission or absence of the name of the father of the child.

"Spontaneous termination of pregnancy" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.29A(7)*"c."*

"Standard birth registration" means a vital record of a live birth event that occurred in Iowa that was submitted and accepted for registration within one year of the event.

"State registrar" means the director of the department or the director's designee.

"Stillbirth" means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 136A.2.

"System of vital statistics" or *"system"* means the same as defined in Iowa Code section 144.1.

"Uncertified copy" means an unofficial copy of a registered vital record that is not printed on security paper and that does not contain any authentication by the issuing jurisdiction. Uncertified copies shall contain an overstamp such as: "Not for Legal Purposes," "Administrative Use Only," "Deceased," "For Genealogical Purposes Only," "Working Copy," or any other overstamp as authorized by the state registrar.

"Vital records" means certificates or reports of birth, death, fetal death, marriage, dissolution, annulment, and related data.

"Vital statistics" means data derived from reports, certificates, and records of live birth, death, fetal death, induced termination of pregnancy, marriage, dissolution of marriage or annulment, and data related thereto.

641—95.2(144) Vital records and statistics. The department will install, maintain, and operate the system of vital statistics throughout the state. No official system for the registration of births, deaths, fetal deaths, adoptions, marriages, dissolutions, and annulments shall be maintained in the state or any of its political subdivisions other than the one provided for in Iowa Code chapter 144, including but not limited to a system maintained by any agency or private entity.

95.2(1) No person shall prepare or issue any certificate that purports to be an original certified copy or a copy of a certificate of birth, death, fetal death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment except as provided for in Iowa Code chapter 144 and authorized by the state registrar.

95.2(2) The state registrar and the county registrar will not maintain or issue copies of any vital record of an event occurring outside the state registrar's or county registrar's jurisdiction except as provided for in Iowa Code chapter 144 and authorized by the state registrar.

641—95.3(144) Forms—property of department. All forms, certificates and reports pertaining to the registration of vital events are the property of the department and shall be surrendered to the state registrar upon demand. Official designated forms used for the express purpose of creating a vital record event will not be accessible to the general public unless authorized by rule.

95.3(1) The forms supplied or approved for reporting vital events will be used for official purposes as provided for by law, rules and instructions of the state registrar.

95.3(2) No forms, except those furnished or approved by the state registrar, can be used in the reporting of vital events or the making of copies of vital records.

95.3(3) Security paper used to report vital events will be maintained in a secure location accessible only to the state and county registrars and their employees for administrative purposes.

95.3(4) Security paper will be used to issue certified copies of Iowa vital records and will be maintained in a secure location accessible only to the state and county registrars and their employees for administrative purposes.

641—95.4(144) Information by others.

95.4(1) Any person having knowledge of the facts shall furnish information the person possesses regarding any birth, death, fetal death, adoption, marriage, dissolution, or annulment, upon demand of the state registrar.

95.4(2) Every person in charge of an institution, or the person's designee, shall maintain a record of personal particulars and data concerning each person admitted or confined to the institution pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.47. This record shall include information required by the standard certificate of birth, death, and fetal death forms issued under the direction of the state registrar. The record shall be made at the time of admission based on the information provided by such

person, but when information cannot be obtained from the person, it shall be obtained from the most knowledgeable relative or person acquainted with the facts. The name and address of the person providing the information shall be a part of the record.

95.4(3) Records maintained under this rule shall be retained for a period of not less than ten years and shall be made available for inspection by the state registrar upon demand.

641—95.5(144) Handling of vital records.

95.5(1) State equipment and state vital records shall not be handled or accessed except by the state registrar, the state registrar's employees, or other authorized personnel for administrative purposes.

95.5(2) The county registrar will provide assistance to the public in accessing vital records designated as public records in the custody of the county registrar.

641—95.6(144) Fees.

95.6(1) *Fees for services provided by state registrar or county registrar.* The following fees will be charged and remitted for the various services provided by the state registrar or the county registrar.

a. The state registrar or county registrar, as applicable, will charge a fee of $20 for a certified copy of a vital record. If, following a search, no record is found and no certified copy is printed, the $20 fee may be retained.

b. The state registrar will charge a fee of $15 to prepare an adoption certificate, amend a certificate, amend a certificate of live birth to reflect a legal change of name, prepare a delayed certificate, process other administrative or legal actions, prepare a noncertified copy of an original certificate of birth pursuant to Iowa Code sections 144.23A and 144.24A, or prepare copies of supporting documents on file in the state registrar's office. No fee will be charged for establishment of paternity.

c. The state registrar will charge a fee of $25 to file a completed application for the mutual consent voluntary adoption registry.

d. The state registrar will charge a fee of $5 to update applicant information maintained in the mutual consent voluntary adoption registry and the declaration of paternity registry.

e. The state registrar will charge a fee of $15 to amend an abstract or other legal documentation in support of the preparation of a new certificate.

f. The state registrar will charge a fee of $35 to issue a commemorative copy of a certificate of birth or a certificate of marriage pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.45A. Fees collected will be deposited in the emergency medical services fund established in Iowa Code section 135.25.

g. The state registrar will charge a fee of $15 for the purpose of issuing an uncertified copy of a certificate of birth resulting in stillbirth pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.31A.

h. The state registrar will charge a fee of $15 for the purpose of issuing a certificate of nonviable birth pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.31B.

95.6(2) *Overpayments.* Any overpayment of $5 or less received by the state registrar for the copying of vital records or for the preparation or amending of a certificate will not be refunded and will be retained by the department.

95.6(3) *Certified copy of modified vital record.* When an individual is in possession of a previously issued certified copy of a vital record and the original record is subsequently modified, the individual may request and receive a certified copy of the modified record without charge if the certified copy prior to modification is relinquished to the registrar's office that issued the certified copy, unless otherwise directed by the state registrar.

95.6(4) *Search of county registrar's records—fee for uncertified copy.* A person who is requesting an uncertified copy of a vital record in the custody of the county registrar shall conduct the search of the county files to locate the record. If a copy is requested, the county registrar may charge a fee pursuant to Iowa Code section 22.3. The fee will be retained by the county.

95.6(5) *Distribution of fees.*

a. All fees collected by the county registrar and the state registrar will be distributed as follows:

(1) For fees collected by a county registrar, with the exception of the fee in subrule 95.6(4), the county registrar will retain $4 of each $20 fee collected by that office. Fees collected will be divided as follows:

1. For a birth certificate or a marriage certificate, the state registrar will receive $13, and $3 will be deposited in the general fund of the state, except for the fee collected pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1)*"f."*

2. For a death certificate, the state registrar will receive $6, the office of the state medical examiner shall receive $8, and $2 will be deposited in the general fund of the state.

(2) For fees collected by the state registrar, the state registrar will retain all fees, with the exception of the fees in paragraph 95.6(1)*"a,"* of which the state registrar will retain $9 of each $20 fee collected for the issuance of certified copies. The $11 balance of certified copy fees collected by the state registrar will be divided as follows:

1. For a birth certificate or a marriage certificate, $6 will be deposited in the general fund of the state.

2. For a death certificate, the office of the state medical examiner will receive $8, and $3 will be deposited in the general fund of the state.

b. All fees retained by the state registrar will be added to the vital records fund established by the department pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.46A.

c. All fees received by the office of the state medical examiner will be added to the operating budget established for the operation of that office.

95.6(6) *Fee for search to verify vital statistics record.* A fee will be charged by the state registrar for each search conducted for the purpose of providing verification of vital statistics data to an agency authorized to receive such data under subrule 95.12(2).

a. The amount of the fee will be determined in an agreement with the department and will be dependent on the nature and scope of the project and the resources needed to obtain the data requested.

b. The state registrar will retain the full amount of all fees collected under this subrule in the vital records fund established pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.46A.

95.6(7) *Fee for researcher access to vital statistics data.* A fee shall be charged to each researcher who is provided access to vital statistics data in accordance with Iowa Code section 144.44 and the required agreement executed with the department. The amount of the fee will be based on the nature and scope of the research project and resources required to obtain the data requested.

a. The state registrar will allocate the fees for copies of birth, marriage, and death certificates provided to researchers pursuant to the distribution of fees set forth in subrule 95.6(5).

b. The state registrar will retain in the vital records fund established pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.46A the full amount of fees collected from researchers for searching files or records to create a data file.

95.6(8) *Service member who died while on active duty—waiver of fee.* The certified copy fee for a birth certificate or a death certificate of a service member, as defined in Iowa Code section 29A.90, who died while on active duty will be waived for a period of one year from the date of death. Application for the certified copy shall be made by an entitled family member as described in rule 641—95.8(144) of the deceased service member or the entitled family member's legal representative. Documentation shall be submitted at the time of application to substantiate the date of death and active duty status.

95.6(9) *Retention of applications and reports.* An application for a certified copy of a vital record in Iowa will be retained by the county registrar for a minimum of six months from date of issuance of the certified copy. All financial reports for vital records fees will be retained by the county registrar for a minimum of three calendar years.

641—95.7(144) General public access of vital records in the custody of the county registrar. A vital record may be in the custody of the county registrar if the event occurred in that county and the record is not excluded by statute or definition for purposes of confidentiality.

95.7(1) There will be public access and the right to inspect all vital records in the custody of the county registrar after the vital records are purged of confidential information pursuant to rule 641—95.11(144). The county registrar will allow the general public access to the electronic statewide vital records system to search as a public user as a right under Iowa Code chapter 22 for events that occurred in that county.

95.7(2) Information inspected and copied shall not be used to establish an official system for the registration of vital statistics except as authorized by Iowa Code chapter 144.

95.7(3) County registrars may issue uncertified copies of vital records held in the registrars' physical custody or accessible through the electronic statewide vital records system, except those records excluded by statute. Uncertified copies issued by the county registrar will be issued on plain white paper and clearly stamped "not for legal purposes." Security paper provided by the state registrar shall not be used to produce uncertified copies.

95.7(4) For records available in the electronic statewide vital records system, the state registrar will send to the county registrars a list of all records that have been modified. County registrars shall, as directed by the state registrar, remove all forms of any vital record in their physical custody from the county vital records system if the vital record appears on the list of modified records.

95.7(5) For records not available in the electronic statewide vital records system, the state registrar will send a copy of any modified vital record to the county of event and, if the record is a death record, to the county of residence.

641—95.8(144) Direct tangible interest in and entitlement to a vital record. Certified copies of vital records may be issued by the state registrar or county registrar upon written application, payment of the required fee pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1)*"a,"* and demonstration of a verifiable, direct tangible interest and entitlement.

95.8(1) The following persons shall be considered to have a direct tangible interest and entitlement and are authorized to obtain a certified copy of a vital record:

a. The registrant, if the registrant is of legal age, has reached the age of majority, or is an emancipated minor.

b. A member of the registrant's immediate legal family, including:

(1) Current spouse or surviving spouse;

(2) Children;

(3) Mother or father if listed on the registrant's birth certificate;

(4) Sibling, if sibling has reached the age of majority;

(5) Maternal grandparents, or paternal grandparents if the father is listed on the birth certificate; or

(6) Step-parent or step-child if:

1. Legal parent and step-parent are currently married at the time of application; or

2. Step-parent is the surviving spouse of the legal parent and not remarried.

c. The documented legal representative of the registrant or the registrant's immediate legal family, including:

(1) An attorney;

(2) A court-appointed guardian;

(3) A foster parent;

(4) A funeral director, for up to one year following the decedent's date of death; or

(5) A legal executor.

d. Other persons who demonstrate a direct tangible interest and entitlement when it is shown that the certified copy is needed to determine or protect a personal or property interest and the interest is for the benefit of the registrant.

95.8(2) The following persons shall not be deemed to have direct tangible interest and entitlement or be authorized to secure vital records:

a. Biological parents of adopted persons in the absence of a court order from the court of competent jurisdiction;

b. Biological family members of adopted persons;

c. Adopted persons requesting biological family records; or

d. Commercial firms or agencies requesting lists of vital record events, or lists of names, or lists of addresses, or that are not legal representatives requesting records on behalf of entitled individuals.

641—95.9(144) Search and issuance of a certified copy of a vital record. The search and issuance of a certified copy of a vital record shall be requested from the state registrar or county registrar.

95.9(1) Only entitled applicants as described in rule 641—95.8(144) may submit requests for certified copies of vital records.

95.9(2) A person requesting a search and issuance of a certified copy of a vital record shall provide in writing the following:

a. The name of the person or persons whose vital record is to be searched;

b. The purpose of such request;

c. The relationship to the registrant of the person making the request; and

d. The notarized signature and the address of the person making the request.

95.9(3) In addition to a completed written application, the applicant shall provide:

a. A current, legible government-issued photo identification of the applicant making the request or other identification documents acceptable to the state registrar; and

b. Payment of the required fee before the search is conducted.

95.9(4) The state registrar and county registrar will have the authority to mandate additional supporting documents to prove direct tangible interest and entitlement pursuant to rule 641—95.8(144).

95.9(5) If, after the search is conducted, no record is on file and the state registrar or county registrar issues a "notification of record search" on certified paper, the fee for the search will be retained pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1)*"a."*

95.9(6) If a certified copy of a vital record is issued and sent to the applicant using a mail service and the applicant does not receive the certified copy, the state registrar or the county registrar may replace the certified copy without an additional fee using an Affidavit of Non-Receipt. The applicant must contact the issuing registrar within 90 days of the date of request. A minimum of 30 days must have elapsed from the time the certified copy was mailed. The applicant shall read the instructions, complete the Affidavit of Non-Receipt and have the applicant's signature notarized. The original Affidavit of Non-Receipt and a photocopy of the applicant's driver's license must be reviewed by the issuing registrar before the certified copy can be replaced for no additional fee. The state registrar or county registrar may refuse any Affidavit of Non-Receipt when the state registrar or county registrar determines proof of receipt, fraud or misrepresentation. The state registrar will give to the registrant a notice in writing of the state registrar's reason and intention to refuse the Affidavit of Non-Receipt.

95.9(7) If printed from the electronic statewide vital records system by a county registrar, the certified copy of a vital record will be stamped by the issuing county registrar to reflect the county in which the certified copy was issued.

641—95.10(144) Search and issuance for genealogy or family history. The search and issuance of a vital record for genealogy may be requested from the state registrar or county registrar upon written application and payment of the required fee pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1)*"a."*

95.10(1) The state registrar or county registrar may issue certified copies of a vital record for genealogy or family history to an applicant who can satisfactorily demonstrate a line of direct lineal consanguinity and to aunts, uncles, and cousins not past twice removed.

95.10(2) All certified copies issued for genealogy or family history will be clearly marked "for genealogical purposes only."

95.10(3) No certified copy will be issued for genealogy or family history if the registrant is known to be living.

95.10(4) If, after the search is conducted, no record is on file, the state registrar or county registrar will issue a "notification of record search" on certified paper, and the fee for the search will be retained pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1)*"a."*

641—95.11(144) Registrars' responsibility for maintenance of confidentiality.

95.11(1) The state registrar and county registrar will maintain the confidentiality of the following material, records, and information:

a. Entries indicated as confidential or statistical in nature on the face of the record or otherwise confidential by law;

b. Any record that is ordered sealed by the state registrar or pursuant to a court order.

95.11(2) The county registrar will take all necessary steps to ensure that confidential information reflected on vital records has been redacted from general public access. If confidential information is included with accessible information, only accessible information will be made available to the general public for examination.

95.11(3) The county registrar will employ at a minimum all of the following methods to ensure confidentiality:

a. Permanently cover or remove, by appropriate means, confidential information;

b. Promptly process the notice to seal a record as directed by the state registrar; and

c. Seal and not reproduce confidential information when copies of vital records are made.

95.11(4) The county registrar may charge reasonable administrative costs to reflect the expenses for efforts needed to allow general public access, examination and the assurance of confidentiality of this material and information pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code chapter 22.

a. The administrative cost is to be paid by persons who request the services provided by the county registrar, including supervising, copying or providing a suitable place for such work.

b. The county registrar will retain all administrative costs collected to allow general public access, examination, and the assurance of confidentiality of the vital record and information pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code chapter 22.

641—95.12(144) Disclosure of data.

95.12(1) The state registrar may disclose data from the system of vital statistics to federal, state, county or municipal agencies of government that request such data in the conduct of their official duties, subject to conditions the state registrar may impose to ensure that the use of the data is limited to official purposes.

a. The aforementioned agencies shall not provide the certified copy or a copy of the vital record, or release information contained therein, to the person named on the certificate, a member of the person's legal family, or the person's legal representative.

b. Certified copies issued to the aforementioned agencies will be appropriately stamped, for example, "administrative purposes only" or "for veteran affairs purposes only."

95.12(2) Confidential verifications of the facts contained in vital records may be furnished by the state registrar to any federal, state, county or municipal government agency or other entity in the conduct of the agency's or entity's official duties, subject to conditions the state registrar may impose to ensure that the verification is limited to official purposes. Confidential verification of the facts contained in vital records may be furnished by a county registrar to another county office, within the county jurisdiction, in the conduct of the county's official duties, subject to conditions the state and county registrar may impose to ensure that the verification is limited to official purposes.

a. Such confidential verifications will be on forms prescribed and furnished by the state registrar or on forms furnished by the requesting agency or entity and acceptable to the state registrar, or the state registrar may authorize the verification in other ways.

b. The aforementioned agencies and entities shall not provide the original or a copy of the verified certificate, or release information contained therein, to the person named on the certificate, a member of the person's legal family, or the person's legal representative.

95.12(3) The state registrar may permit the use of data from vital statistics for research purposes subject to conditions the state registrar may impose to ensure the use of the data is limited to such research purposes. No data will be furnished from vital statistics for research purposes until the state registrar has prepared in writing the conditions under which the data may be used and has received an agreement signed by a responsible agent of the research organization agreeing to meet and conform to such conditions.

95.12(4) The state registrar may transmit to the county registrar data needed to produce certified copies of vital records pursuant to rule 641—95.8(144).

95.12(5) The state registrar may transmit to the statewide immunization registry information from birth certificates for the sole purpose of identifying those children in need of immunizations. The state registrar may impose conditions to ensure that the use of the information is limited to official purposes.

95.12(6) The state medical examiner or the county medical examiner may request an uncertified copy of a death certificate before the death certificate is accepted and filed at the county registrar's office.

a. The copy will be clearly stamped "administrative purposes only."

b. The death certificate shall be for the sole use of the state medical examiner or county medical examiner and shall not be used as a legal document, be distributed, be copied or be maintained other than to be made a part of the investigatory file.

c. If the state medical examiner or any county medical examiner determines the death does not warrant further investigation, the state medical examiner or county medical examiner shall destroy the uncertified copy of the death certificate.

641—95.13(144) Preparation of certified copies. Certified copies of vital records may be prepared and issued by the state registrar or the county registrar pursuant to rules 641—95.3(144) and 641—95.9(144).

95.13(1) Certified copies of vital records may be made by mechanical, electronic, or other reproductive processes, except for confidential information. Certified copies will be issued using security paper that is prescribed by the state registrar.

95.13(2) When a certified copy is issued, each certification will contain a statement certifying that the facts are the true facts recorded in the issuing office, the date issued, the name of the issuing office, the registrar's signature or an authorized copy thereof, and the seal of the issuing office.

95.13(3) No person shall prepare or issue any certificate that purports to be an original, certified copy, or copy of a certificate of birth, death, fetal death, or marriage.

641—95.14(144) Access to original certificate of birth prior to adoption. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, an adopted person who was born in this state and whose original certificate of birth was substituted with a new certificate of birth pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.24 based upon the adoption, or an entitled person, may apply for and obtain a noncertified copy of the original certificate of birth of the adopted person who is the subject of the original certificate of birth in accordance with this rule, including with any mandatory redaction of personally identifiable information pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.24A(2).

95.14(1) Entitlement.

a. If an adopted person who is the subject of the original certificate of birth is submitting the application, the adopted person shall be at least 18 years of age at the time the application is filed.

b. If an entitled person is submitting the application, the adopted person who is the subject of the original certificate of birth must be deceased at the time the application is filed.

95.14(2) The adopted person or the entitled person requesting a noncertified copy of the original certificate of birth shall file a written application with the state registrar on a form and in the manner prescribed by the state registrar.

95.14(3) Upon receipt of the written application, proof of identification pursuant to paragraph 95.9(3)*"a,"* and payment of a fee pursuant to paragraph 95.6(1)*"b,"* the state registrar will issue a noncertified copy of the original certificate of birth to the applicant in accordance with this rule, including with any mandatory redaction of personally identifiable information pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.24A(2). At the time of such issuance, the state registrar will also provide to the applicant any contact preference form or medical history form completed and submitted to the state registrar including with any mandatory redaction of personally identifiable information pursuant to Iowa Code section 144.24A(2).

a. A biological parent may file a contact preference form prescribed by the state registrar in accordance with the provisions outlined in Iowa Code section 144.24A(2) and state the biological parent's preference for contact by an adopted person or an entitled person following application for and issuance of the noncertified copy of the original certificate of birth under this rule. The contact preference form will be provided to the biological parent in accordance with Iowa Code section 600A.4. A contact preference form may be completed or updated by the biological parent at any time at the request of the biological parent.

b. A biological parent may file a medical history form prescribed by the state registrar in accordance with the provisions outlined in Iowa Code section 144.24A(3) and provide medical history of the biological parent and any blood relatives. The medical history form will be provided to the biological parent in accordance with Iowa Code section 600A.4. A medical history form may be completed or updated by the biological parent at any time at the request of the biological parent.

c. Upon receipt of a completed contact preference form or medical history form, the state registrar will attach any such completed form to the original certificate of birth.

d. For the purposes of this rule, "entitled person" means the spouse of the adopted person who is deceased or an adult related to the adopted person who is deceased within the second degree of consanguinity.

e. An application may be submitted under this rule by an adopted person or an entitled person to obtain a noncertified copy of an adopted person's original certificate of birth in accordance with this rule, if the adopted person who is the subject of the original certificate of birth was born before January 1, 1971.

f. An application may be submitted under this rule by an adopted person or an entitled person to obtain a noncertified copy of an adopted person's original certificate of birth in accordance with this rule, notwithstanding the date of birth of the adopted person who is the subject of the original certificate of birth prescribed under paragraph 95.14(3)*"b."*

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 144.24A and 600A.4.

641—95.15(144) Certificate of nonviable birth.

95.15(1) A health care provider who attends or diagnoses a nonviable birth or a hospital at which a nonviable birth occurs shall advise a patient who experiences a nonviable birth that the patient may request a certificate of nonviable birth as provided in this section and, upon request by the patient, shall provide a letter certifying the nonviable birth to the patient on the form prescribed by the state registrar.

95.15(2) The department will issue a certificate of nonviable birth to a patient within 60 days of receipt of a request and certification letter. The request shall be made on the form prescribed by the state registrar.

95.15(3) The certificate of nonviable birth will contain all of the following:

a. The date of the nonviable birth.

b. The name and sex of the baby, if known.

(1) If the name is not furnished by the patient, the department will complete the certificate with the name "baby boy" or "baby girl" and the last name of the patient.

(2) If the sex is unknown, the department will complete the certificate with the name "baby" and the last name of the patient.

c. The name of the patient and, if married, the patient's spouse.

d. The statement: "This certificate is not proof of live birth."

95.15(4) The fees collected will be remitted to the treasurer of state for deposit in the general fund of the state and the vital records fund in accordance with Iowa Code section 144.46A.

95.15(5) A certificate of nonviable birth shall not be filed or registered with the department. The department will not register the nonviable birth associated with a certificate issued under this section or use the nonviable birth in calculating live birth statistics.

95.15(6) A certificate of nonviable birth shall not be used to establish, bring, or support a civil cause of action seeking damages against any person for bodily injury, personal injury, or wrongful death for a nonviable birth.

95.15(7) This rule will only apply to, and a certificate of nonviable birth may be requested and issued for, nonviable births occurring on or after January 1, 2000.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 144.31B.

641—95.16(144) Cancellation of fraudulent records.

95.16(1) When the state registrar determines that a certificate was registered through fraud or misrepresentation, the state registrar will give to the registrant a notice in writing of the state registrar's intention to cancel the certificate.

95.16(2) The notice of cancellation will give the registrant an opportunity to appear and show cause why the certificate should not be canceled.

a. The notice may be served on the registrant, or, in the case of a minor or incompetent person, on the parent or guardian, by the forwarding of the notice by certified mail to the last-known address on file in the office of the state registrar.

b. The certificate shall not be available for certification unless the registrant, parent or guardian within 30 days after the date of mailing the notice shows cause satisfactory to the state registrar why the certificate should not be canceled.

95.16(3) Upon presentation to the state registrar of a court order stating a marriage certificate was registered through fraud or misrepresentation, the state registrar will remove the record from the vital statistics system. The state registrar will order the county registrar to remove any record related to the marriage.

641—95.17(144) Unlawful acts.

95.17(1) *Serious misdemeanors.* Any person who reports information required under Iowa Code chapter 144 and who commits any of the following acts is guilty of a serious misdemeanor:

a. Willfully and knowingly makes any false statement in a report, record, or certificate required to be filed or in an application for an amendment or willfully and knowingly supplies false information intending that such information be used in the preparation or amendment of any such report, record, or certificate.

b. Without lawful authority and with the intent to deceive, makes, alters, amends, or mutilates any report, record, or certificate required to be filed or a certified copy of such report, record, or certificate.

c. Willfully and knowingly uses or attempts to use or furnish to another for use for any purpose of deception any certificate, record, or report or certified copy thereof.

d. Willfully and knowingly alters, amends, or mutilates any copy, certified copy, record or report.

e. Willfully, with the intent to deceive, uses or attempts to use any certificate of birth or certified copy of a record of birth knowing that such certificate or certified copy was issued based upon a record that is false in whole or in part or that relates to the birth of another person.

f. Willfully and knowingly furnishes a certificate of birth or certified copy of a record of birth with the intention that it be used by a person other than the person to whose birth the record relates.

g. Disinterring a body in violation of Iowa Code section 144.34.

h. Knowingly violates a provision of Iowa Code section 144.29A.

95.17(2) *Simple misdemeanors.* Any person committing any of the following acts is guilty of a simple misdemeanor:

a. Knowingly transports or accepts for transportation, interment, or other disposition a dead body without an accompanying permit as provided in Iowa Code sections 144.32, 144.33, and 144.34.

b. Refuses to provide information required by Iowa Code chapter 144.

c. Willfully violates any of the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 144 or refuses to perform any of the duties imposed upon the person.

641—95.18(144) Enforcement assistance.

95.18(1) The department will report cases of alleged violations to the proper county attorney, with a statement of the facts and circumstances, for such action as is appropriate.

95.18(2) Upon request of the department, the attorney general will assist in the enforcement of the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 144.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 144.